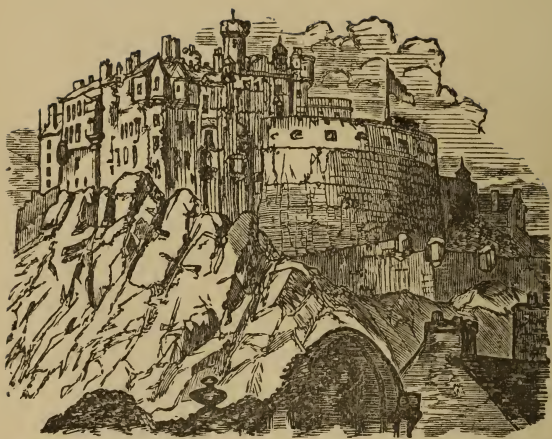


EDINBURGH SKETCHES

AND

MISCELLANIES.

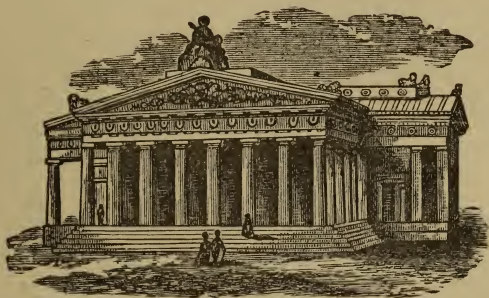


EDINBURGH CASTLE & HALF-MOON BATTERY.

EDINBURGH SKETCHES

AND

MISCELLANIES.



NATIONAL GALLERY.

EDINBURGH:

MENZIES & CO., HANOVER STREET.

1884.

P R E F A C E.

AN ancient author of some repute, one Julius Cæsar, in a work with which I made an early but involuntary acquaintance, has finely observed, that all Gaul may be divided into three parts. So deeply did this great truth penetrate my youthful mind, that throughout life I have gone on the principle of dividing everything that came in my way into three parts,—a fact which shews the superior influence of Classical literature over all modern productions. Following this plan, I have arranged the contents of the present volume under three heads. In these Sketches the author cannot lay claim to the wit possessed by the most popular writers of the present day, he having spelt all the words correctly, so far as his knowledge of the rules of orthography enabled him to do so. The absence of poetic talent must also be painfully

evident, there being nothing in the volume susceptible of an immoral construction. But, on the other hand, the author thinks he might fairly point out that, as the book is not intended for a History, there will be found in it comparatively few lies; and as it has no pretensions to the character of a Philosophical work, it contains little that is of vague import, and nothing that is absolutely meaningless.

CONTENTS.

EDINBURGH SKETCHES.

	PAGE
THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE,	3
MY OLD DEBATING CLUB,	23
EDINBURGH STUDENT LIFE,	35
FALLACIES CONCERNING AN IMPORTANT INSTITUTION,	52
SANDY M'GOUSH,	63
AN IDYLL OF MODERN EDINBURGH,	78

MISCELLANIES.

THE STRIDES OF INTELLECT,	103
A CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY, .	113
MISUNDERSTOOD LITERARY MEN,	126
RECOIL OF ROMANCE,	135
AN OLD BATTLE RE-FOUGHT,	140
HEROISM IN ART,	153
A FOSSILISED RELIC OF THE PAST,	160
The Town,	162
The Newspaper Office,	170
SHAKESPEARE'S PROFESSION FINALLY DETERMINED, .	176
ALONE AT CHRISTMAS,	185

VERSES.

	PAGE
TIM GOODMAN,	191
CODGERS' HALL,	193
A MODEL SONNET,	200
EXCELSIOR,	201
EIN TRINKSPRUCH,	203
THE HAPPY BRIDEGROOM,	203
THE VALLEY,	205

EDINBURGH SKETCHES.

THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

AFTER many years of active and not unprofitable employment, I am now spending the last years of my life in peaceful retirement amidst the scenes of my youth, in my native city of Edinburgh. To a man like myself, who is of quiet, studious habits, and is at the same time fond of society, Edinburgh offers every opportunity for reading and meditation, with few of the disadvantages of a large town. The active but not too busy thoroughfares of the Old Town, the refined serenity that pervades the New Town, the romantic, secluded walks in the suburbs, the libraries, and the men of knowledge to be met with in every department of learning, combine to make life in Edinburgh agreeable in every season. But the old city has still deeper attractions for me in those haunts of my youth and early manhood, amongst which I love to dwell once more. Of all these cherished scenes there is one for which I have a greater affection than for all the rest. This is a majestically sombre retreat in the most bustling part of the city—it is the Advocate's Library. This was my first favourite haunt, and it will be my last. Among the most pleasant emotions of my early years were those I experienced when placing between me and the crowded streets the grand old Cathedral of St. Giles,

and presently descending to the deepest recesses of that literary temple. There I would sit poring over the antique pages, listening to the words of some ancient hero, and marking their effect on the admiring crowd, only half-awakened from my reverie at intervals by the solemn echo of the cathedral bell.

At that time I was looked upon by the librarians and the less constant frequenters of the place as an unaccountable young fellow, who spent most of his time in the library. In the same way I am now regarded as an odd old man who does the same thing. Things are somewhat altered from what they were thirty years ago, and from time to time I now see some modern innovation introduced; but I can sit on the same chair and read the same book as ever. When I feel fatigued by too much study, or when I am in a humour for looking around, I often start from this point for a stroll about the town. At other times, when I am in a pensive mood, and require something to divert my thoughts, my custom is to leave my books and go upstairs into the region of the courts. That is to me a place of frequent resort. It is wonderful how much I find there to call my faculties into activity. Every part of my mind is worked upon in turn: now the serious, and again the gay emotions of my nature are brought into play. I am now overwhelmed by the solemn genius of those halls, and deep in reflection on the memories of the past. At such times I am transported to other ages, and to a long line of successive scenes which can now be realised only by a few; but my mind rests with terrible distinctness

on a generation in which I myself lived and acted, and which has now been swept away as completely as those that went before it. I look around the old Parliament Hall with awe, and behold in stone and canvas the features of men who are more familiar to my eyes than those who now occupy their places on the bench and at the bar. And not a few only: I can recal the faintest characteristics of gesture and tone of the great proportion of the men whose figures now adorn those walls. I look from the pictures to the faces of a new generation, and I am sometimes startled to hear them loudly jesting and laughing, as if they at least were certain of holding possession for all future time. I seem solitary in my meditations. Everybody else is occupied with the business or enjoyment of the present; but my thoughts run on uninterrupted. I am known by sight to the busy frequenters of the Parliament House, but I am allowed to pass unheeded as an objectless person, who is happy in having nothing to do.

When I am not in a grave mood I extract great enjoyment from watching the light phases of Parliament House life. It is sufficiently interesting and amusing; and it possesses a certain native oddity and grotesqueness which can be appreciated by a man who has lived in other lands. But you must be brought into close contact with it to comprehend it thoroughly. I am often carried away by the excitement that pervades the active crowd; I sometimes even consult the "rolls" of the court, and feel as if I were at a loss how to overtake my numerous appointments. No doubt, life is

expended at a furious rate within these walls, but I have occasionally been struck with the fact that after all there is not so very much work done. People are not so busy as they seem; and one who gives as much attention to the subject as I have done, will find that those who appear in the hottest haste are in reality those who have least to do.

The most lively period of Parliament House existence is just before the meeting of the courts in the morning, when the judges and a few leading advocates in carriages, and a great many advocates, and agents, and clerks not in carriages, sweep past the statue of Charles II., and impart a momentary flush of life to the dreary precincts of Parliament Square. The lobbies, which were but now totally deserted, become instantly thronged. Then the air becomes filled with affectionate salutations of rival men of business, and gradually each falls to his task, and drops into his company according to his rank. And I have never been in any place where the distinctions of rank are so markedly observed. I can make a pretty shrewd guess at the income and prospects of almost any man here by a single glance at his surroundings. Not by his appearance; for the individual who wears the very newest style of neckcloth, and sparkles with dubious jewellery, may or may not be a person of position. But here no one communicates with or recognises the existence of anybody except his equal in social standing. The third clerk of an influential firm would as soon think of holding familiar intercourse with his manager as he would expect the Lord-Justice-

General in the First Division to rise from his chair to salute him. The man who enters on the business of the Court of Session soon finds his level, and if he rises it is by imperceptible degrees. After the arrival in the morning, the reference to the rolls and pencilings of engagements appear to involve an immense amount of labour and confusion. I don't wonder at this; for, after a minute analysis of those printed lists, extending over a great number of years, I frankly admit that I was never able to make anything of them myself. While the courts are sitting I often spend an agreeable hour in sauntering into one of the Divisions, or from one to another of the boxes of the Lords Ordinary, where I find much to occupy my attention as an unprofessional man. On these occasions I allow nothing to escape me, excepting, of course, the business of the court, which has no attraction for my unpractical mind. The peculiarities of the counsel, of the agents, of the parties, and if I might be allowed to say it without disrespect, of the judges also, afford a large field of contrarieties of human nature well worthy of prolonged study.

But while the courts are preparing for the day's work, let us take a glance at the venerable hall, and observe the various groups—the most interesting, I make bold to say, of any that assemble from day to day in any part of Scotland. The hall itself is well worth an occasional visit on its own account. It contains more of historical associations, ancient and modern, than any other building in the country. It is spacious and lofty, though one does not feel lost

in its magnitude. There is not the awe-inspiring immensity of Westminster Hall, which always appears to me to be frowning satirically on the smallness of its occupants. But it has an encouraging, socialising aspect, and might serve for an assembly of heroes, while Westminster Hall is fit only to entertain a company of giants. But the professional men who meet here daily don't much study its capabilities from this point of view; and if we are to understand their character, we also must adopt a more practical standpoint of observation. Our attention is first directed to a number of promising-looking young gentlemen in wigs and gowns, who are pacing to and fro with careful regularity, and although they have only now arrived, they are already discussing political and literary subjects with great warmth. This is their daily occupation, and has been for years; and they look forward to a happy continuance of it for a long time to come. It is no doubt a harmless and even improving mode of passing away the hours; but why they should go to the trouble of appearing in such a costume, and such very neat and spotless white ties for that purpose, I never could understand. It is to this class, however, that we owe in a great degree the lustre that has been cast on the Scotch bar by its connection with literature; and an excellent type of them is found in a man who has identified himself with the English language, and who walked about in this manner for a long course of years, scheming and slowly executing the work of his life—as nearly perfect a picture of a great man as was ever drawn by

human hand. It cannot be doubted that these are a more rational class of advocates than those others, equally burdened with professional duties, who spend the day lounging round the fires, or in the more retired corners laughing immoderately at the most stupid jokes. These latter are quite as sedulous in their attendance as the others; but I observe that when they meet in the morning they sometimes look very hollow about the eyes, and exchange mysterious winks with each other. Further on in the day you will see the man of extensive practice step out from his seventh case, and condescend to take a few turns here with a distinguished client, as he eats the half of a very small biscuit—probably as an example to his younger brethren of simple habits in the matter of diet. Those politely dignified gentlemen in the elegant hats, who stand about in knots of four and five, and keep stroking their beards while they hold what appears to be mutually pleasing conversation, represent a body of men who appear to me to be sadly overworked. I feel very much improved by the exchange of sentiments amongst them, so far as I overhear it; and I am extremely annoyed when a pleasing little chat of two or three hours' duration is interrupted by a small person in a wig and gown handing one of the company a paper to copy. From these interruptions I see that they are the advocates' clerks. So far as I can discern their character, I think it is very estimable. It is only justice to say that they afford a solitary example of a class of men who have a deep-rooted affection for their employers.

In fact, their regard for a person in a wig and gown surpasses belief—it approaches to veneration. Their talk all runs on the extraordinary qualities of the men at the bar, with whom, I judge from their tone, they are on terms of cordial intimacy. “He positively,” said one of them in my hearing a few days ago, referring to his chief, a person of unnatural loquacity even for a man of his profession—“he positively had not above twenty-five minutes to prepare that speech. He was at the theatre with the Sol.” (I understood this to refer to the Solicitor-General), “and afterwards had supper with Toole, the comedian—a great friend of his, by the way; and it was past four when he went to bed. He didn’t look at his brief till nine, and we left at twenty-five minutes to ten.” The fact is, the speaker had left ten minutes before, heavily laden with documents and briefs; and he would probably have explained this, had he not been interrupted by the hero of the narrative himself, who brought a draft paper which he wanted “extended.” The most important class in the Parliament House practice, next to that we have been considering, are the agents’ clerks. You see them clustering about the hall and the lobbies in pretty large groups. They are numerous and more miscellaneous in character than the advocates’ clerks, embracing the consequential-looking person who conducts the cases of his firm in the Court of Session, and the junior fresh from the country, who is alarmed and confounded at having nearly tripped up that important gentleman in the wig as he is crossing to the library. But the junior

needn't have distressed himself: it is only one of our literary friends, who deems it proper to affect such an abstraction from surrounding circumstances, that he is on the point of being thrown over a hundred times in a day. Like every other section of Parliament House society, the agents' clerks make a point of not hiding their lights, in the way of personal attractions, under a bushel. Though usually of a sedate, severe cast of mind, they seem not to be without a certain kind of ambition. But it all runs in the way of their business, and is kept within a moderate limit, which bespeaks a complete mastery of the imagination. Indeed, there seems to be something in the profession of the law which precludes a flight of fancy in the youngest mind, and which in the course of time wholly eliminates that profitless faculty. Some of these youths are incipient solicitors or Writers to the Signet; and the fond object of the older portion is to have business in the court on their own account; while the younger members derive a thrill of sublime delight in contemplating the possibility of being, at some remote future time, managing clerk of the firm. Thus they move on, each in his sphere, and following his own aim. In the meantime they devote their energies to qualifying themselves for the best post Providence may assign to them; and this consists chiefly in familiarising themselves with the minutest particulars of the private life of everybody who attends the Parliament House. When we regard the magnitude of the subject, we shall not be surprised that it absorbs the leisure as well as the business hours of these

energetic young men. Some of the more important personages have arrived at a pretty mature age, and have been married several times; and to trace the genealogy of each wife, and the destination of each child, is a work that cannot be accomplished in a day. We next notice a party of unpretending looking persons, who seem regardless of the fashions of the Parliament House. They live exclusively in each other's society, and are constantly to be seen conversing earnestly in the lobbies, or taking a rapid glance into the courts through the glass doors. These are the reporters for the newspapers. They are generally a clever, shrewd set of men, possessing abilities and knowledge that would shame some of the more important persons about the Parliament House. It is a sad spectacle to witness that at the present moment all their shrewdness and abilities and knowledge are concentrated upon a very unworthy object: they are scheming to secure some letters in a divorce case, which the parties have a desire to keep from the public. One of them detaches himself from the main body to reconnoitre, and in a short time returns with the documents, which he has procured surreptitiously; out of respect for public morality we shall not inquire how he has obtained them. He retires to a corner with his fellow conspirators, where he hastily dictates the contents of the purloined correspondence, conscientiously dwelling upon any oddity of grammar or orthography on the part of the writer. The letters will appear in full in the newspapers to-morrow morning, and the agents and parties

in the case will be exasperated to fury. Those persons of solemn, almost funereal appearance, that you see from time to time worming their way through the crowd with slow, melancholy motions, are the macers. They don't move about much—generally you see them sitting in a secluded part of their respective courts, watching the progress of a case with a mournful interest. Formerly, I was at a loss to account for the expression of deep dejection which you see depicted on their countenances; but after some inquiry and study, I have arrived at a pretty satisfactory solution of the question. I find that their vast opportunities for contemplation on the miserable lot of man have produced in their minds a kind of compassionate contempt for all earthly vanities. In particular, they have received especial enlightenment in this respect as to the corruption and futility of the institution of the law. They have come to despise every form of litigation; and so far as my experience goes, the only time when they discover anything like an animated interest in human affairs, is when they have an occasion to express their disgust for the processes of court and the whole legal machinery.

Passing from the hall, and calling at one or two of the bars of the Lords Ordinary, the first point that strikes a visitor is the order and regularity with which business is conducted. The frequenter of the Outer Court is familiar with this fact. When a particular number on the roll is reached, it *never* happens that some unexpected circumstance renders it desirable that the case should stand over “in the meantime,”

that anything requires to be adjusted before commencing, that a leading witness has been kept back by some unforeseen casualty, or that, just as the case is about to begin, one of the leading counsel, whose presence is indispensable, is called away to the Inner House. Everything is harmony here: in fact, a perfection of system seems to have been attained. Then, as a rule, the progress made at each sitting is quite marvellous. Again, counsel are always so well posted up in their facts and points, that they have no need to take a hurried glance at their briefs before rising, nor to hold hasty consultations with the agents or their clerks; and, as a natural consequence, they are so succinct and concise in submitting their arguments. Indeed, their acquaintance with the principles of logic, relating to the arrangement of arguments, is almost as marked as their intimacy with the rules of grammar. Truly, considering the smooth way in which the business is conducted—how everything is at hand whenever it is wanted, the rapidity with which cases move from one stage to another, the passion for brevity exhibited by the gentlemen at the bar, as especially evinced in their manner of disposing of evidence,—considering all this, one cannot but look upon the position of a judge in the Outer House with envy, free as it is from cares and perplexities, and replete with unmixed enjoyment.

A stroll into the Inner Court is well worth the trouble. This part of the court is divided into two chambers, in each of which sit four judges. In

ordinary circumstances you will have no difficulty in accommodating yourself with a good seat ; for, excepting the officials and the reporting advocates, the audience generally consists of about half a dozen persons. To these we should add a sight-seeing lady or two, who modestly take a seat in a remote corner, and who seem to take an absorbing interest in the proceedings for from three to six minutes, when pressing engagements call upon them to tear themselves away. Here you will have an opportunity of hearing some effective displays of forensic oratory, for counsel reserve their most polished eloquence for the Inner House. To a stranger the judges look and act very much like judges everywhere else. I have observed that to a casual visitor to a court of law, there always appears a strong family resemblance among judges ; and frequently months will pass before he is able to tell one from another. But to me their most obscure characteristics are well known—even the peculiarities of thought and expression of every man on the bench are to me so familiar, that I can guess pretty correctly the view each will take of a certain set of circumstances. I have watched a great many judges in my time in different countries, and I have come to believe that for professional acuteness and facility in disposing of business, the Scotchmen stand pre-eminent ; but in candour I must confess that I never could appreciate their jocularities, nor partake of the extravagant mirth excited in the counsel by their witticisms. If my entertainment in the court depended on the jests

of their lordships, I am afraid that while I remained here a tinge of sadness would be mingled with my enjoyment.

The court is at present engaged on a case involving a mass of intricate accounting; and the small lively gentleman with the cunning little eyes that keep rolling about, if possible more actively than his tongue, is appearing in his fifth case to-day, although it is as yet comparatively early. This is a good type of the Scotch advocate. He speaks fluently, and in a forcible though redundant style, with a marked affectation of the English accent. But after all, his tone is decidedly Scotch, and anybody but a Scotchman would recognise that instantly. Notwithstanding this, he believes, with a number of his leading brethren, that, because he slurs over his R's, and raises his voice two or three times in every sentence, he would be taken for an Englishman anywhere. This delusion is shared in by a host of aspiring youths who attend the courts with a view of acquiring a pure English pronunciation; and none of them seem to discover that in their futile efforts to get rid of the pleasing characteristics of their native tongue, they make a very ludicrous appearance. The diminutive gentleman who is now addressing the bench is one of the most crafty lawyers in Scotland, and has the keenest foresight of the slightest possibility of advancement. He started life with little means and no influence, and though not remarkable for his talents, he has made for himself a position and reputation by dint of sheer sharpness. Every act of his life

has been marked by a far-seeing prudence. The first-fruits of his practice he expended in the purchase of property in a remote fishing town, and he soon after got himself returned as member of Parliament for the Kelpington District of Burghs. He is one of that scarce, acute class of men who can tack between two political parties in such a manner as to take advantage of the contrary breezes of both, and make such contribute to their own progress. He steers his little bark steadily through the ocean of professional and political fortune, and is in the direct course for the haven of a snug judgeship, whichever way the wind blows. He speaks in this case with an energy and earnestness which speak of a valuable brief; and now he finishes with a flourish of his little arm, and sits down, after thrusting out his lips and hoisting his left shoulder—a movement he believes to be graceful in itself, and indicative of suppressed wisdom. He is altogether a curious little fellow, and a marvel of concentrated vitality. I remember reading one morning at breakfast a speech he delivered in the House of Commons the previous evening. It was the eve of a dissolution of Parliament; he thought it a fitting opportunity to propound a scheme for the promotion of the Kelpington industries, and took occasion to represent his constituents as a people endowed with a high spirit of enterprise, who were labouring to increase the wealth of the community, but were clogged and thwarted in their patriotic efforts by burdens and imposts which in their nature embodied the essence

of oppression and tyranny. In the division which followed the discussion of the question, I saw from the report in the newspapers that the member for the Kelpington District of Burghs had secured the votes of three members from the same neighbourhood. On looking into the court after breakfast what was my astonishment to find him vehemently addressing a jury as to the rights of some fishermen belonging to a litigious little town on the coast of Fife. Our small friend is succeeded by a thin, pale young man, with a slight stoop, and sharp earnest features. His extreme blandness is the first thing that strikes you. His appearance, his demeanour, his movements, his tone,—all seem blended in one comprehensive smile of politeness. That is the most “rising” man at the Scotch bar. I should trust a case with him sooner than with any other in the courts. His power over a jury is immense, and he can positively lead their lordships by the nose. It isn’t his professional skill, and certainly not his mode of speaking—for a more hazy and confused style of oratory has seldom been heard since the days of Cromwell. The secret lies in his wheedling powers, and he is as expert a hand at that as I have met. His free and utterly disinterested manner of stating his case overcomes every difficulty; and it is a little to be regretted that his notion of a good speech of two or three hours’ duration is, that it should consist of one prolonged, hopelessly muddled sentence. Hark! you hear in the lobby the sound of a powerful regular step, as of a com-

pany of dragoons ; it draws nearer, presently the outer door and then the inner door of the court flies open as if by machinery, and there enters a gentleman in the ordinary wig and gown of an advocate, but with the addition of an amplified white scarf,—who looks as if his expanded idea of his importance was in danger of bursting him asunder. I can remember when he was a comparatively humble person, but his talents for frightening a jury into fits of agony, with the most slender materials, has so improved his position that he has lately had three or four of the finest mansions in the city thrown into one, to contain his dignity. On entering the court you observe he strides majestically to the clerks' table, suddenly stops short, throws back his head, and looks over his nose, first at the judges and next at the counsel, and then goes out again with a flourish. Another of the counsel in the case rises to address the court, and his character is very much the reverse of that of the winning young gentleman who has just sat down. He is a big, clumsy fellow, with enormous feet, which he manages to set in everything he undertakes. He was a shoemaker at one time ; and how he ever reached his present station is a problem which has not yet been solved by the most knowing clerk who attends the Parliament House. He has the most eccentric notions of conducting a case, probably acquired at the Shoemakers' Scientific and Philosophical Association, of which he was a distinguished member—distinguished for his ill-breeding as much

as for his want of common sense. His plan in an argument is to set out by inveighing extravagantly against the opposite side ; and the constant snubbing of judges and counsel has not succeeded, and never will succeed, in convincing him that that is not the only sound mode of discussing the merits of a question. I have known a barrister make wonderful progress at the Quarter Sessions of an English county by this line of debate, only he had the additional advantage of the gruffest voice I ever heard outside an agricultural show. But the gross vituperation of our awkward friend is of no avail here ; and the only effect of his most studied efforts is to destroy any advantage he may have possessed when he started. There ! his lordship in the chair is obliged to remonstrate with him already, observing that hard words alone won't make out a case. Our friend receives the rebuke with dignified scorn. He replies with unruffled calmness, that he is perfectly aware of that, and that he does not rest his case solely on any particular words, hard or otherwise, but on a general survey of the facts as he will state them. And now he launches forth in his usual strain, to the intense amusement of everybody in the court, but particularly his brethren at the bar. After ringing the changes on such terms as "wilful misrepresentation," "fraudulent concealment," and "systematic and flagrant imposture," the eminent pleader resumes his seat, believing that he has thoroughly overturned his opponent's case. The proceedings now subside into a dreary discussion

on the provisions of numerous deeds relating to the property in question,—an estate yielding a very small income, and situated on eleven different islands on the north coast. As this has little interest for us, we may leave to take a glance at some of the more remote parts of the building.

There are some queer, unknown nooks out of the range of the noise and clamour which pervade this part of the court, that have a strange charm for me. They are fitted to soothe to a placid mood of reflection the most commonplace mind. You can look out from the windows of the old House of Parliament on nearly all that remains of the original capital of Scotland. You see through the dust and smoke that on the clearest day obstruct the vision, piles of rickety buildings, at one time the halls of the most powerful and cultivated of the land. The mansions of the nobility of past ages have for years afforded shelter to the most lowly and abject of the inhabitants of a large town; and now they are being swept away as too mean for this last resort. You have forced upon you scenes historically associated with the streets of Edinburgh, and undisturbed you can realise and live in presence of the mighty changes that have succeeded each other. When I was young, I used here to speculate on the profound historical knowledge such reflections must produce on the minds of those who were led by their daily avocations to pass the great part of their lives in this solitude. Their antique appearance and solemn demeanour favoured my view of their profundity.

I formed the project of striking up an acquaintance with such attractive spirits, in order to have some converse with them on subjects suggested by our surroundings. I succeeded in making myself known to a venerable old gentleman who sat all day on an antiquated chair in a dim, remote chamber—filled with records and Acts of Parliament going as far back as A.D. 1100—apparently contemplating the events of former ages. I approached with reverence, and at length plucked up courage to allude to the ancient documents, which were arranged in book-cases of oak, and filled every corner of the room. He conversed with me without reserve on their interest and antiquity, but not with the warmth I had expected. I ventured to ask if they were printed, or in manuscript. “Well,” he replied, “I’ve been looking at them for fifteen years, but it never struck me to open one of them. I would let you see them, but some years before I came the keys were lost, and nobody has inquired about them since.” From my inspection of the place at a very recent visit, I am of opinion that the keys have not yet been found.

MY OLD DEBATING CLUB.

WHAT has become of the Edinburgh Addison Club?

I have often looked forward to this day. In the midst of a busy life, I have often vowed that I would one day come alone to the room where we used to meet, call for my pipe, as I was wont to do, and spend some hours in solitary reflection on the fate of my old friends, and on the nights we used to spend here together. I have fulfilled my long-cherished desire, and the old bell of St. Giles again strikes familiarly on my ear.

What has become of the Edinburgh Addison Club? How many sombre and gay pictures of the past cling around the name? Where are all the young hearts that beat so impatiently, the speculative eyes that sparkled so intensely in a glow of life-heat, the youthful manly voices that trembled with sincerity, or awakened a sympathetic merriment by their playful wit? We who shared in the momentary triumph or dismay shall never again take part in those serious but good-humoured combats which formed our characters and gave a tone to our lives. It is many years since we looked forward to our lively weekly meetings; and though, even now, I sometimes feel as if it were necessary to prepare for the Wednesday night, I can never indulge a hope of again mingling in the pleasant

strife. The turmoil of the debate is ended ; the divisions are closed for ever. Our annals are written briefly in our society's books, entered with religious care and exactness by each of us in succession when we filled the office of secretary ; but we can never re-awaken the activity of thought, the virgin conviction, the heated feelings of which they are a dry and formal record.

Our club meetings were held in this very room—an antique chamber of an ancient coffee-house ; but its present dingy and somewhat bare appearance was tempered into a social aspect by the large cheery fire that always awaited us, and our pipes and coffee were all that were necessary to our material happiness. Those meetings were held with a regularity which I never saw equalled in the case of any collective body in after life—a regularity which could only be the offspring of the constant health and enthusiasm of the young. When I look over the roll of our members, and observe the mass of contrary elements it embraced, it appears to me surprising that we could live together, and enjoy so much pleasure and delight in each other's company as we did. There were between twenty and thirty of us, varying little in years, and every one punctual and regular in attendance. There are few of those on the roll at the time I speak of who still survive ; but those who do will agree with me, that the hours spent in our club were, everything considered, among the happiest, if not the very happiest of our lives. Yet how incessant was the warfare of that time, and with what jealous interest were the numbers scanned in the record of the voting !

We had amongst us types of every variety of thought and sentiment, all struggling for intellectual mastery. We could also claim a merit which few small unions possess, for we had every class of society represented. The bulk of our members consisted of students of the University—some of them very poor students, some of them the heirs of large estates; but we had also a number of clerks of different grades, employed in the legal offices of the city, and young men of other stations. Notwithstanding that there were aristocrats in our ranks, our society realised in the highest degree I ever witnessed in any voluntary association the character of equality. A man was neither admitted to nor excluded from our ranks simply because he was rich or poor, of high or low social position. Our constitution was purely democratic. Our members were elected by ballot; and after having entered our body, deference was paid to them in the proportion of their intellectual influence or their power of making themselves agreeable. I do not say that the qualities which rendered them acceptable were such as would weigh or ought to weigh in a more mature assembly, but they certainly were qualities which we considered the highest and the best.

How our society came to be of such a mixed character was hardly known. We attributed it to the efforts of a gentleman of a distinguished name and broad sympathies, who was president of the club long before any of my contemporaries had become connected with it,—for our society was of long standing, and included on its roll some names of the

previous generation, which were well known in literature. But, however so many people of such diversity of rank came together, there they were; and they always conducted themselves in the most respectful manner towards each other. Whether it be that my recollection of any asperities that existed has been softened by time, I cannot tell; but I do not remember any one instance of the most distant allusion by a member to the social position of another, though the attempt to throw doubt on the mental power or truthful professions of a member was of constant occurrence. Personalities of this, as we considered it, legitimate kind, formed a most attractive element in our proceedings. The twisting of names and the distortion of personal characteristics, mental and physical, were also regarded as within the bounds of fair battle. Two good-natured fellows, named respectively Crabbe and Hogg, used to be dealt with most severely in this respect. "I cannot lay claim," one of their opponents would say, when hard pressed for a point in his speech, "to the intellectual activity of a *Crabbe*, or to the suavity and urbanity of a *Hogg*." The possessors of unfortunate names, however, lived their opponents down, until the joke became too stale for repetition. But we usually dwelt in regions higher than personalities. When my eyes fall upon a particular spot of the fantastic panelling of the chamber, on which I had a habit of fixing my gaze in listening to a speaker, I think of the limitless fields of history over which we travelled in the vivid painting of my companions; the varying prospects in

the systems of philosophy ; the old writers in whose company and in the company of whose creations we lived familiarly ; the puzzling problems in science, made clear and soluble by long fixed scrutiny, and the concentration of varied lights ; and the honest vacillation and ultimate abandonment of cherished opinions, brought about by the close reasoning of uncompromising antagonists. I studied in the ordinary way before I attended the club, and after ; but that was the school at which I learned to think, or at least to reason. We did not merely learn to argue or debate. We acquired a power of taking a broader view of a subject presented to us, by entering into sympathy with those who applied to the question another principle than our own—perhaps one that included our own, perhaps one that opposed it. It was a true school of modern philosophy. But whether we gained or lost in mental power by our intercourse, could we ever be ungrateful for the pleasure which it gave us ? Is it nothing to have the heart and mind of men opened to you with all the candour and frankness of youth ? We saw to the bottom of each other's souls with a clearness and directness of vision, undimmed by the distorting influences of vanity and ambition. We desired a victory, but it was for our honest and unaffected faith ; and if we were convinced that we were being led aside from truth by plausibility, we had no motive to cling to our error. Never was interchange of soul nearer perfection. Perhaps our most exciting pleasure was derived from realising together the great events of history. We lived to

gether at distant periods of time. We assisted in the senates of ancient Greece and Rome, the Long Parliament, and the National Convention of 1793, as thoroughly as we did in those of our society. We conversed with the noblest minds of the world with a vividness which it was impossible to realise in our own studies. There was not one amongst us who had not imbibed the spirit of his favourite thinker or poet more completely than would be possible in advanced years: and he communicated his mode of thought and manner of expression, until we could fancy the dead author expounding his philosophy, or confiding the secret and most exalted aspirations of his soul. Any one who has formed one of a coterie of enthusiastic students in the days of his most ardent devotion to literary pursuits, will understand our ecstasies. I have not lost my love for the studies of my youth: I retain my old affection for my books; but with all my efforts I could not for worlds recall one spark of that early fire.

And where are all my old companions?

The first form summoned up to my memory is that of Hamilton, the king of our debates. I never knew him intimately: I seldom met him except at the club: yet it is his face that appears to me now as the centre-piece of the picture. He never prepared for the discussions. There was no necessity for it. His readiness to grasp the principles of an opponent's speech, the glowing images that ever appeared at his call, his fertility and originality of new stand-points, and his happy power of putting a strangely

twisted idea into simple words, were sure to prevail. His superficiality of vision was concealed by the ingenuity of his reasons, and the fervour of his language. His after career was an unusual one. Having completed his professional studies and entered the church, he became gradually convinced of the futility of eloquence for any good purpose, and so far from exerting himself to obtain a prominent position in the ecclesiastical courts, which he might have done, he came latterly to shrink from speaking in public at all. He gave himself up wholly to the performance of the most routine duties of a clergyman's life—particularly visiting the sick—and is now known only as a zealous and hard-working parish minister. I have been told that his sermons are of the most brief and practical character, without a trace of the poetry which rendered his youth brilliant.

The next figure that presents itself to my recollection is more shadowy in its outline, because of its want of distinctive character. Walker was a distinguished mathematical student, of a nature opposed to Hamilton in every particular. With a cold expression of countenance and a listless manner, his mind was always actively at work. Nothing escaped him. His mode of treating an opponent was incisive, but ineffectual. He would demonstrate that the most ideal outburst of Hamilton had no foundation in reason, or even in sentiment; but the cold-blooded way in which it was done, and the embarrassed, hesitating, and halting sentences of the scarifier, failed to excite admiration, and tended rather to create a

sympathy for the fallen victim. His mind was always engaged in mathematical problems, and he seemed to arrive at his conclusions by some occult process of figuring. It was strange that I should have formed such a warm attachment to Walker, but for a long time he and I were inseparable friends; and we walked out regularly on the Saturday afternoons to the banks of Duddingston Loch, discussing in all points of view the subject of the succeeding Wednesday's discussion. He took his medical degree, and soon formed a good practice. I lost sight of him for about a year. One day I received a telegram in England from a mutual friend, another member of the club, in these words—"Poor Walker is dead of typhus fever, caught from a patient. Funeral to-morrow."

I now see the stalwart form of a Highlander, a student at the Normal School, who was indebted for his prominence in our society to a voice so powerful that it always reminded me of Danton. Our audience was never what could properly be called a large one; but this youth, M'Gulgery, who prided himself on his Celtic blood, always spoke as if he were addressing a vast assembly on one of his native hills. His speeches had never great effect, but he was very strong on points of national history, and used to entertain us with lively descriptions of battles in which our countrymen had been victorious, often without much reference to the subject immediately before our attention. His range extended from Bannockburn to Prestonpans; and he used to invite us to accompany him to the latter place on the

Saturday, that he might explain with clearness the disposition of Charles Edward's forces. He ultimately retired to take charge of a school in a remote glen in the Highlands, where he spent his leisure time in writing histories of the surrounding glens. His chief delight there has been to gather the pupils around him every Saturday on one of the adjoining hills, and range them in the order in which Robert the Bruce marshalled his men before the battle of Bannockburn, discoursing with manifest pleasure on the havoc produced among the English troops.

The deeply-cut letters, "T. Wilson," graven in the oak wainscoting, remind me of the most juvenile member of our club, who, although he never contributed anything of solid value to our speculations, would have been more missed from our debates than any of the rest. He was the drollest character I ever met with, and the order of his mind was essentially original from the bottom. His countenance was naturally contorted into a broad smile—you could not say whether sarcastic or imbecile—and his head altogether was not unlike one of those grotesquely hideous figures above the gate of an old cathedral. He was always restless—drawing fanciful sketches with a pencil, tearing up a book, or swallowing whisky, which he brought with him in a flask and drank in great quantities without any apparent effect. It was in one of his more restless moods that he inscribed his name on the wall. He never did anything seriously, and might be regarded as the jester of our company. His studies had all

been confined to comic literature, but this he used to read in great quantities, and, strange to say, in several tongues. He had no feeling or sense of any kind except for the ridiculous, and to this he sacrificed everything. The most pathetic image he would convert, by a few touches, into a humorous picture, and cause you to laugh heartily while you were inclined to weep. He possessed the highest intellectual gifts. He conversed in classical language without trying to do so, and even without knowing it. When he spoke, his speeches—in which he did not always deal very directly with the question at issue—combined the laughing cynicism of Swift, the witty subtlety of Fielding, and the vigorous coarseness of Smollet. Rabelais was his favourite author and constant companion. After he left the society he went out to Jamaica, to take possession of an estate left him by his uncle. When he had been there about a year he sent a long letter to the club, which I am glad to find bound with the minutes, written exactly in the style in which he used to speak. It is a passionless, chilly production, and is chiefly devoted to describing the delight he derives from thrashing the natives with a peculiar long pole, which he had had constructed expressly for the purpose. The letter is accompanied by pen and ink sketches, illustrating the different modes of using the novel instrument of torture, and affording a full-length view of the machine itself.

A contrast to Wilson (or, the Curé of Meudon, as we used to call him) was found in Davidson, a young

man of about twenty-five, who was studying for the ministry. The seriousness of his features never relaxed. He applied himself to his studies with an assiduity which would have killed him, if he had not been possessed of a powerful frame. He exhibited a strange weakness for discovering (without any marked originality of mind) new readings of the Scriptures and the Classics, which he found not only specially applicable, but actually having allusion to the circumstances of modern times. If in order to prove his construction, any considerable alteration in the text was necessary, he never failed to make it, attributing the present erroneous renderings to the errors of commentators and transcribers. The ingenuity which he displayed in his researches excited our admiration, but seldom won our assent to his theories. This extraordinary faculty led him into the regions of prophecy, and in after life he succeeded by his earnestness and talents in obtaining a number of followers, who formed themselves into a distinct sect named after their teacher. Without being a fanatic, the constitution of his mind exhibited a number of the elements of fanaticism. His theories received very inconsiderate treatment at the hands of Wilson. To this day I occasionally burst out laughing in society when I am suddenly reminded by some passing circumstance of the Curé's droll sayings in regard to the "new readings," at a time when it would be altogether impossible for me to explain the subject of my mirth.

I again see before me, at the bottom of the table, the figure of an Irishman who was studying medicine at

the University, also a member of our body. Although his visage was deeply scarred by small-pox, it was the very embodiment of humour and good-nature. His speeches were of a highly-flavoured Hibernian sort, but were often truly eloquent. His special peculiarity was a knack of proving that almost every question proposed afforded legitimate scope for a treatise on Irish affairs; but I must admit that few were inclined to interpose the point of order, as the sayings of this thoroughly representative thinker from the other side of the Channel had always a charm for us, who rarely at any other time had an opportunity of hearing a statement from his point of view. He used to fall into some glorious blunders, of which one remains distinctly in my mind. He always took occasion to enumerate what he called the five noble houses of Ireland; but I observed that although he never forgot to mention his own among them, his list of the other four varied on every occasion that he spoke.

A crowd of other faces is before me, and the tones of familiar voices ring in my ear; but I could trace no characteristics that would lead the stranger to sympathise with me in the tender sadness with which I regard these visions of the past. It is only to myself that I can awaken the old memories. After hours of silent regret, and even softer emotions, I reluctantly turn from the altar of my pilgrimage, with a strong presentiment that I have looked upon it for the last time.

EDINBURGH STUDENT LIFE.

“ Oh ! alte Burschenherrlichkeit
Wohin bist du geschwunden ?
Nie kehrst du wieder gold'ne Zeit
So frei und ungebunden.
Vergebens spaeh' ich umher
Ich finde deine Spur nicht mehr.
O quae mutatio rerum ! ”

German Students' Song.

THOUGH the ordinary observer might be somewhat impressed at a first glance with the outward staidness and even solemnity of demeanour exhibited by Scotch students in general, he would find on familiar acquaintance with them, that scholars attending the Scotch universities do not differ much, after all, from students everywhere else. They have, however, their own peculiar traits, and their sober bearing is one that probably owes its origin to the characteristics of their country. There is no place where the city life is so blended with the scholastic, and yet so distinct from it, as it is in Edinburgh. The lofty, grey walls of the University—dingy and dead-like as they appear to the common passer-by, sombre and venerable as they seem to the student—look out upon the very centre of the city throng. Its austere presence sheds a lustre of academic calmness upon the busy streets around, and over the whole area of the Old Town, whose

numerous libraries and book-stalls derive their existence from the intellectual activity within its walls. Generally speaking, its influence on the surrounding life is depressing. When the classes are in full operation, the procession of students that pass along the bridge, is mournful, if not funereal in effect. The young men themselves look as if they were suffering intensely, but were resolved to support their anguish with silent resignation. The sudden transition from the High School to the University must be very trying to a junior student. Fortunately, however, this strain of seriousness is not constant. It is frequently relieved by an outburst in the class-room before the lecture commences, and outside at certain seasons of the year.

Every student, and indeed every citizen of Edinburgh, is familiar with the famous snow-ball encounters which used to stop legitimate traffic in the neighbourhood of the University, and give to all the streets about the aspect of a besieged city. Leaving out of view the fact that the shopkeepers' windows were usually shattered ruthlessly by stray missiles, the only serious objections to these annual wars was that as operations were conducted on a great scale, the comparatively harmless ammunition that came from the heavens used to run short, and then the harder projectiles found on the earth were hurled without scruple into the ranks of either side. The battles were regarded with deep interest by the inhabitants of the town, but, it must be admitted, with the greatest approval by those who resided at the farthest point

from the theatre of war. After the fight the activity evinced on either side was celebrated by ballads, which sold in large numbers in the lower quarters of the city. I can remember a portion of one of these, which enjoyed a vast popularity at one time. After recounting the daring exploits of the young philosophers, the poet burst into the following enthusiastic refrain :—

“ Hurrah for the College,
That old seat of knowledge,
Where Science and Frolic agree;
With sticks and stones
We may break a few bones,
But—we'll mend them all after the 'spree.' ”

Collectors of chap-books can exhibit bundles of equally brilliant effusions in the same strain. I have observed of them, that they were usually couched in terms of general admiration of the courage and skill exhibited on either side, without awarding the victory either to the students or to the youths of the town. There is now reason to believe that in consequence of the strong measures adopted by the authorities to suppress these combats, they can never be renewed on the same scale as formerly.

Among the students these and similar street displays of boisterousness have become less frequent and less fashionable of late years—probably receding before the ever-advancing tide of “ Respectability ”—but the balance is preserved by an increased vigour and recklessness being introduced to the class-room exhibitions.

As we have already indicated, the existence of the Edinburgh student is in the main serious and serene. How smooth and unexciting his life compared with that of a student at a French or German university! Yet what Scotsman who has experienced the foreign fashions does not return with deeper affection for his own that he has at first felt inclined to depreciate? Take the student who, after taking his degrees at Edinburgh, passes a year at a famous university in each of the countries I have named. How novel and dazzling he finds it at first, and how many new charms does he discover to astonish and fascinate him!

Is there anything more delightful than the life around the Sorbonne? In the blazing summer sun, the dreamy lounges in the shady parts of the Luxembourg gardens; the palace in the distance, with its old historical pavilions, familiar to his imagination years before he saw them; the groves and flower-beds, and statuary, and glittering ponds; the long avenues abounding in every variety of strange life, from the sentinel pacing gravely in front of the porch to the infant creeping cautiously on the lawn. The explorations round the Pantheon in the boundless forests of books—the literature of a people who have lived, and thought, and fought as if the world he has just left had never existed at all. Then, his new companions, their child-like exuberance of gaiety, so different from the demure earnestness of his old friends. The winter evenings spent in the brilliant concert-café, or in the dingy room of the lodging-house, in a group of grim Bacchanalians, dancing wildly round the blazing punch-bowl.

Or the quaintly-furnished Kneipe of the German university, with the eternal torrent of bairisch Bier. The associations of this life are more of an anecdotal character, however, than of a delirious abandonment to charming social influences. The witty drinking songs, at first sounding loose or childish to a Scotch ear. The kindly matron, owner of the Kneipe, and "mother" of all the students. But, above all, the funny "old student," who had attended the classes about twenty years, and had during that time kept everybody laughing at his drollery. The recollection of the old student was perhaps the most interesting and vivid which the young man carried with him. The adventures and peculiar habits of this extraordinary scholar were known to everybody at the university. He had not always moved about so placidly, attending his classes with strict punctuality, and calmly drinking his beer and smoking his pipe in the centre of a delighted circle of younger men. When he was about twenty-four years of age, his father, after repeated threats, cut off his supplies; and he was then obliged to leave the university and seek his fortunes abroad. He joined the United States army, and fought against the Indians. His story, told almost daily at the Kneipe, was that in one of his expeditions he was captured by a band of Indians, who brought him to their village, and made immediate preparations to put him to death, after their usual manner. He sat impassively resigned to his fate, upon the trunk of a tree round which they had assembled. When all was ready for despatching

him, the savages began to chant solemnly the song of their tribe reserved for such occasions. When the first words struck on the ear of the doomed man, what was his astonishment to recognise in the melody, one of his favourite drinking songs.

“ Oh ! alte Burschenherrlichkeit,
Wohin bist du geschwunden ?
Nie kehrst du wieder gold'ne Zeit,
So frei und ungebunden.
Vergebens spaeh' ich umher
Ich finde deine Spur nicht mehr.”

But surprise soon gave way to an illusion produced by a freak of memory. In a moment he supposed himself to be in the familiar Kneipe, and he joined in the chorus as heartily as any of the other singers :—

“ O jemini ! O jerum !
O quae mutatio rerum ! ”

The Indians suddenly drew themselves up in silent amazement, and desired him to finish the song by himself, which he did with great spirit. The result was a council among the chiefs of the tribe, who soon returned to him with an intimation that he had been pardoned, as it was supposed that he must have been possessed of some kind of supernatural power, to discover a full knowledge of the mysterious chant of their tribe, after hearing which no white man was permitted to live. The intended victim afterwards set himself about discovering how the tribe had become possessed of a composition of which they

manifestly did not comprehend the import. He ultimately learned from one of the doctors that it had been taught to them by a German philosopher who had fallen into their hands, and who had recommended it to them as a potent incantation to summon the evil spirit when they desired to hand over to him one of their enemies. The "old student" ultimately regained his liberty, of which he availed himself, learning that his father was dead, to come and take possession of his small estate, and to resume his old habits, which it was his intention to indulge for the rest of his life. He was always accompanied by his dog, which, by the way, could drink more beer than any of the other dogs at the university, just as its master could drink more than any of the other students. Such is an indication of one of the impressions of the social life at a German school that dwell in the mind of the Edinburgh student.

But does he not return to his country tired of foreign ways, and with fonder remembrances of his own college? Does he not revisit the old haunts with greater interest and sadder pleasure after his Continental experience? Does he not pace the quadrangle, that now appears to him so small, with a more solemn footstep, and enter the class-rooms with greater respect than before. The purpose of this paper is to awaken some of the reminiscences suggested by the retrospective glance of such a wanderer.

Looking back upon my college companions, I

must, however, pass over the vein richest to me in touching recollections,—I must omit all mention of my private friends, and divide the mass of my fellow scholars into classes. In doing so I shall speak of them not as they were separated into sections in the class-rooms, but rather according to their private character, tastes, and pursuits.

There was one knot of young men that occur to me first, probably because they were the most eccentric body of the whole throng, and were always to me a very interesting study. They were of different ranks and of different degrees of intelligence, but they possessed a common affinity, which drew them to one place and to one another. The object of their idolatry was the stage,—not the drama in its literary sense, not the ancient classics, or the modern master-pieces, but simply the stage as it appeared to their eyes. The different faculties contributed to this infatuated group, but votaries from the Arts predominated. Their favourite meeting-place was a small tavern adjoining the theatre, where they assembled in full force every forenoon, as the hours of their respective classes allowed, and again without fail in the evening, in good time to be at the door of the pit before the performance commenced. A careful investigation as to the antecedents of these students proved that most of them had lately been brought within reach of a theatre for the first time in their lives, and that only one or two were natives of Edinburgh. When I became acquainted with them first, I took a special delight in watching their move-

nents, thinking that I had discovered a refined society of lovers of our old drama. I was first made aware of my error by a visit to the lodgings of the most enthusiastic among them. I looked with great curiosity at his library, expecting to see a fine stock of choice plays, a class of books that I always examine with deep interest. After making my way through heaps of dramatic newspapers and portraits of notable actors and actresses (the former always arrayed in the garb of brigands, and the latter without any garments at all worth mentioning), I came upon whole shelves of modern productions, nearly all stitched in paper, and marked "acting edition." A very large proportion of these were called "burlesques," and contained italicised words in each line indicating that the sound corresponded with that of other words in the next line also italicised. From some conversation I held with the proprietor of the collection, I found that his view of the province of the stage at the present time was, that all the passions and emotions of human nature having been exhaustively portrayed by ancient and modern dramatists, the men of talent of this generation had allotted to them only the task of ridiculing the productions of former ages, and causing us to laugh at the most serious passages, by giving them a comic turn. He explained that in the course of time, perhaps some ages hence, people would begin to tire of this class of wit; and that then, but not before, the serious writer would have a chance of a place on the stage. Following this gentleman and his companions to their haunt,

I found that this was the prevailing opinion, and that it had been derived from no less an authority than the leading "walking gentleman" of the "stock company." This artiste, it must be observed in passing, was generally regarded among them as the first living exponent of dramatic principles, only giving way in these matters to the authority of the manager himself. I made a point of going to see him on one occasion, with the view of ascertaining the merits of his pretensions to the high position he occupied. I found him to be a dreamy-looking young gentleman, with large eyes and a powerful moustache. I noticed that he never under any circumstances parted with his hat, which he always wore on the fore part of his head, with the brim touching the eyebrows. He was daily to be seen in the back parlour of the tavern before referred to, but it was a difficult matter to obtain an introduction to him, as he was perpetually surrounded by a large circle of admiring disciples, to whom he discoursed languidly, generally with his eyes half closed. To be allowed to pay for his next bottle of wine was an honour to be remembered, and one for which I found it useless to contend. What added to the gravity of his utterances and threw all possibility of rivalry out of the question was the fact that he was admitted to the society of the distinguished London actors who visited the city and could bring their opinions (communicated to himself in private conversation) to support any proposition he desired to establish. An additional charm if not the most potent one which he possessed, wa

his intimacy with all the ladies of the company, with some one or other of whom every member of the theatrical circle of students was desperately in love. It was not uninstrusive to watch their faces when the actresses were spoken of. Each of the young men would have a question to ask regarding some one of these female divinities, and he did so with a nervously assumed indifference of tone, which proclaimed to the hearer his state of mind on the subject. It was not till many years had passed away that they discovered that the ideal attributes with which they invested the objects of their admiration were but the outcome of a fancy glowing with images of beauty and purity. But apart from the transient spell exercised by the rising of the green screen, were the more serious students altogether free from such illusions? Can we now look out over the waters of the Forth, or down on the old Abbey from the summit of Arthur's Seat, without remembering the long solitary walks in the early summer mornings, following sleepless nights, when the bewitching dream made the pulses fly deliriously, until it daily vanished before the mill-round of common work. I had ever a sympathy with the stage-loving youths, and I remarked that they were not the people of the meanest nature when tried in the world.

The political students were more divided according to the old schools of politics, than the modern ones. They had hardly recognised the forms produced by recent revolutions of the state kaleidoscope. If we were to seek deep the principle of their divisions, we

should find that they might have been called Jacobites and Whigs. The reason of this was probably that the literature that interests the Scotch student is imbued with the spirit of Jacobitism or Whiggism, while modern politics has really no literature at all. Before having a literature an event must possess a history; and the time has not yet arrived for writing the history of modern politics. But even if they possessed a history, the political struggles of recent days are wanting in the most important element of a literature in this sense—the element of romance. There is little that is seductive, and nothing at all poetical in the mere record of popular agitations. The augmentation of a list of voters, or the repeal of a tax, however important, does not present to the young mind an attraction like the overthrow of a dynasty or the change of a national creed. To the juvenile university politician the scene of the last great event of Scottish history was Culloden Moor. Although it might not be openly acknowledged, or even perhaps perfectly understood, this was really the battle-ground of their debates. As they advanced in years, if they were “practical men,” they changed their standpoint, and adopted that of the larger community which had absorbed their national characteristics; but if they remained students to the end of their days, as Sir Walter Scott did, they continued to apply the old principle to the newest question. The politicians of the University were a small body, and they only occasionally came into prominence. They did not form any united society, and even the

hottest advocates on either side were frequently unknown to each other. They were distributed amongst the debating clubs of the city, and spent their leisure time in perusing the newspapers and reading up history, in order to prepare themselves for the discussions.

The most considerable body of students following one line of study from pure love of the subject, consisted of those who interested themselves in ecclesiastical affairs. There were more animation and fire in their discussions than were to be found anywhere else. The extent of their agreement on all points affecting the doctrines of religion and the government of the church was marvellous to a stranger; but this was nothing as compared with the extent of their differences on subsidiary points. They were familiar with the theological controversies of all times and countries, but their great turning point of modern history was the "Disruption." That event was to them what the French Revolution was to European politicians. Their debates were wholly unintelligible to any one but a highly-educated and profoundly-read Scotchman.

Within my knowledge several ineffectual attempts were made by strangers to place themselves on a level with the ordinary student of the Edinburgh Divinity Hall in church matters. One of these was made by a Canadian Episcopalian, who came all the way from Toronto for the purpose. Having failed, he devoted a large portion of his time, when he returned to his native country, to researches, with the view of proving

that amongst all barbarous, uncivilised peoples, disputations on subtle points of theology were of common occurrence; and that wherever these were indulged in, they might be taken as a certain indication of a low type of intellect. In a pamphlet which this gentleman published on the subject, he declared that there was a strong desire amongst the members of some of the religious denominations in Scotland to unite themselves in one body, and that they had only been prevented from doing so by one insuperable difficulty. The difficulty, he said, consisted in this, that none of their most learned doctors could say, with absolute certainty, what was the difference between their creeds, or even whether there was really any difference at all. Another similar case came under my observation. It was that of an English student, a Dissenter, who became so much interested in the general history of Scottish Presbyterianism, that with the view of fully comprehending it in all its branches, he spent a session at the Edinburgh University. He obtained introductions to several of the most profound reasoners attached to the various denominations, and set himself earnestly to work to discover their principles. He attended ecclesiastical meetings of all kinds, including the regular debates of a religious association; but the more he applied himself to the subject, the more he became confused. At length he was forcibly removed from the scene of his troubles by his southern friends, who saw that he was rapidly qualifying himself for a prolonged residence in Morningside Asylum. But to the practised ecclesiastical disputant of Edinburgh,

the perplexities that threatened such serious consequences to this rash Englishman were a source of pleasure and recreation.

This class of students spent their evenings in scanning carefully the proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts, which were reported at great length in certain Scotch newspapers, and they looked forward all the year to the meeting of the General Assemblies in May. When that event took place they might be seen in the galleries, when the House was almost empty, and when all the public visitors had retired to rest, listening with unwavering attention to the discussion of a point of order, or the interpretation of an old Act of Assembly, as applied to a point of discipline in the church.

Although there is no Boulevard St. Michel, and no Jardin du Luxembourg at Edinburgh, the city may be said to have formerly possessed a "student's quarter." Leaving the castle behind, and proceeding by Hanover Street, across Princes Street and Queen Street, through the Queen Street Gardens, and down past Northumberland Street and Great King Street (I cannot help dwelling on the route thus particularly, it is engraved so distinctly in my memory), you arrive at a somewhat sombre, narrow thoroughfare running right and left, which looks dismally monotonous in its uniformity. This is Cumberland Street, where the students from the country dwelt in great numbers before they began to take up their abode in the more lively new roads and terraces on the south side of the city. It is a locality inviting to study, having a quiet

and contemplative air, and indeed was chiefly frequented by the meditative student. Here the scholar may read in peace, and in the early evening ramble forth past the solemn villas and overhanging trees of Inverleith Row (without encountering any of that noise and bustle that breaks the thread of reflection in a sensitive mind), until he arrives at an elevated plateau near Trinity, where he has the sweet Forth with its deserted islands stretching out before him, and behind the graceful city, smiling pensive in her eternal mantle of grey. It is to this place that Edinburgh poets must have come to dream, and her philosophers to ponder, for it is the straight and lonely pathway to the sea.

Respecting the social life of the Edinburgh students, their gaiety does not take the form exhibited at the Continental universities. There are no brilliantly illuminated *cafés* like the *Molière*, and no fantastic *Kneipen*, such as those in the vicinity of the German universities. The social eruptions are nothing to compare with those at Heidelberg or around the Sorbonne. But the rejoicings that follow the examinations are such as would astonish disbelievers in Scotch sociality. One custom that savours of the last century is fast disappearing. It was a mode of celebrating an academical success, which consisted, in the first place, in the fortunate candidate inviting his friends to supper. After the repast, he placed a large supply of various inspiriting drinks (including, of course, a considerable quantity of the "white wine of the country"), locked his door, and refused to allow

any one of his guests to depart, under any pretence whatever, before everything before them was drunk up. The bare recollection of the agonies that succeeded such a rejoicing prevents me from writing another line.

POPULAR FALLACIES CONCERNING AN IMPORTANT INSTITUTION.

UNLESS my reader be in the pettifogging solicitor line (and I hope, for his future welfare, that he is not), it is a hundred to one that he never was inside a Small Debt Court. I don't mean one of your bran new County Courts with the ornamental ceiling and glass doors, and all the arrangements so ingeniously contrived that you can't hear a word spoken at a distance greater than three yards. There you have the sedate and slovenly old judge, whose mind is completely engrossed in his business, perched on an exalted throne, and underneath, the trim young recorder, whose mind is a long way off the huge volume before him, and the proceedings conducted in such a formal melancholy way, that you are instantly reminded of a "superior" civil tribunal, and a chill runs through your frame. It has been my misfortune to pass many dreary hours in one of these dismal retreats, and the only circumstance which prevented a total collapse of animation during those hours was the fixed contemplation of an object which presented itself on every court day—an object of ever fresh and changing beauty. This was the under garment of the learned recorder, who was obliged to concentrate on that part of his attire

the taste in fanciful pattern and design for which he was well known, and which he was prohibited from exercising in the upper parts of his dress by reason of his official wig and gown. The sort of Small Debt Courts that I mean, are those such as are to be seen in Scotland to this day. These are presided over by sheriffs without any wigs or gowns, who seem to be not altogether devoid of some little sympathy with human affairs. Their conduct of business has not that gloomy, saddening air that renders a court of law so distasteful to an ordinary citizen; there is a natural activity about it which sometimes seems to rise even to liveliness. It is my purpose in this paper to dispel some of the prejudices existing in the vulgar popular mind on this subject, and to shew that such a court as I am describing may be resorted to by the person of refined mind as a place of rational and profitable entertainment.

It is generally supposed that the parties to be met with in the Small Debt Court belong to the very lowest class of society—people who run up little accounts with grocers and drapers, without the means or the intention of paying them. There never was a more absurd or a more dangerous error. You may attend for a dozen court days without seeing such a person. The fact is that this class of debtors never think it worth while to answer a summons, but calmly allow decree to be pronounced in their absence, knowing very well that it can never be put in force to any practical effect. You may chance occasionally to hear what you might term a shabby kind of case,

but it is quite the exception. The company is usually orderly and respectable, and no fears need be entertained on this account.

This being Wednesday, we might take a turn into our Small Debt Court in Edinburgh; the building is very near the centre of the city, and can't take you far out of your way. It is within a few minutes of the opening time, and there is a large muster of parties to causes and witnesses. Pretty respectable-looking people those, are they not? quite genteel. The fact is, the miserable creatures lounging about the passages will be called up by and by; but it never crosses their minds that they would be permitted to enter the precincts of the court until they are called, when they come up trembling, as if they were about to receive, I was going to say, sentence of death, but rather, let us suppose, sentence of prolongation of their present wretched existence. Besides, they are more happy in the lobbies; the gaze of the officer whose business it is to close the doors, and who is knocked aside by the petty tradesman, holds them in terror. The company inside, however, are not much awed by the majestic voice of the door shutter, nor do they seem broken in spirit by the prospect of their approaching ordeal, or they would never keep the court in such a din with their stupid jokes and laughter. But hark! a solemn voice proclaims "The Sheriff," and presently all is still as a pickpockets' festive gathering at the entrance of a policeman. His lordship places his back to the fire, and supports a coat-tail in each hand, while the names

of parties are being called. It's a very short list to-day—only sixty-five cases. The clerk reads the names with a marvellous fluency and despatch, which are only the result of long practice, and his lordship cries out at intervals, "Discern," "Absolve," as if it were a part of the process of warming himself. In a few minutes the list of causes to be heard is reduced to the number of six, the parties to all the others having lost their case by failing to appear, or having on second thoughts come to an arrangement with their adversaries. Two or three of the cases remaining to be heard will give us a notion of the general character of the business of this court.

The first that stands for hearing seems to be of uncommon importance, for the pursuer has retained Mr. M'Wheedlim, the advocate, whose forensic talents entitle him to the first place in the inferior courts. This gentleman is the author of that famous work, *The Sheriff-Substitute Clerk's Instructor*; and his knowledge of the law relating to shebeens renders it a point of great consequence for the parties in such cases to secure his services. The revenue he derives from his extensive police and sheriff court practice is said to be enormous. On the cause, M'Dougall v. M'Snougall being called, he steps forward and makes a short confidential statement to the sheriff, which does not occupy more than a quarter of an hour in delivery, and is to the effect that he desires the case to stand over for a short time, in order that one of the leading witnesses, who

has been detained on his way from Leith, in consequence of the breaking down of an omnibus, may be present. This request being granted, he goes into the lobby, (where he has just left the witness in question,) and proceeds to make himself acquainted with the points in dispute.

M'Snail *v.* Whippim is next called. The pursuer is represented by the eminent solicitor Mr. M'Crawl, who acknowledges no superior in this department of law but the great M'Wheedlim himself; and the defender Whippim appears on his own behalf. You wouldn't suppose from Mr. M'Crawl's threadbare coat and deferential demeanour that his income doubles that of many a flourishing high-class agent; but his humble appearance is one of the most potent strokes of his policy—it renders him easy of access to his peculiar class of clients. Mr. Whippim, who smells strongly of brandy, is a stable-looking person with a red face: the most prominent article of his dress is a huge scarf-pin, representing a well-mounted hunter clearing a five-bar gate. The question in this case is, whether defender is to be forced to refund the sum of ten pounds which he obtained from pursuer for a pointer dog. Mr. M'Crawl stated that when his client paid the ten pounds to defender, it was on the distinct understanding that the sum would be returned if the pointer did not prove itself a well-trained animal; and as, on the contrary, it had turned out a worthless creature, and had exhibited symptoms of a chronic disease in the lungs, he contended that the money should be refunded. The sheriff asks

the defender if those were the terms of the bargain. That gentleman only utters an exclamation of amazement, and expresses himself altogether startled to hear that such a condition was ever mentioned in his agreement with the pursuer. After exhausting vehement gesticulation to give vent to his surprise at the audacious villany of such a plea as had been stated by Mr. M'Crawl, Mr. Whippim, in a calm, confident voice, asks the sheriff just to look at him, and consider whether he looked like a man who would enter into such an absurd transaction. He further desired the sheriff to look at M'Snail, the other party (who was trying to shelter himself behind his agent from the gaze of the court), and conscientiously declare whether he didn't look like a man capable of any degree of roguery. The sheriff seemed to think that the speculations to which he was invited, however curious they might be from a phrenological point of view, had little relevancy to the question in the summons, and directed that the witnesses should be sworn and examined. The result of the evidence was, that Mr. M'Crawl, with all his skill, failed to establish his case, and Whippim left the court with the ten pounds in his pocket, the very picture of triumphant virtue.

An aged, poorly clad man, called Corkle, described as a bottlewasher, appears at the instance of the Poor-law authorities, on a charge of failing to maintain a helpless father; and his plea is that he is unable to afford anything for that purpose, although quite willing to do so if he could. The Poor-law officer

shews the court that the earnings of the defaulter cannot be less on an average than sixteen shillings a week, and with that he has to support only a wife and five children. The sheriff at once grants an order against Corkle, reminding him, however, that he has a remedy at law for payment of part of the sum against two brothers, one of whom is in America and the other in South Africa.

The next person who takes his place in the box as defender is a sporting young gentleman of about twenty-five. He seems proud of his prominent position, and resolved to take advantage of it. Having gathered himself up into an imposing attitude, and gracefully disposed of his hands over the side of the box, he winks towards two benches of his friends who have assembled to hear the case, and then listens placidly to the statement of the pursuer. That statement shews that he is due a sum of £14, 9s. ; that he had contracted the debt at various periods, extending over three months, and that the articles contained in the account could be divided into three distinct classes—glasses of brandy, bottles of soda water, and cigars. The defender admitted his liability for the sum claimed, only observing that he did not think the items were quite correctly stated. This objection he founded on the fact that the cigars were three in number more than the glasses of brandy; and as his practice was to have at least one glass of brandy to a cigar, he was driven to the conclusion that there was something wrong. The sheriff does not attach much importance to this apparent defect

in the accounts, but at once asks defender why he does not pay his bill. "The same plea as in the last case, your lordship," replies the young gentleman: "inability to pay." This answer excited a titter, which was joined in by the whole court, except the two benches of the speaker's sporting friends. They considered the matter too serious for merriment, each having a considerable interest in the success of such a plea in law applied to his own affairs. If the defender could only get the court to look upon a man in his position as legally unable to meet such a demand, the sum gained by the two sporting benches in similar actions would be incalculable. The sheriff cannot forbear a smile at the novel principle proposed to be introduced to the law of Scotland by the sporting community, and the party interested in the defence look upon that as a favourable omen. "My income," said the defender, evidently intending to push his advantage, "amounts only to £300 a year, and it is paid in half-yearly instalments. It is only three weeks since I received my last instalment; and as I had several heavy accounts to pay, I am reduced at the present moment to a state of absolute beggary." A sympathetic emotion is evinced by the two sporting benches, and the rest of the court bursts into a roar of laughter. The sheriff inhumanly grants an order for instant payment. "At least," said the defender somewhat abashed by the suddenness of the decision, "you will compel my importunate creditor to allow a percentage of"——

The sheriff, who shews himself by his manner to be devoid of all compassion for an unfortunate man struggling against inexorable fate, orders the defender, in a harsh tone, to leave the box. The young gentleman, however, makes a final appeal.

“Considering the amount of patronage, not only my own custom,—but, I assure you, my lord, that which all my friends as well as myself have bestowed on the pursuer”——

At this point he is forcibly dragged from the box by an instrument of tyranny in the form of a menial officer, and he and his friends indignantly stride out of the court in a body, more impressed than ever with the hopelessness of expecting justice from a legal tribunal.

And now the court takes up the adjourned case of *M'Dougall v. M'Snougall*, and once more the eloquent *M'Wheedlim* and the subtle *M'Crawl* stand opposed to each other, each supported by his clerk, and on either side a formidable array of authorities, in all varieties of binding, which look as if they also were eager for the combat. The consummate skill of *M'Wheedlim* has enabled him to compress his examination of the chief witness into three-quarters of an hour, and he is handed over to the powerful cross-examination of *M'Crawl*. That gentleman, before commencing, draws himself up exactly as if he were in a legal gown, and slowly re-arranges the seals hanging to his watch-chain—his manner of inspiring a witness with that fear and suspense which are the first essential elements of a complete break-down.

"Having admitted," slowly articulates Mr. M'Crawl, "that you have two clerks, which one of them left your employment before the date of the disputed account, has the other one prepared a correct summary of the state of your affairs?"

The first question staggers the miserable prevaricator. Vainly does he pretend that the question is not put in a clear form. M'Crawl quietly reminds him that he is on his oath, and that his lordship is not to be practised upon. Already he winces—he becomes nervous—and now M'Crawl fastens upon him in earnest.

The other witnesses are equally discomfited by the wily agent. Only once does he meet with a slight check, and even this is but the result of an excess of sharpness. It was in the course of an examination of an elderly lady, who seemed disposed to withhold from him information material to the case of his client.

"In the course of that conversation," said Mr. M'Crawl (we quote from the notes supplied by the shorthand writer), "you referred to the subject of this loan?"—(Answer, Yes.)

"And what did he say in reply?" asked Mr. M'Crawl in his most insinuating tones.

Mr. M'Wheedlim objected to the question.

The witness was removed from the court, while the counsel debated, at great length, the relevancy of the question. Authorities are produced on both sides, and the sheriff seems considerably puzzled; but after the lapse of about an hour, his lordship comes to the con-

clusion that he must allow the question, taking a note, however, of Mr. M'Wheedlim's objection.

The witness having again been placed in the box, Mr. M'Crawl repeats his question with great deliberation, and with a tone of triumph.

"*Now*, tell us what he said when you mentioned the loan?"

"Well," said the witness slowly, "he told me to mind my own business, and ordered me out of the house." (Sensation in court.)

Notwithstanding this reverse, the cross-examinations ran in Mr. M'Crawl's favour. But, on the other hand, his witnesses did not escape M'Wheedlim; and they have only concluded the evidence when the court rises.

The speeches are continued till next court-day; and if my readers feel themselves competent to appreciate forensic eloquence of an order not to be met with every day, we advise them to go and listen for themselves.

THE DOUBLE ELEVATION OF SANDY M'GOUSH.

Nods and winks of mutual understanding and amusement were exchanged across the desk in the area flat of a mansion in the New Town of Edinburgh, when it came to light that Sandy M'Goush was taking lessons in riding. These expressions of sentiment were made among Sandy's fellow-clerks, and in the office where he had spent ten hours a day for the last fifteen years. He had been recently promoted to the head-clerkship of the firm of Wawkin & Spongim, S.S.C., and his old friends and companions were excusably anxious to find matter of amusement at his expense.

Sandy belonged to a large family of small means in the county of Ross-shire, and while a boy distinguished himself by his assiduous industry in pursuits which proved him to be possessed of a peculiarly Scotch cast of intellect. He took naturally to the study of arithmetic, and to that part of geography which treats of the names, dimensions, divisions, and subdivisions of remote districts, and the branches of industry in which the inhabitants are engaged. His punctual attendance at the Sabbath School, and his extensive acquaintance with Scripture names, induced the minister of the parish to recommend him at an early age to his present employers, whose service he entered as apprentice

clerk. Sandy was one of those quiet, dull, plodding youths who, while they tenaciously hold to every immediate advantage within their reach, are yet not animated by any high ambition to improve their position. This class of persons seem quite incapable of forming a project which meditates a rapid rise in life. However favourable an opportunity may offer, they dare not seize it; they can see no possibility of advancing except with slow, steady steps, and by the beaten road. So Sandy M'Goush, when he entered the service of his firm, never dreamed of being so suddenly thrust to such a supreme elevation as he now occupied. Nor had he attained it by the display of any brilliant qualities, unless his being able to repeat the *Law Register* and the *City Directory* by heart comes under that class. He applied himself to his laborious work, which would have utterly disgusted a person with a single idea above "extending" a conveyance, and he did it quickly and well, just because he felt as happy in writing deeds as in doing anything else. And when his occupations outside the office are examined, it won't be in the least surprising that this was the case. His evenings were spent either in scraping melancholy strathspeys out of an unsound violin all by himself in his lodgings; or, worse still, among a group of sad-looking fellow-clerks, who pretended to carry on a conversation, but who really only uttered dismal repetitions of popular comments on the weather and crops. Indeed, one might regard it as a great relief to escape from such company to a lively conveyance of rights of mussel scalps and

other *piscatorum*. But while leading this life Sandy was one of the most happy of men—that is to say, he had almost no desire, no wish for anything that he didn't possess; and he gradually rose in his position in the establishment, till now the head clerk left, and he was suddenly installed in his place. When Sandy heard of his promotion he was thunderstruck—he could hardly realise the fact. “Beyond a doubt,” he reflected, as he began gradually to comprehend his situation, “I am one of those individuals who have greatness thrust upon them.”

On the day when his fellow-clerks were affecting to be amused, as before related, Sandy had been several weeks in his new position. In the meantime his mind was rising with his material elevation. He was carefully freeing himself from the bonds which connected him with his old companions, and had met with some success in his efforts to assume an air of dignity suited to his altered circumstances. He began to feel that he was destined to make a prominent figure, and he saw it was only a matter of time to qualify himself for his proper rank. He set about refining his habits and cultivating his tastes to a higher standard; and the effect was already visible in his appearance and demeanour. While walking into the country one day abstracted by considerations regarding his future line of conduct, he was nearly run over by a horse which was cantering past at a pretty fair speed. On looking up he found that the rider was managing clerk of a firm not nearly as respectably connected as his own; indeed,

he knew for a positive fact that it derived a precarious subsistence from the business of two bankrupt estates. It immediately occurred to him that, as head clerk of the firm of Wawkin & Spongim, he would make no despicable figure mounted on a good horse; and the very next day he arranged for the course of lessons in horsemanship which provoked the envious sneer of the under clerks.

Of this passage in his career, strangely enough, Sandy had only a confused recollection. He remembered going to the riding-school on the first morning, and feeling quite uneasy and helpless as he was taken in charge by a formidable person, whom he learned to be the master. This gentleman looked quite majestic in his French riding boots and spurs; and as he, with an air of dignified condescension, uttered a few encouraging observations with his aristocratic drawl, Sandy felt quite overpowered with a sense of insignificance. The next circumstance which he remembers—and this he won't readily forget—is the look of implacable hostility and contempt directed at him by the fierce charger on whose back he was to be mounted. Beyond that he has no notion of what transpired for an hour, except that he was shaken terribly while describing a series of large circles in space, and that somebody had hold of his coat-tails. Only one sentiment did he give expression to in that time: it was in reply to an observation by his conductor. "Theas no neacessity," said that gentleman patronisingly, "for putting on such a good coat for practising in; you

may get it tawn." "Ne—ne—never mind the co—coat," ejaculated Sandy in a state of great perturbation, "you ho—hold fast;" and he had described one of those perilous circles while giving this injunction. Great was his relief when he was permitted to escape from the presence of that infuriated animal, at whose mercy he had felt himself for what appeared to him to be at least twelve hours. As he walked home, his pleasure was heightened by the consciousness that he had performed some daring feats; and he was overjoyed for the remainder of the day by reflecting on this exhibition of his courage. When he next encountered the gaze of that fierce steed, however, his spirits forsook him, for he could trace in it an expression of deeper hatred and scorn, as if in allusion to the experiences of yesterday. To aid his discomfiture, the magnificent personage who deigned to direct his movements, informed him that on this occasion he must ride by himself. He raised himself to the saddle silently, and took the reins with trembling hands. His steed "Bontarillo" brought him once round the circle with a slow and steady step, doubtless with a view of giving him false confidence, and gloating over his torture. Then, at the signal "trot" from its master, it gave a sudden bound, evidently intended to jerk the rider over its head, and in this it nearly succeeded, for he was leaning pretty well forward when it started. From that moment Sandy remembers nothing of this day's lesson except a prolonged series of jolts and long circles, relieved at intervals by cries of "trot," "walk,"

"trot," from the conductor, delivered in what appeared to be a mocking tone, and with a view to increase his agony. When he next ascended the stirrups he tried to follow his director's instructions to press his knees against the saddle, but found that the exercise of the previous days had deprived him of all pressing power, and that, in short, he had lost control of his legs. The enmity between him and his steed increased on every occasion. In vain he attempted to govern that wild brute by pulling indiscriminately at the reins; the more he exerted himself the more unequivocally did it threaten his destruction by giving a sudden plunge forward and then rearing frightfully, and ultimately he deemed it wise to let it have its own way. Various were the expedients to which the brute resorted in order to intimidate its rider. Besides the sudden darts and springs, which it practised openly, it had recourse to more direct attacks when the eye of the conductor was turned another way. Now it would wheel round in a series of short circles, apparently with the object of rendering its rider giddy; and then, feeling that it had thus brought him completely within its power, it would get into a corner and dash itself against the wall, resolved at least to break his leg, though it should injure itself in the attempt. But notwithstanding these difficulties, Sandy practised every day, and at length came to believe that he was an excellent rider, if he only had a reasonably well-disposed animal to deal with. This opinion was primarily based on observations of the conductor's tone, which had been

daily altering, and which was now completely changed from what it was at first. In his early lessons, Sandy had been almost driven mad by the constantly recurring "Sit back," "Close your knees," "Keep your heels down," launched at him in a highly authoritative tone by his imperious director. The repetitions of these orders, however, diminished day by day, until they ceased altogether. The delighted pupil put a construction on this which was reasonable in itself, but quite unwarranted by the fact. Sandy naturally believed the directions were no longer required; but his instructor confided to a sporting friend, who had dropped in for leaping practice, that "That fellow" (shaking his head languidly towards his pupil) "would never be a rider, and there was no use wasting one's lungs in speaking." By way of jocular description he added, "He's one of those fellows who are born to lie on a horse's neck, and kick out as if they were swimming for the Humane Society's medal." So it came about that one morning the gentleman with the spurs didn't condescend to call out once, and that very day Sandy intimated that he didn't find it convenient to attend the school any longer.

The Saturday following this assurance to Sandy of his complete proficiency in the art of riding was a beautiful summer day; and as the roads about the city were thronged with pedestrians enjoying the fresh air and looking about them, and as he had a tolerably good notion of where he might accidentally meet a certain young lady, he thought he could not do better than have out a horse for a couple of hours.

Accordingly he went to a stable where he learned they kept good horses for hire, and set about making inquiries with a view of getting into action as quickly as possible. In the midst of a forest of horses, and ponies, and vehicles, and harnesses, and a variety of leather belts and buckles, there were a number of grooms and idle lads loitering about, but he could find nobody to give him the information he wanted. Everybody's attention seemed divided between an opening into the public thoroughfare on one side, and an opening into a backyard on the other. By the latter passage a stream of evil looking youngsters kept pouring into the stableyard with pots of porter, which were instantly consumed by the bystanders the moment they made their appearance. To several of these Sandy addressed himself in turn, but from each his questions met with a direct evasion, and he finally gave himself up to contemplating the scene. He thought the retainers of the stable were strangely occupied, and wondered whether they spent all their business hours in this way. At length his eye lighted on a gentleman of betting appearance in a corner, who was moving about unsteadily, and addressing himself in vehement language to the only object near him—an empty dog-cart—"Have I not ordered you," he said, giving it a dig in the wheel with a silver-headed riding whip, "have I not ordered you again and again to groom that beast? Well, I won't tell you again, but I'll be"—at this point Sandy's attention was arrested by a shrill whistle, and on looking round he observed

that the boys with the empty pots disappeared instantly, and everybody in the yard seized hold of the object nearest him—the tram of a conveyance, a horse's leg, or a leather strap—and fell to rubbing it with all his might, and puffing violently. On looking in the direction of the opening into the public thoroughfare, towards which point all eyes were glancing surreptitiously, he observed approaching a person with a ferocious countenance and top boots, whom he judged to be the master of the establishment. "You, Watkins, you lazy scoundrel, leave ago of that"—the new-comer bawled out in a savage tone,—“leave ago of it, and you go and look after the Graceful Witch of the Haunted Glen,” which Sandy understood to refer to an animal in the stables. After he had addressed similar observations to each of the other men, and seemed to be at leisure for a moment, our friend made up to him, and timidly inquired, if he had in the stables a horse that might be had for a couple of hours. “Oh yes,” he replied, turning sharply on the questioner, and casting at him a somewhat scornful glance, “several: why?” Our friend intimated in a tone of assumed carelessness that he wished to go out for a ride. “And as to terms,” he cautiously added—for he was one of those persons who have very definite notions of the value of money, and he wouldn't enter into a bargain without knowing the conditions. “As to terms,” said the proprietor surlily, as if he had been personally insulted, “my terms is 4s. an hour, and less than that no horse ever will go out of my stables. You awkward

ass, Brooks, upon my soul if you hurt that beast I'll dash out your brains with this spoke." On Sandy's assuring him that he offered no objection to his rates, he roared at the top of his voice to one of his subordinates at the other end of the yard, "Saddle Tilly for this gentleman," and sprang off to administer a rebuke in his gentle manner to another whom he observed to stop at his work in order to put into his mouth a doubled-up cake of smuggled tobacco. Sandy walked in the direction of Tilly, and made strict inquiries of the groom as to the habits of that animal. The report he received was that it was of a peaceable disposition, except the curb was applied, in which case its habit was to rear, retreat a few paces, and bolt off. It was, however, the quietest animal in the stables, and with a little management could be got to go quite mildly. "You may find him a little fresh," his informant added, "as we haven't been able to get out with him much lately; but if he breaks off, just you give him a good hill, and he'll soon come to." This communication rather alarmed our friend, especially that relating to the curb—for the truth is, he had rather a dim notion of which was the curb. However, he said in a gay tone, "Ah, just so; I see;" intending the groom to understand that he knew exactly how to deal with such a case as *that*. "This curb," he remarked, thinking to artfully extract a bit of useful intelligence, without compromising his reputation, "seems to be a little tight." "No; it's all right; but the other is the curb; the one with the buckle is

the snaffle." "Yes, I meant that," said Sandy; and he moved out of the yard without having deceived the groom in the least as to his knowledge of horsemanship.

He moved quietly along the street leading from the stables, and soon began to feel what every rider must have experienced, that it's a much easier matter to ride on the road than within the cramped area of a school, where your movements consist of an incessant turning of corners. His confidence increased as he went on, and by the time he got into the leading roads, he thought it would be impossible to discover that he was out with a horse for the first time. His only difficulty was about the reins, for he wasn't quite sure whether he held them too slack or too tight, and then, doubled as they were over his hands, he felt some trouble in discovering which was the one with the buckle and which the other. He couldn't but reflect, too, that there was this advantage about the school, that if the animal shewed any inclination to run off, there was little danger of its going far. Dispelling such thoughts, however, Sandy held boldly on in his course, and even ventured a slight tentative tap on the shoulder with his elegant riding-whip. Only once at this stage of his progress did he feel a little dubious, and that was while passing a point which is the crucial test of a young rider—a cab-stand. Has the reader never felt in his early equestrian experiences something like a tremor of terror in similar circumstances? There they stand, those cabmen, all in a row, ready to seize ruthlessly on the slightest indica-

tion of weakness, with a view to hold up the unfortunate subject to universal scorn ! And Sandy, for all his show of coolness, thought he could trace something like a grin on the features of more than one of these heartless critics. To prove how groundless were their suspicions, he was tempted to a second application of his whip ; but this proceeding was productive of some disquiet to himself, for he immediately remarked signs of commotion in the conduct of his horse. To appease its apparent indignation he patted it several times on the neck, when it resumed its quiet pace, adopting, however, a more independent attitude. Henceforth it chose the roughest part of the road to walk in, and always passed an obstruction on the wrong side. Sandy viewed these signs of inward discontent with some misgiving, but dared not make any attempt to control his wayward steed. Feeling its mastery in the matter, the animal began to assert itself in a more decided way, tossing up its head, and taking slow, defiant strides. Then it gave further indications of an impending eruption. As it went on, the disaffection and agitation seemed to increase ; and on Sandy's touching gently what he conceived to be the snaffle rein, at the bottom of the road in which he principally wished to figure, his horse gave a sudden plunge and broke into what appeared to him to be a mad gallop, but which was in reality a pretty smart canter. Sandy can hardly be said to have been taken by surprise, as he had all along meditated the possibility of such an accident as this. The first thought that crossed his mind related to a ballad he had read in his youth of

a citizen "of famous London town," who had fallen in with a similar adventure, and he instinctively pulled his hat well down on his forehead. On went the furious animal; and as Sandy was forcibly prevented from noticing surrounding objects, and was by no means wanting in courage when it was necessary to shew it, he gave himself up while pursuing his wild flight to inward meditation, first taking precautions to impress passers-by with the belief that he possessed complete control of his animal, and that this was all on purpose. The emotion which took most hold of him was surprise that he was able to keep a firm, and he might almost say convenient seat, and that he could regard his position with such coolness as even to enjoy the pleasing sensation of being carried through the air by means of such an extraordinary conveyance, and at such a speed. Then he began to make conjectures as to what part of the city he had arrived at, for by this time he had passed along several streets, and turned numerous corners. He also wondered whom he had met in his strange career, and whether he was deceiving the public in general as to his being quite at home, and only a daring, careless sort of fellow. He humbly believed that this was the fact, except in the case of another cab-stand, of which he caught a hasty vision. As the horse maddened and threw fresh vigour into its efforts, he felt more reconciled to his position, and more philosophical every minute. He didn't give the horse a hill, as he was instructed to do, for two reasons. In the first place, he had no notion where to find a hill, nor could he recognise one in his present con-

dition; and in the second place, he was not presumptuous enough to suppose that he could in the least direct the movements of his infuriated steed. So he let things take their course, and didn't feel so uncomfortable after all. After a race of what he calculated to be three-quarters of an hour's duration, Tilly at length gave symptoms of exhaustion, and finally stopped short, of its own accord, at the corner of a quiet street. Sandy drew a long breath, and looked round to see in what locality he was situated. He was astonished, and not disagreeably so, to find that he was within a stone's-throw of the stables. He plucked up a lively and satisfied appearance as he entered the stable-yard, and called out to Tilly's groom, "Hi, I shan't keep this horse out two hours, as I intended. I suppose it is about an hour since I went out?" "An hour!" said the groom, looking amazed, and casting a suspicious look at Tilly, which was breathing very hard, and throwing off a cloud of steam; "you haven't been away ten minutes." Sandy referred to his watch, and found it was just twelve minutes since he had taken it from his pocket on leaving the yard. "Well," he observed, a little disconcerted, "at any rate, I'm not going to keep it out any longer to-day." He gave his horse over to the care of the groom, whose palpable hints as to a gratuity he did not see it necessary to understand; but that functionary took his revenge when he turned his back, by giving vent to unmistakable expressions of derision, in which his brethren of the inferior race of animals connected with the stables heartily joined.

Sandy made his way to a corner of the yard where there was a box filled with stable furniture, and smelling strongly of the glanders, which was called "the office," from the circumstance that there was a greasy book lying on the floor. Here he was soon delighted (for he had a taste for such disputes), to fall into an altercation as to the amount he was to pay. "You hired it for two hours," said the person who kept sentry in the box, a kind of compromise between a groom and a warehouse clerk. "I wasn't out ten minutes," remonstrated Sandy. "I can't help that," said the sentry. "We might have hired it in the meantime three times over. I think it was three persons who were here since you left. How many persons were here since?" he asked of the Tilly groom. "Three gentlemen and two ladies," promptly responded the referee, in a vindictive tone. "Why didn't you give them some of the other horses?" Sandy shrewdly inquired, seeing he had no means of directly meeting the statistics arrayed against him. "They said they wouldn't have none but Tilly," maliciously replied the referee, thereby clinching the matter. Secretly wishing he had conciliated this powerful opponent, Sandy had to confess himself vanquished, and pay for a two hours' ride. "However," he consolingly reflected, "it's not a bad thing being run away with by a first-class horse, and I so cool all the time. It familiarises one's mind with great ideas."

AN IDYLL OF MODERN EDINBURGH.

My little story commences with an incident that occurred within the knowledge of the noble-hearted Dr. Alison, whose monument ought to be reared on the highest point of the Scottish capital, in commemoration of the union of science and humanity. The great and wealthy have almost forgotten the name of this friend of the lowly, except when the student glances at his *Outlines of Pathology*; but his virtues and works are handed down as a tradition amongst the poor with a tenderness that would have been dearer to his simple heart, than the most imposing obelisk of marble carved with the richest art.

One cold, raw night in December, Dr. Alison was threading his way (as was his custom when he had discharged his professorial duties and called upon his aristocratic patients), alone and on foot, through the dark, narrow "closes" of the low-lying and most foggy part of the old town of Edinburgh. He entered one of those dingy alleys, and having found the stair he wanted, he began to ascend with a light, cheerful step; for although there his patients were of that class who have only their gratitude and blessings with which to repay the most solicitous attention of the highest medical skill, that was the work on which Dr. Alison

entered with the greatest energy and spirit. Before he had put his foot on the first step, he was recognised by an old Irish woman of the poorest class—for he was as well known in that locality as the “King of the Cowgate” himself. On seeing the Doctor, the woman immediately re-entered the house that she had just left, and seizing the dim candle that stood on the mantelpiece, ran after him, lighting his steps to the door of the sick-room, which was two stairs farther up, and stood courtesying meekly until some one within opened the door. Dr. Alison expressed his recognition of this voluntary homage, that was very familiar to him, in a thousand thanks, uttered in the gentle, humble tone which always abashed these poor people,—making it seem that they were receiving a favour when they would have died to shew their gratitude for his devotion to their class. On turning to retrace her steps, her cheeks flushed with shame at the extravagance of the Doctor’s acknowledgments of her graceful little attention, the poor woman met one of her neighbours pressing up the narrow staircase.

“And who is that, Kitty,” said the new-comer, who had only arrived in time to see the door close.

“It’s nobody but that dear Doctor Alison himself, gone up to visit poor Widow M’Cluskey, that I hear is worse to-night. Sure it’s an angel he is, that gintleman; and sorry I am that he doesn’t belong to the thrue church. But it’s not his heresy that will condemn his sowl at the last day, for there’s not a priest who could do so much for the poor

people, with his great medical skill and his running up and down these stairs on a night like this, and leaving his grand drawing-rooms, and running the risk of breaking his head against these dark corners. And it's sure I am that God will receive him, if, indeed, He doesn't open his eyes to the truth before he dies."

"'Deed, Kitty," resumed the first speaker, "often it is I ask God to bless him when I see him running into the houses where fever is raging, and leaving money along with his orders for medicine. And if he kills himself with his running about these streets, 'It's to heaven he'll go,' I say to myself; and may God forgive me if I speak anything but the truth."

The house that Dr. Alison entered was one of the lowest class, small and cramped, with little entrance for light or air; but it bore a bright and tidy appearance, which it was wonderful to find in such circumstances. The wood of the floor seemed to be wearing away from constancy of scrubbing, and the tin lids, with which the strange fancies of these poor people often ornament the walls, were all shining like silver in the dim candle-light. In the bed, that occupied about a third of the apartment, lay a woman of about sixty, who seemed to be closing an anxious life, with but little regret at leaving it. The Doctor prescribed a little medicine, and after a few cheering words to the patient and the neighbour who was attending her, was about to leave, when the sick woman prayed that he would remain for a few minutes. He willingly consented to do so, and at once placed his hat on the table, and took a chair.

After a moment's hesitation the sick woman said, "There's something on my mind that I want to clear up before I die, and whether that is now or some years after this, it doesn't matter."

She spoke with a clearness and intelligence that would not have been expected in one of her class. She had, in fact, received a good education, and was for some years a school teacher; but finding that occupation unsuited to her habits, she gave it up and became a housekeeper. Her communication was made in a calm, deliberate tone of voice, as if she had long considered what she was about to say.

"It is now fifteen years," she proceeded, "since I went to live with an old sea captain, named Norton, as his housekeeper. At that time he had just returned from the Indies, and was resolved to spend the rest of his life in Scotland. He was a man of very odd ways, produced by a sunstroke that he had received while abroad. On his arrival in Scotland, he was advised by an old friend of his, a solicitor in Edinburgh, to take up his residence there; but he refused to do so, because, he said, he must see the ships pass. He took a house on the Fife coast, and had a high tower added to it, and fitted up with naval instruments like a captain's cabin of a ship. He brought his daughter, a little girl of five years, to live with him, and I was the only other inmate of the house. It was generally believed that he had brought a large amount of money with him from India; but he didn't like anybody to think that, and he used to declare that he had only enough to live upon. He always got money, when he

wanted it, from Mr. Nickhart, and he allowed me a certain sum every month for the purposes of the house. He used to spend his time in a very strange way. After breakfast he went up to the tower, and remained there sitting or walking about till dinner-time, smoking or drinking his grog, which was brought to him at certain intervals during the day. He watched with his telescope every vessel that passed, and used to give orders in a loud tone, as if he were commanding a ship. I suppose he gave the right orders, for he seemed to think that the vessels obeyed him in all their movements ; but if they did not, he used to go about stamping and swearing until they resumed the course that he marked out for them. When there were a number of vessels in sight, he appeared to be very busy giving directions, and sometimes, on these occasions, he would say he was too busy to come down to dinner, until long after the usual hour. After dinner he slept in his easy chair until the time arrived to go to bed ; but when he awoke, as he did from time to time, he would go up to his seat in the tower, and, after looking around, come down again quite satisfied. If he was confined to his room with rheumatics, as he sometimes was, he used to have himself wheeled round to the bottom part of the tower, and he would then call up the stair as if he was giving orders to some one above. In this way he lived for about eight years. His daughter lived in the house, and when she was old enough was sent to a school in the neighbourhood. She used to spend the evenings with the captain ; sometimes she would play on the piano

for him, generally songs about the sea, and sometimes he would teach her things he knew about, such as mathematics, foreign languages, and astronomy. One afternoon I heard him storming about his room in a great passion—worse than I had ever heard him before. He seemed to be furious about something, and I could hear him throw about a number of his instruments. Immediately afterwards he was very quiet, and on going up, as I generally did on such occasions, I found him lying on the floor. I ran for a doctor, but when we got back to the house we found that he had died in a fit of apoplexy. We were informed afterwards that, just at the time when he was raging about the room, a vessel had struck on the rocks some miles off, and was lost. We supposed that he had seen that it was going wrong, and that that was what caused him to fly into such a temper.

“I tell you these things to let you know the character of the captain, and to explain why I mixed in his affairs to the extent that I did.

“He left a paper that it was believed he intended for a will; but it was so full of sea phrases, and so incoherent, that nobody could tell what it meant. He referred in this paper to a large sum of money, but he did not say where it was. Mr. Nickhart, the solicitor, who was appointed sole trustee and executor, took charge of his affairs. He took the captain's daughter to live with him, and gave me a place as a servant in his house, so that I might be beside her. In going about the house, when the captain was alive, I used often to see a paper in an open drawer, which was a

receipt from Mr. Nickhart, the solicitor, for £40,000, which had been handed over to him to be invested for the benefit of the captain and his daughter. It bore that the money was to be invested in the name of Mr. Nickhart; I suppose the reason of that would be that the captain did not want it to be known that he possessed the money. I never liked Mr. Nickhart; and on the captain's death the thought crossed my mind that I should take possession of the receipt, in order that I might hand it over to the girl if anything occurred. On the death of the captain, I accordingly took it away, and left it in the house of my sister before Mr. Nickhart arrived in Fife. I preferred to run the risk of being charged with stealing it, rather than let it fall into Mr. Nickhart's hands—at least, until I saw how he proceeded. I was glad afterwards that I took the receipt, because Mr. Nickhart never made any allusion to the money that it represented; and, indeed, he often said that the captain had only left about £1000 altogether. Mr. Nickhart questioned me very anxiously as to whether there were any other papers that he had not taken possession of; but he never seemed to suspect that it had been taken away; and as the captain's papers were scattered about in the most careless way, I suppose he thought it had been accidentally destroyed. Mr. Nickhart always treated me well, and I never could bring myself to tell any one about the document, particularly as he seemed to rear the daughter of Captain Norton as his own child. Another reason why I have never mentioned this matter is, that I

began to feel so guilty about having it in my possession ; and that feeling grew upon me as time went on. I have made up my mind now to hand it over to you, if you will accept it. If I have done anything wrong in keeping it, I hope God will forgive me ; but I never intended to profit by it myself to the extent of a penny."

Dr Alison was highly interested in this simple, straightforward tale ; and after putting some questions to elucidate a few minor circumstances, he said he would call in company with a legal friend the following day, and take possession of the document as desired. In the state in which the woman lay, he did not feel it to be his duty to apply too strictly the principle of honesty to the case, and he left her expressing a hope that God would judge of the act by her motives in committing it.

The house to which Mr. Nickhart brought the daughter of Captain Norton, in the circumstances described by the sick woman, was named Marlowe Villa, and was situated outside the city, on the south. It was surrounded by flowers and trees and rustic lanes, and sheltered from the piercing east winds of Edinburgh, it afforded all the attractions of a country residence, while access could be had to the town in a drive of a few minutes. When she was brought to this house, Helen Norton was only a little girl, and all that she in after life remembered of this period was her weeping over the death of her father for many, many months. The only occupants of the house besides Helen, were old Mr. Nickhart, his two ser-

vants, and the housekeeper that he had taken with the daughter of his deceased friend, Captain Norton—for his family consisted of but one son, who was being educated in an academy in England.

The life that Helen led in this house would have been regarded by most people as intolerably monotonous for a young girl. Except in her school-hours, she spent her time solitary and occupied only with her own thoughts, for she never had made a confidant of her old servant. Mr. Nickhart was engaged at business during the day, and when he sat at meals or in the drawing-room at night, he was always poring over a book, or brooding over something that seemed for ever to haunt him. Left to herself, when grown up a little, Helen found only in reading, subjects to keep her mind engaged; and as there was a large and varied library in the house, no part of which was closed against her, she had material of which she availed herself to occupy all her leisure hours. As in the case of all persons situated as she was, her mind took a peculiar bent, which unfitted her for deriving much enjoyment from the society of the young ladies of her own age whom she met in the few visits which she made and received. When she felt lonely and fatigued by reading, which happened rarely, she played her favourite airs on the piano. In this life of comparative solitude a number of years passed away; and when she had arrived at the age at which the majority of young ladies in her position are most giddy and thoughtless, she began to feel dissatisfied with her life, as an idle and purposeless one. The little poetical flirtations

with which her female friends passed the time so pleasantly were unknown to her. She had met and conversed with the brothers of her friends; but her long course of involuntary study enabled her to discover at once their unvarying shallowness, perceptible through the thin polish of affected gallantry. As to young Mr. Nickhart, he was exactly of the class of the other young gentlemen she had met, and besides, she always regarded him as a brother.

When she was progressing in her sixteenth year, however, another friend was introduced to the house as a constant visitor. This was a young man of about eighteen, named George Patrick, whose father had asked Mr. Nickhart to watch over him while he pursued his studies in Edinburgh. He was an articled clerk in the office of an architect in the city, and at the desire of Mr. Nickhart visited Marlowe Villa two or three times a-week. The little villa assumed a more cheerful aspect from the time his visits commenced. He used to bring new music for Miss Helen, and a good deal of news from the town. His demeanour was modest and slightly provincial, but his face betokened a thoughtful disposition, and he was well informed on all ordinary subjects. He was devotedly attached to his profession, which he studied with unremitting attention in his leisure hours, particularly in its romantic phases. The variety of his information on the architecture of all periods imparted a charm to his conversation, and divested the subject of all colour of technicality. His descriptions of old castles and abbeys led him to delightful pictures of

the lives of those who inhabited them. Mr. Nickhart and his son found the youthful enthusiast a pleasant companion, and Helen realised in his talk—which was allowed to run with all the careless flow of youth—a realisation of many shadowy thoughts that had floated in her mind in the course of her desultory reading.

While George was passing an easy and pleasant life in Edinburgh, a cloud suddenly shot across his career in the death of his father. This event left him without friends, and without resources further than would barely maintain him while he completed his professional studies. After this time his visits to Marlowe Villa became less frequent and more gloomy than they had been. His father's death was not the sole cause of this change: the fact was, that his visits were thenceforth discouraged by Mr. Nickhart, who began to suspect, without the slightest cause, however, that some intelligence of mutual sympathy had passed between George and his ward. Now, there was a project that had occurred to Mr. Nickhart of late years, and that he was determined to execute—for the double purpose of the better arranging his affairs at his death, and of to some extent satisfying his conscience while he lived—and that was to marry his son to his ward, and leave them jointly all the property that he possessed. This scheme was at the bottom of the coldness between George and the family, which increased in intensity as time went on, until his visits to the house nearly ceased altogether.

It was at this period that George began to feel

that the sorrow for his father's death had been succeeded by a new and a stronger passion. When the opportunities for his meeting with Helen became few, he discovered that he looked forward to them with greater longing. When it was revealed to his own heart that he was entirely and devotedly in love with Helen, he was startled for the first time by the thought of the distance that lay between them, and the hopelessness of any expectation that their fates would be joined in a consummation of his burning hopes. In a material point of view, he had every reason to believe that she would inherit a large fortune, if not from her father, at least from the wealthy solicitor who had supplied her father's place since his death; while he could only hope to be able to earn his livelihood. And then he would ask himself—in the exaggerated language of a lover—how could one of such exalted soul and cultured mind ever regard him in any other light than as a provincial apprentice? The more he reflected on her merits, the more apparent did the contrast between their positions appear, and the more despairing and downcast did he become. At length, those delightful excursions that he used to make to the south were brought to a termination, his own timidity having finally severed the last thread of his visiting connection with Marlowe Villa. Often he would walk up to the top of Salisbury Crag to get only a glimpse of the house, almost concealed in the trees, that contained the object of his constant dreams. Sometimes he would even walk out in the direction he

had so often followed, but only to turn again guiltily, lest some one might divine his thoughts. Occasionally he would experience transitory beams of hope. While in one of these happier moods, he mustered courage to make a visit to Marlowe Villa, on the anniversary of the day on which he was introduced to Helen for the first time. He was received with cold politeness by Mr. Nickhart and his son, and with a marked reserve on the part of Helen herself. During his stay, which he did not prolong, he could find little to say, and the conversation that passed was of the most indifferent and commonplace character. At the close of his visit, however, he found an opportunity to present Helen with a flower, which he meant to be emblematic of a deep and eternal love. He observed that she blushed as she received it, but he was so excited at the moment that he hardly knew whether either of them spoke or not. That was his last visit to Marlowe Villa. The next day he received a little packet by the post. It contained the flower on which he had founded his hopes, and a brief note in these terms:—"Sir, On reflection I find that I did wrong in accepting this flower from your hands: I therefore return it now; but I hope you will not suppose that I intend any discourtesy. I shall ever esteem you as the worthy friend of Mr. Nickhart." The simple returning of his flower did not sting George so much as what appeared to him to be the icy nature of the note that conveyed it. After many hours of utter prostration, he braced himself up, resolved to forget the past, and to devote himself solely

to his profession in the future. Shortly afterwards he heard from a faithful friend of his, Leonard MacDonald, whose sister was on calling terms at Mr. Nickhart's, that a marriage was arranged to take place between Helen and Mr. Nickhart's son Andrew.

Leonard, in communicating this information, added—"But remember, my sister has not received it from Helen—who declines to say anything on the subject—but from the Nickharts."

"Very well," said George emphatically, "let the matter rest there. I hope you will respect my feelings sufficiently never to mention her name again." Leonard undertook to observe the injunction, and he kept his promise.

In the course of a few months George finished his apprenticeship, and with the resolution to obliterate all traces of the sorrow that had embittered his early life, he left for the United States, in order that he might pursue his professional career without any distracting influences of recollection, such as he now encountered at every step in what was his beloved Edinburgh.

.

Three years after his arrival in America, George Patrick was sitting in one of the most brilliant cafés in the French quarter of the City of New Orleans, at which he called nearly every evening to read the newspapers. He had just finished the perusal of the English and Scotch journals which had arrived by the mail of that day, and was sitting in a state of half dreaminess, produced by the news he had read

from the country he could not help regarding as his home, although he had hardly a single friend within its bounds. The events of which he had read concerned him in no way, and were indeed unimportant in themselves; yet the mere mention of places he had known had gradually led him into a reverie, in which he imagined himself looking out on the charming city prospect (to him so familiar) seen from a point near the north end of the North Bridge of Edinburgh. While he was sitting half unconscious of what was passing around him, he felt some one tap him gently on the shoulder. On looking round, he recognised an attendant of the house where he had taken chambers, who said,—“Here is a letter for you, sir, that came to-day. As I saw that it was from Scotland, I thought it best to bring it to you here, for we did not expect you home early.”

After thanking the domestic for his attention, George took the letter and examined it. It was from his friend Leonard, in Edinburgh. After the servant had gone, he called for another cup of coffee, and drawing himself up into a quiet corner, he sat down and broke the seal. He was astonished to read what follows:—

“MY DEAR GEORGE,—You will admit that I have faithfully remembered your solemn request that I should never mention to you the name of a certain young lady; but I think that, after you have read my letter, you will pardon me for breaking the long silence, at least this once. If you can see no other reason to justify me in referring to her now, her misfortunes

must plead for my rashness in irritating, as I know I do, an old wound.

“The marriage which we expected to take place between Miss Norton and Mr. Nickhart never came off; but that fact alone I did not deem sufficient to exonerate me from disregarding your express desire, therefore I never informed you of it; but I have now several other particulars to relate. In the first place, Mr. Nickhart is dead. Strangely enough for a man of his exact business habits, he died without leaving a will. His son consequently took possession of all his property, a great deal more than anybody ever believed him to possess. All I could learn for a long time as to the proposed marriage, was, that young Nickhart was very anxious that it should take place, and that it was Norton’s absolute refusal that stood in the way.

“On the death of Mr. Nickhart, Helen rented a little house in the vicinity of the Meadows, and went to live there with the old housekeeper of her father. My sister lost sight of her for some time, but by and by discovered that she was attending a training school for governesses, where she was exerting herself diligently to acquire a knowledge of needlework and other departments of ordinary teaching, which the high style of her education had not permitted her to learn. On my sister finding out Miss Norton, the two young ladies renewed their acquaintance; and in a short time Helen became more confidential with her than she had ever been in the old days. Notwithstanding this, it was only with the exercise of great

finesse and delicacy that my sister at length obtained from her the reason why she had declined to marry young Nickhart. Be prepared for a revelation ! It was because she all along entertained all the affection of a first love for you ! The note which you received with your flower was written at the dictation of old Nickhart, who represented to Helen that it was her duty to write to you as she did. The poor girl seems to be taking to her new mode of life sadly enough. Although she is full of courage, and above murmuring, her health is visibly failing.

“ Do you not forgive me for telling you of a devotion which survived your apparent indignation and contempt ? ”

The rest of the letter contained nothing of interest to George, and as it treated of other and comparatively indifferent subjects, he hardly allowed himself to read it. But the portion which has been quoted he read so often, that by and by he began to doubt whether he understood it at all. After the first flash of excitement had worn off, he felt a thrill of joy pass through his frame, such as he had not experienced for years. “ Now,” he exclaimed almost aloud, “ that she is penniless and working for her livelihood, while I stand near the head of my profession, I shall hesitate no longer to cast myself at her feet.”

About a month afterwards, without having given a moment's warning, he burst into the room in Edinburgh where Leonard sat listlessly reading a pamphlet.

"What!" exclaimed the latter; "is it really—did you get my letter?"

"Yes," said George, seizing the hand of his friend; "and I think I have honoured it in the most hearty fashion, by coming to thank you personally for it."

"But—but," stammered Leonard, "my second letter?"

"What second letter?" asked George, somewhat startled at the appearance of hesitating solicitude betrayed in Leonard's features.

Leonard did not reply, but placed a chair near the fire for his friend, who experienced such a feeling of apprehension, a kind of indescribable terror arising within him, that he could not take his eyes from the silent face before him.

"For God's sake!" he at length exclaimed, "tell me truly what has happened."

"Well," replied Leonard slowly, "prepare for bad news. In my first letter I mentioned that Miss Norton had fallen into delicate health. She became desponding, and took little interest in a strange discovery which had been made through the confession—made to Dr. Alison, when she was dangerously ill—of the old housekeeper who lived with her, and which promised to restore to her, from the estate of Mr. Nickhart, a considerable fortune that had been left her by her father. She sank and became more feeble every day, until"—

"Come, tell me the worst," interrupted George.

"She brightened up a little under the influence of an enthusiasm imparted to her by the minister of the

church she used to attend with the Nickharts. From the death of Mr. Nickhart, the old minister was unremitting in his attentions to Miss Norton ; and he seems to have succeeded in convincing her that her trials were designed by Providence to awaken in her a proper anxiety for her eternal welfare. Under this new excitement—for it amounted to that—she revived to such a degree, that my sister thought she was about to enjoy again her usual vigorous health ; but it was only a transitory bloom that appeared in her cheeks, for ”——

Leonard hesitated, as if afraid to complete the sentence.

“ Is she—is she dead ? ” cried George.

“ She is,” his companion whispered solemnly.

Leonard placed his face in his hands, and allowed his head to drop on the table.

The friends sat mute for a long time. At length George rose somewhat suddenly, but perfectly calm.

“ What is the address of this old housekeeper,” he asked.

After receiving an answer he shook his friend’s hand without saying a word, and walked without further direction to the house that he wanted. Such was his familiarity with the streets that he seemed to find the place mechanically. He looked at no one, and had the consciousness that he walked unsteadily—an impression that was confirmed by people who met him turning back and eyeing him askance, as if they thought he was intoxicated. On arriving at the house he informed himself with a few words that the woman

who came to the door was the person he sought. He then fell into a chair and looked around, unable to utter another syllable.

"Are you," said the woman tenderly, "Mr. Patrick from America?"

George was silent for a moment, then he started as if amazed at the woman's prescience. He intimated by a nervous shake of the head that she had guessed aright. Moving suddenly again, as if agitated by a new paroxysm of grief, he added—"Did she speak of me?"

"Ah! often," was the simple reply.

After sitting silently for a few minutes, without the poor woman attempting to disturb him, he said,—“I have a favour to ask.” Then slowly, after a pause, and in an entreating tone, “Would you give me her Bible?”

“I intended,” she replied, “to have kept that for the rest of my life, but that would not be long, and I have another little remembrance of her. Yes, I’ll give it to you.”

Going to a drawer, she unlocked it, then carefully unwrapped from several covers of coloured cotton a little pocket Bible that George knew well.

He briefly muttered his thanks, and pressed upon the poor woman a valuable acknowledgment of her disinterestedness in at once delivering to him what he now held to be the most valuable of his possessions.

“Where is she buried?” he asked.

The domestic described the spot in a manner which shewed that she had been there more than once.

It was now late in the evening, and George walked back to the house of his friend, where he passed the night in that restless anguish that follows, in early life, the first news of a great bereavement. The fourth hour of the morning had arrived, when he fell into a disturbed sleep, from which he did not awake till the forenoon. On the invitation of his friend, he tried to eat a little breakfast, but he felt the first morsel remain in his throat, as if it would choke him. In a few minutes he was on his way to the Low Calton Burying Ground. As if directed by a hand only seen to himself, he walked direct to a newly-formed grave on which were scattered some fresh flowers. The sight of the earthy mound overcame the last fragment of his fortitude, and in that silent home of the dead—the only objects visible above the tombstones the two now desolate hills, half obscured by the sombre smoke of the city—he threw himself down and wept. After some moments he slowly raised his head to look once more upon the beaten clay, when he saw a face bent over him. Instantly he recognised Andrew Nickhart. They joined hands, but spoke not a word. Neither of the young men betrayed any surprise to see the other in that place. All rivalry was over between them : the hopes of both were buried in the grave before their eyes.

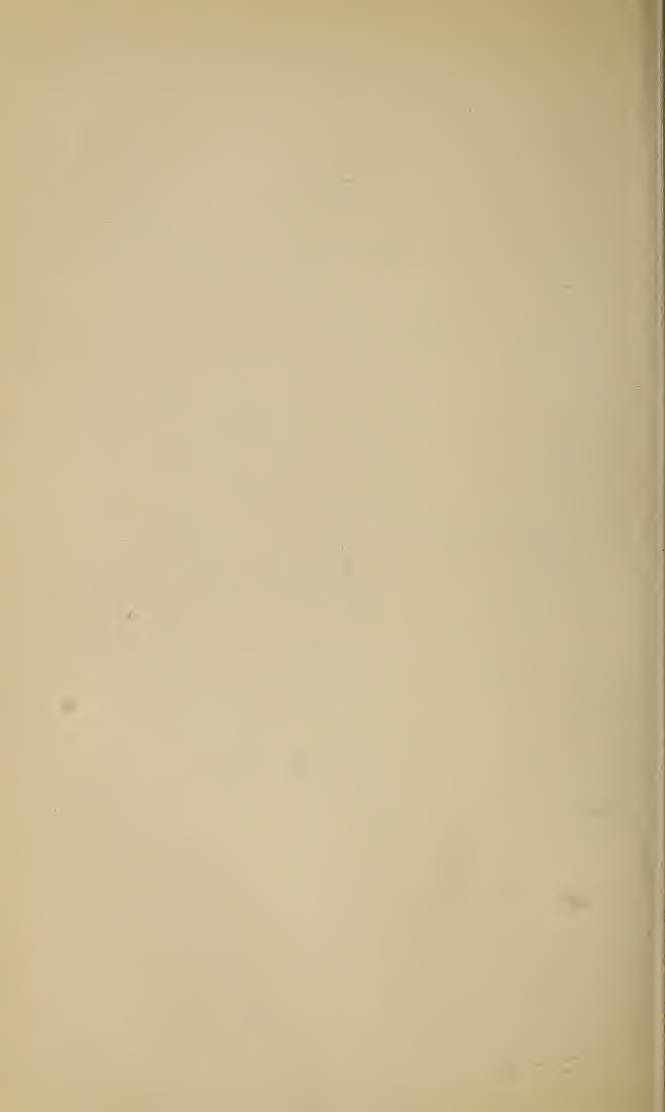
George did not see Leonard MacDonald till late in the afternoon.

“I want you to come with me to the train,” he said to his friend.

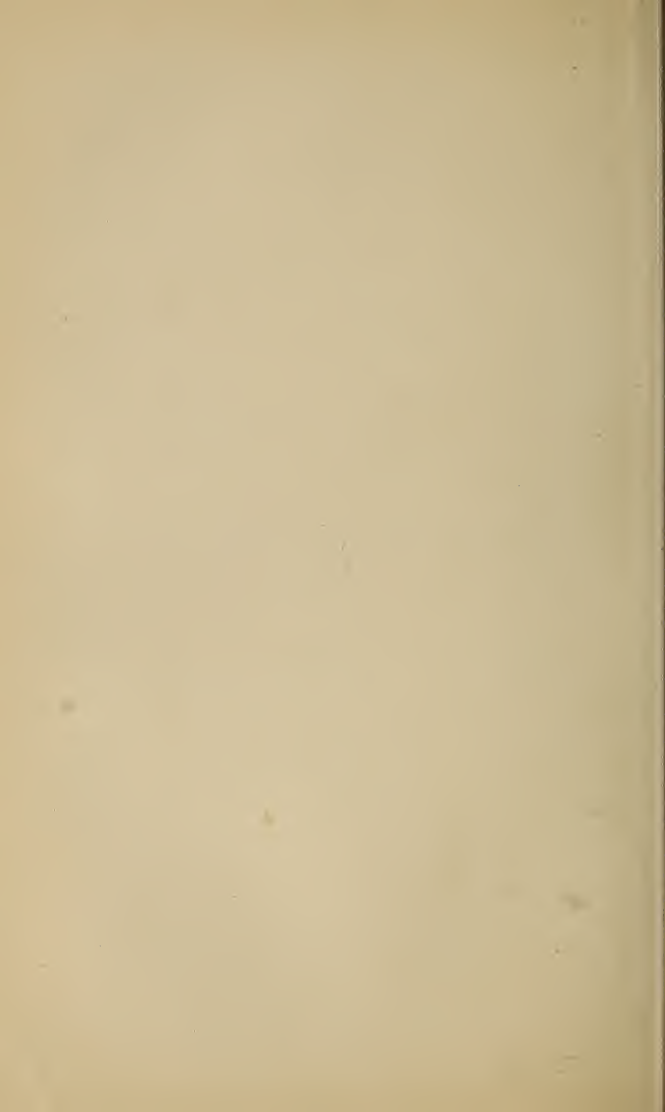
“Where are you going ?” asked Leonard.

“Back to New Orleans at the fastest possible speed.”

He would listen to no remonstrances; and before the day was past, he bade his friend farewell from the window of a railway carriage, as the train moved off the platform.



MISCELLANIES.



THE STRIDES OF INTELLECT.

As I have all my life been a warm advocate of education, I am of course delighted with the indications I meet with on all hands of increased knowledge among the people. The rays of intellect now pervade the remotest recesses of society, awakening the masses to the realisation of a new and higher life. Nowhere is this improvement so marked as in the world of politics. How much more extended the circle of politicians now, compared with old times! I am no politician myself, but I am struck with wonder and admiration at the advanced spirit of the age, when I hear a youngster expounding the most intricate clauses of a complicated Act of Parliament, whose grandfather's idea of politics was a war with the French.

I have a good opportunity of contemplating this pleasing state of affairs at a tavern which is to me a place of frequent resort. I dine in town two or three days of the week, and on these occasions I never fail to go to the "Neutral Tint," a comfortable and retired house in a quiet locality, visited by a company of politicians of different shades. The room that I frequent is the best in the house, and is set apart for eight or nine young gentlemen who dine together every day. With the exception of a

quiet-looking middle-aged gentleman and myself, who only go occasionally, the oldest of the company will not be above twenty-three ; yet it is a remarkable sign of the times that they are the hottest political partisans I ever saw collected together.

To understand the character of my companions, it is necessary to have a notion of the present state of political affairs ; and as some of my readers may, like myself, devote little attention to these matters, I may just state in a sentence what I have learned at the "Neutral Tint" on this point.

It appears that politicians may at present be roughly divided into two great classes, who are headed by two statesmen of remarkable powers. I cannot discover that either of these parties has any very definite line of policy, except that it is opposed to the other. Generally, however, one seems to be guided by the belief that by a process of periodical changes in everything connected with the government of the country, except in the single circumstance of their party holding exclusively the offices of State, something like human perfection will in course of time be reached ; and the other class holds it better to leave things just as we find them, save posts of government when occupied by their opponents. The most prominent leader of the former class is a gentleman of marvellous activity, said to be deeply read in antiquity. He possesses some qualities of a very striking character ; and his power of speech is such that his listeners are amazed at the capacity of his lungs, which enables him to

declaim for hours together without any apparent injury to his constitution. The chief of the other party is a man of an Oriental turn of mind, who seems to be mainly indebted for his reputation to his eccentricities. He spent the early part of his life in making books and speeches, to shew that the party he now leads was quite devoid of anything like a principle, and he has devoted his later years to demonstrating that proposition in practice.

Our dinner company is about equally divided between the two great parties; nor are they without their leader on either side. As for me, I take little part in the discussions, but I listen attentively, and derive much instruction from what I hear. I am tolerated by my friends as a very agreeable fellow; but the one set holds me to be wanting in the spirit of progression, while the other suspects me of being criminally indifferent to the inroads of revolution and anarchy which threaten the constitution. Though I should like to be held of more weight among my companions, still I cannot but admire the honesty with which they form their opinions, and I am grateful to find these young men take such a lively interest in the welfare of the nation. Mr. Dibdin, the middle-aged gentleman of whom I have spoken, takes quite a different view, however; and I am sadly mistaken if he looks upon their ardour with any other feeling than that of amusement. Indeed, when our debates reach their highest degree of interest and excitement, he seems most diverted.

The leader of what I may call the Onward Party,

in our room at the "Neutral Tint," is an experienced politician of the age of twenty. He wears the Madstone hat and collar, and is generally an enthusiastic follower of that eminent statesman, though not in a position to approve of his career or to subscribe to his policy in all respects. Indeed, such is the independence of thought amongst us, that there is not one person who goes absolutely with his party, but only conditionally, always reserving his right of private judgment; and this, it generally happens, leads him to differ with the framers of a measure in at least one or more of the subordinate points. Young Matchlow sees a great many vast improvements to be carried into effect, before the inhabitants of these islands can in conscience stop their forward course, or cease to apply the ameliorative process of legislation, which is essential to the regeneration of life in our decaying State. But he prides himself on being thoroughly practical, and would do nothing rashly; nay, he even concedes that the feelings of the less enlightened party should be consulted in any sweeping reform proposed. In common with the rest of our friends, Matchlow's opinion is invariably of a most decided and uncompromising tone, and is delivered with a confidence and assurance which are as marvellous as they are praiseworthy in so young a man. He expresses himself in intricate sentences of great length—such as would involve, if printed in the newspapers, a large supply of dashes; and he generally concludes a speech of some minutes' duration with such a phrase as "the peace, contentment, and happiness of an enlightened people."

The gentleman who leads the other side is a shade older than Matchlow, the leader of the Onward Party ; and from his constant allusions to his ancestors, I suppose he comes from a noble lineage, though there is no disputing that his father was a tallow-chandler in Lancashire. It would be difficult to give a complete view of his politics in small space, except by stating that he most emphatically dissents from the measures of the Madstone Party. In his opinion we have never recovered from the shock administered to society at the time of the Commonwealth, and he begins to fear we never shall. His only hope for the recovery of our sinking constitution is that the country will at length awaken from its long and fatal delusion, and that something like the old feudal relations will be re-established. His veneration for the aristocracy is supreme ; and he holds that if the government is allowed to pass from their hands, ruin and perdition must be the consequence. Hence he regards with considerable suspicion the chief to whom he now gives his qualified allegiance. In short, a man who rises to prominence by the mere force of his individual power, he holds to be an impostor ; and a body of men not identified with the aristocracy, who assume a right to interfere with political matters, he stigmatises as a mob or rabble—only to express this idea he uses French words, which I don't profess to be able to spell. Consistently with his views, our friend bears a desponding but resigned aspect, dresses rather foppishly for a man of such elevated mind, and preserves his little jewelled hands in a state of perfect

purity. As to his supporters at our dinner table, I can say little, except that they take their tone from Augustus, whom they look upon as one well able to direct them in all that affects the recovery and conservation of our institutions.

There are other two of our members who are worthy of special notice, as affording instances of the high state of culture attained by the rising generation. The first of these set out when a boy with the determination to receive nothing as true unless he could demonstrate it by the rules of arithmetic. Having applied these rules to every question within the range of social and political economy, and being now arrived at the age of nineteen, he feels himself prepared generally to give his support to the Onward Party, solely on statistical grounds. I regard this youth with awe, as a perfect compilation of universal statistics. He is of great service to his party; for when his friends are at a loss for an argument, he quotes from memory a table of figures which settles the matter on the spot. The other young gentleman I speak of, though giving the Onward Party a cold support, on grounds of temporary expediency, does not desire to be identified with it. His aspirations are more lofty than theirs, his object being the total emancipation of mankind, and the uniting in bonds of freedom and eternal happiness the whole human race. I ventured to observe on one occasion that to my ears "bonds of freedom" sounded a little incongruous, but he proved to me that it admitted of a rhetorical reconciliation by the laws of metaphor. The appearance of this young man is as

striking as are the originality of his views and the boldness of his expression. The hair of his face being closely shaved, the ringlets that hang about his neck are shewn in strong contrast ; his plain brown coat he wears buttoned to his chin, and he discards all superfluous ornaments as effeminate. This, I am told, is after the manner of the ancient Republicans, of whom he is a stern disciple. For peculiarity his principles are only matched by his brilliant and picturesque mode of speech. At the proposal to secure the grand aim of his life by practical legislation, he smiles feebly. It will only, he believes, be reached by one mighty revolution, which will annihilate at one swoop the results of the miserable, pettifogging legislation of centuries. Though our company, or at least the Onward portion, believe our friend to be in advance of his age, he has yet great faith in the appearances of his times. The atmosphere of society, he thinks, is charged with the ingredients of a sublime eruption, which will destroy the last vestiges of the chains which have so long enthralled the world. To this event he looks forward with placid confidence. It gives a colour to all his thoughts and hopes ; in fact, the hope of its realisation alone renders life endurable to him. With this frame of mind his discourse, though it carries a tinge of sadness, is the most interesting we have. He expatiates with fluency on the virtues of the Republicans of Greece and Rome, and points to numerous redeeming features in the lives of the most abhorred leaders of the French Revolution. Without seeking to make apparent to our plain minds the pre-

cise objects to be attained by the impending revolution, he deals largely in richly poetical allusions to the undisturbed harmony and boundless happiness in store for the human race.

Such is the character of the persons who make up our little society. I have already hinted that I receive infinite instruction from our deliberations on public affairs; and I may add that, notwithstanding the contrary elements to be found amongst us, our intercourse is always of a pleasing and happy kind. Under the encouraging influences of the good dinner which our excellent host provides for us, a bright and cheerful fire, and agreeable company, there is free interchange of thought and feelings, and sometimes even heated discourse; yet no one seems rendered at all miserable, let his views meet with ever so little favour. Indeed, I may mention it as an observation generally founded in truth, that the more a man is concerned about the dangers which threaten the country, the more heartily does he enjoy his dinner, and the better does he thrive. Our discussions are most lively on the day following a great debate in Parliament, and on such occasions I always make a point of attending. Besides the expressions of general concurrence and satisfaction on the one side, and general objection and disappointment on the other, we usually have some acute suggestions as to what might with more force and propriety have been urged by the speakers, and hints as to what would have been a more acceptable line of policy. Great wisdom and penetration are exhibited in these criticisms, and I often regret that they are

lost to the public. The only impediment to the smooth run of our conversations in the course of improvement is Mr. Dibdin's unduly light treatment of our remarks. He insists on calling my friends, who allow him great freedom, a "miniature senate of incipient statesmen," and turns to ridicule their most serious reflections. Thus, the other day, we had under consideration a scheme for registering votes on a new principle, proposed by our statistical friend. It was an idea of his own, and did great credit to his invention. The statement of his plan involved our astute friend, who has a cautious and guarded manner of expressing himself, in a rather long speech. Mr. Dibdin, who appeared to listen attentively throughout, observed at the close that the proposer had so completely hedged round with restrictions and limitations every assertion he made, that there positively was not left a single idea to deal with. A discussion ensued, in which Mr. Dibdin shewed such want of sympathy with the spirit of the age, that he drew forth a gentle rebuke from several of the company.

"I need to remind you," said Matchlow, "that we have dispelled the darkness of the feudal ages, when the light of knowledge was extinguished, and the spirit of inquiry systematically suppressed; when the reward of the man of genius and the discoverer was poverty and the rack. Nay, we have even emerged from the twilight of the earlier centuries, and burst into a favoured period of intellectual effulgence. The schoolmaster," he exclaimed emphatically—"the schoolmaster is abroad."

“I should think he is,” said Mr. Dibdin, with a mischievous wink towards me, “in the sense that he has been absent from your quarter for a considerable time.”

A CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.

I HAVE often been struck with amazement and filled with indignation while reflecting on the neglect and indifference exhibited by the public towards men of truly great mind. Turn up *Men of the Time* for the year 1615 (which you will find on any old book-stall), and see if it contains the name of William Shakespeare. It does not. Turn up *Men of the Time* for the current year. Can you discover there the name of the great Scotchman, David Benlocher? No. And yet in that sphere which has laid itself open to the influence of his genius, he holds an unquestioned supremacy over the minds of the multitude. Many have been the conquests of his daring and fertile pen in the higher walks of literature to which he has devoted himself, and cordial the sympathy and the gratitude he has met with from an enraptured though a limited circle of admirers. But how paltry the return he has received from that general public to whose enlightenment and elevation he has consecrated a noble life! No tribute to his genius, no acknowledgment of his labours; nay, he is even ignored by those compilers of contemporary biography who are not ashamed to bestow pages on a prime minister or a popular poet. But

no word of scorn or even impatience escapes Benlocher : he awaits with confidence the judgment of an unbiassed posterity. Feeling, however, that an unnaturally stupid generation should have one more chance of arousing themselves from what amounts to a cruel, not to say sinful depreciation of merit of a high order, I take the first opportunity of placing before the public some particulars relating to the life of this extraordinary man.

David Benlocher was born and bred in the town of Auchtermuchty ; and, as may be supposed, he finds no difficulty in tracing his descent from a noble Scotch family, distinguished from a time far beyond the reach of tradition, for the patriotism and valour of its sons. As the name obviously indicates (in the original language of the country “Ben” signifies a mountain, and “loch,” a lake), the forefathers of David occupied for many ages a commodious mansion constructed by Nature in the side of a high hill, commanding a picturesque prospect, and affording an abundant supply of pure, invigorating air. This healthy situation, and the active mode of life adopted by them in order to evade the hostile vigilance of the emissaries of a usurping government, imparted to David’s ancestors a hardiness of constitution which he himself has enjoyed in a high degree. His future character was predicted in his childhood by a double seer of great skill, who sold smallwares to the family ; and many years before his petticoats were cast aside, which was done on his departure for England at the age of twenty-two

(for in his early manhood he wore a peculiarly folded petticoat, known in his native country as a phila-beg), there were traced in the formation of his skull several distinct lines of resemblance to that of the great author of *The Dingin' Doon o' the Catheedral*. His education was shaped so as to develop his peculiar genius, which, agreeably with the observations made upon his skull, proved, as time went on, to run in what we may term the theologico-satirical line. The character of his mind turned out wonderful in its singularity, combining as it did an extraordinary skill in ecclesiastical polemics, with a ready power of sarcasm withering in its effect. His attainments in theology were such that at the age of twenty he proposed to edit a translation of *Calvin's Institutes*, with a copious commentary, and was only deterred from entering upon this undertaking by the positive assurance that no publisher living would think of printing it. To that lively and keen appreciation of wit common, we may say, to all his countrymen, David added a subtlety of perception and a capacity for exposing the ludicrous, quite his own. Of the early part of Benlocher's life I have been able to obtain but little particular information. It must, however, have been about this time, and in his wanderings amongst the hills of his forefathers (for he frequently resorted to them for meditation), that he acquired an affection, which has increased in intensity with his age, for an inspiriting drink, a feeble imitation of which is sold in England and in the large towns of Scotland under the name of whisky. The

manufacturers of this liquor from whom David received his supply, seem to have been exempted by the authorities from the payment of the high duties imposed upon dealers in other parts of the country, for they provided him with large quantities for a small sum. Finding that a moderate draught of this beverage, increased gently in quantity from time to time, threw fresh vigour into his frame and gave an impetus to his intellectual powers, David indulged in it at pretty frequent intervals, and especially when entering upon the mental exertion incident to his literary pursuits. At this time he was following the occupation to which he had served his apprenticeship—that of a dyer; but, as may be supposed, his mind travelled far beyond the regions of his vat. His first decided literary success was an essay of 700 and odd pages, entitled, *The Apocalyptic Beast Unmasked and Exposed in all its Hideousness to the Light of Day*. This was a prize essay of the “Combined Association for the Suppression of Ecclesiastical Flummery;” and such was the extent of the impression taken at the time, that a number of copies remain in the hands of the printer till this day. It was the unbounded satisfaction with which this work was received by those capable of understanding his merits that induced Benlocher to remove to England, where he took up his abode in the large mining town of Southester. He next set himself to write a philosophical romance, again for the first prize of a rich and powerful society, bound together on a great principle. Although he tried to concentrate all his faculties upon this work,

he was not at first well satisfied with his progress, for the beverage formerly alluded to, which formed the chief motive power in his intellectual efforts, he found very deteriorated in his new situation. However, by judiciously compensating by quantity for the inferior quality, he succeeded in producing a work which has rarely been equalled for masterly exposition of a principle, or for the manifest sincerity of purpose in the writer. There was no doubt in the minds of the judges: it was immediately announced that the tale had carried off the hundred guinea prize of the "Total Refrainers' Temperance Literature Society." The circulation of that book through the English reading world was incredible: indeed, a number of copies were ordered by some settlers in California before they had an opportunity of seeing what it was like. Its effect was no less startling: it is said that a veteran teetotaler shed tears at the very thought that the man who composed that work should be alive in the nineteenth century. With the enormous rates charged for his favourite beverage, the hundred guineas lasted Benlocher only a short time; and he was casting about for a new subject to employ his talents, when he was led to form a connection which shaped his future destiny. The mining population of Southester are, it appears, a very numerous, and somewhat wealthy class of people. Being for the most part of a refined turn of mind, they have a strong desire to patronise literature, and at the time referred to they were anxious to have an organ that would fairly represent their views on public affairs, but especially on local

topics. Several attempts had been made to supply this want ; but the miners being a little eccentric and exacting in their requirements, none of these enterprises had met with any success. *The Monopoly Extinguisher*, *The Coal Pioneer*, and two other journals started in the operative miners' interest, had each in its turn carried on a brief, feeble existence, and met with a sudden death. There was no principle of vitality in any of them ; no individuality, no character. *The Underground Journal* had arisen out of the wreck, and was evidently drifting to the same fate. Several numbers had appeared : the members of the "United Miners' Enemies Repulse Committee," at their weekly meeting in "The Bishop and Broomstick," had shaken their heads. The proprietor, in a state of desperation, consulted Benlocher. That was a bright thought : it proved to be the proprietor's tide, and as he took it at the flood, it did not fail to lead on to fortune. Benlocher considered ; next week the *Underground Journal* appeared transformed to *The Miners' Lamp*. Here was an idea—a consummate stroke of genius in the very title, viewed either in its literal or figurative sense ! But the matter ! There never was such a metamorphosis. The leading article—all shewing how the race of miners seemed to have been singled out—by the capitalists, to wreak their hereditary vengeance against the working classes of what was in mockery termed a free nation ; by Providence, for a more glorious end, an end which it would be the duty of the *Lamp* to point out from time to time, together with the means by which that end could be attained.

Two columns and a half of police reports, compressed in the former journals to a few lines,—“Tippling Jack again in Court,” “A Drunken Policeman,” “Which was in the right—Tibbie or the Beak,” “I’d choose to be a Gaol Bird,”—all reported word for word. Then the letter to the Editor, signed “A Pitman’s Wife,” to be continued weekly, and discussing every variety of subject in the feminine style, and with the true smack of the coal-pit. There never was such a hit: the genius of the district was in every line. Twenty thousand copies circulated before the evening. All Southester was in ecstasy. Every week added to the popularity of the new venture. Benlocher withdrew finally and completely from the dyeing business, and soon became recognised throughout the district as the People’s Champion; the director, and, indeed, the sole light of the great *Lamp*. The calls upon his intellect now became numerous and pressing: not only had he to attend the courts regularly, and watch closely the proceedings, but there was the leading article to be prepared (for he got a mere outline of the most glaring grievance, in a very crude form, from the committee at the “Bishop and Broomstick”), and the letter of “The Pitman’s Wife,” and all within the space of a week. Besides that, he commenced the tale—printed by instalments from time to time in the columns of the *Lamp*—*The Perils of a Miner’s Daughter; or, Temptation Vanquished*, which is now familiar to every household over a wide tract of country. To enable him to overtake all his work, Benlocher was obliged to have recourse to still

further augmented supplies of his favourite liquor, or rather the substitute for it which he was able to procure, but to which he was now becoming reconciled. It was a matter of some pleasure to him to observe that the more deeply he drank, the more fire did he throw into his work, and the more were the productions of his pen appreciated. Thus the passage most widely admired in the story of the *Miner's Daughter* (that in which the daring abduction of the heroine by the wild son of a pit-owner is described) was written by him after he had indulged so freely that he thought it wise to keep the house for two days. The committee of the Repulse Association discovering, from his visits to their rooms, the peculiar tastes of the directing mind of the *Lamp*, voted a part of their funds for the purchase of a large quantity of what they called "Scotch dew," and sent it as a small mark of respect to Benlocher. After considerable hesitation he accepted it, on the understanding, however, that he was to be free to exercise his judgment on the actings of the Repulse Association. His speech on the occasion, delivered in a vigorous tone and in the pure Auchtermuchty idiom, was worthy of his position and of his reputation. "He would on no occasion," he distinctly intimated, "swerve from the path of responsibility and duty which had been assigned to him; and however it might be received by the members of the committee—whatever might be thought of it by their constituents—he felt constrained to say, that he did not think they followed the proper course in yielding to the masters, as they did in the

matter of the halfpenny an hour increase." It should be stated, to the honour of British workmen, and especially of the mining community, that loud and repeated cheers followed this frank avowal of difference in opinion. An account of the presentation ceremony appeared in the columns of the *Lamp*, describing the "dew" as "a little luxury for domestic consumption," and giving an abstract of the speeches made on the occasion by the office-bearers in the committee. The speech of Benlocher himself, reported at full length, in larger type than the rest, and with a space between each line, created a great sensation. It abounded in generous sentiments, and in open expressions of sympathy with a warm-hearted, and honest, and enlightened, and (the speaker did not hesitate to say) a misunderstood and oppressed class of people.

.

It is a long time since that speech was delivered. Many winters have glided over the head of Benlocher since first his genius awakened the surprise and reverence of a dazzled multitude, and they have left their stamp upon his manly brow. Far-stretching and massive rocks in the district have yielded to the hand of time, and have risen in shadowy vapours to salute the morning sun. Shafts around Southester that once teemed with vigorous life are now closed for ever. But others, more consistent with the advancing march of science, have taken their place. The men that cheered the flowing sentences of Benlocher's first speech have passed away, but a more discerning and critical generation have suc-

ceeded them. He has reached a higher pinnacle of greatness than ever he enjoyed before, and his fame is more exalted every day. He was appreciated, admired by the past race of miners; he is adored by the present. And how has he been employed all this time? Though the effect of his labours has been stupendous, and is utterly incalculable, their scope may be indicated in a few words. Finding he had struck upon a rich vein of instruction and usefulness (opening, as it were, a new branch of literature), Benlocher resolved to work at it for the common good, and in particular for the improvement of the deserving community that surrounded him. This task he performed with such fidelity and success, that the *Lamp* has attained a celebrity and circulation never before possessed by a local journal, and which have been the means of bringing to the proprietors a princely fortune. And what has been the return to Benlocher? The usual reward of a man of genius. He receives a paltry allowance out of the profits, which has hardly been advanced from the time of his first connection with the concern. Indeed, he would not be able to afford that increased amount of mental stimulus, which he derives from the sustaining draughts formerly adverted to, but for his income from a religious and a temperance journal, the pages of which he frequently enriches with his contributions. To these aids may be added a little assistance he obtains from attending the convivial meetings of the district—at which he invariably replies to the toast of “the Press”—and from the legitimate use to which he puts

his discretion to report or suppress cases which come before the police courts. As to the social gatherings, it is well known that "the Press" is generally the very last line of a toast list—in fact, it follows that allotted to "the Ladies." Taking this fact into view, and considering further that the company, who have always an eye on Benlocher, consider themselves insulted unless he tosses off at least one bumper to every toast, it will not be surprising that he is very frequently obliged to travel the streets of Southester, on his way home, at very late hours. Now the streets of Southester are proverbially the worst paved and lighted in the country, and this accounts for the many accidents, of which the eminent man of whom I write has been the unfortunate subject. The truth is, that there is hardly a bone in his body that has not been, at some time or other, broken or fractured by some casualty of this kind. These occurrences have been matter of deep regret to the inhabitants of Southester, not only because of the sympathy entertained by them for the sufferer, but because they have for a time deprived the readers of the *Lamp* of much entertainment and profit. It was on one of these occasions that a conspiracy was hatched which, if successful, would have proved one of the deadliest blows aimed at literature in this country. Benlocher's duty had prompted him to be present at the annual meeting of the Southester Wholesale Spirit and Anti-Small Beer Association, where he delivered a brilliant address in replying to the toast, "The Press and Literature of these Islands," coupled with his own name. On his

way home he stumbled over a hole, which he had calculated was in the next street, and broke a collar-bone, and two others in his right arm. This prevented him from writing for nearly a fortnight—an unusually long time for him to recover from such an accident, for his physical constitution is, if possible, as strong as his mind. While he was thus prostrated, his ungrateful employer, whom his exertions had by this time raised to opulence, relying on the reputation of his journal, tried to rid himself of the connection with Benlocher. Several numbers were printed without his assistance, in as nearly as possible the ordinary style. The imposition was instantly detected : indignant Southester repudiated the spurious print : two of the impressions remained unsold : the *Lamp* was all but extinguished. The proprietor capitulated : he humiliated himself before the wrathful public, and apologised to Benlocher. The latter was tempted to sever the bonds by which he had been so long restrained ; but temporary embarrassments compelled him to submit. Southester was at length appeased, and the *Lamp* restored to its ancient splendour.

Since this incident, our author has laboured unceasingly in his high vocation, wielding his pen with matchless eloquence for the elevation of the human race. It is suspected by his friends (and, indeed, he himself does not deny it) that some of the most effective papers in high-class periodicals are the productions of his pen ; but such is the inherent modesty of his nature, that he cannot be prevailed upon to point them out. However, I have no hesita-

ion in referring the reader who is acquainted with Benlocher's inimitable writings, to the monthly magazines of best repute, and if he does not find, in some of the first-rate articles, traces of his style, I am much mistaken.

MISUNDERSTOOD LITERARY MEN.

It is quite sad to see how some people utterly misapply their lives in sincere and arduous endeavours to fulfil what they conceive to be their mission. They seem born with an illusion which clings to them to the end. It leads them into the most devious paths in pursuit of an object which they have no power to grasp or even to recognise, if it came in their way, and it extracts from their lives any capability of usefulness they may have originally possessed.

My good friend Joel W. Grubble is a man of this class. He belongs to an influential family in a large manufacturing town, and was educated to pursue the trade of the district, which is the fabricating of a certain plant into pigtail fasteners, for exportation to China. He was soon discovered to have excellent parts, especially an aptitude for mental reckoning, and his education was directed with great skill and attention to the improvement of his peculiar faculties. Had my friend taken advantage of his opportunities, he might have been second partner in the great concern of Grubble, Son, & Bros., and looking forward to the office of mayor of his native town. But he discovered at an early age that commerce was not his vocation. To use his own ex

pression, he "hearkened to the strain of the ancient minstrel, drew into his soul the noblest aspirations of antiquity, and read a couple of chapters of the book of Nature." Thus was his mind raised to a lofty eminence. He stood on an elevation of moral and intellectual grandeur, and looked down with scornful pity on the grovelling votaries of the pigtail fastener manufacture. In order to obtain temporal commodities, he was obliged to conform to some revolting business practices of the firm; but henceforth his desires and hopes centred in the divine region of poetry. He wrote a long poem in the Spenserian stanza, and had it printed in a local newspaper. As it represented the writer to have arrived at the last stage of dejection and despair, and to be suffering unutterable throes of mental agony, it was believed by the inhabitants of the town to indicate a very high class of genius. To this production my friend appended his full name, to the horror and indignation of his uncle the alderman, after whom he had been christened. He circulated the poem among his friends, and spread his literary reputation to such a degree, that from that time forward he deemed it necessary to assume in his countenance an expression of settled gloom and suppressed anguish. As Joel had arranged for a hundred copies of the paper containing his poem, the editor (who was also proprietor and general manager, and lent a hand to work off his journal at the press on the Saturday mornings) promised to insert any reasonable amount of his future writings on the same terms.

Being thus launched on the world of letters, Joel became less attentive to his business pursuits, and shut out all prospect of promotion in the renowned commercial house with which he was by hereditary right connected. He was now thrown upon the resources of his pen, as it were, to secure a respectable position, apart altogether from the glory which was itself in his view worth the sacrifice of his life. He burned the midnight lamp with greater assiduity than ever, and the result was the appearance in the *Meteor* of a strikingly original romance of a psychologico-analytical character, which occupied two columns weekly for about six months. The scheme of this work was to afford to the reader abrupt glimpses of the erratic and changeable but ever sublime mind of the hero, who was evidently the same person whose mystic wanderings heavenward were shadowed forth in the poem we have mentioned. If there could be said to be a plot, it was chaotic and quite impenetrable. The writer discarded, as beneath the dignity of a poet, all order and arrangement in the disposition of his ideas. The language was consistent with the spirit of the work. A great proportion of each number consisted of words which had never been heard of in the town before, either imported from poets of kindred soul with the author, or invented by himself, the pronoun "thou" and the agreeing verb were largely introduced, and the subject was generally placed at the very end of an unnaturally long but highly poetical sentence. Joel built his hopes upon this work, and he reasonably supposed that it would

gain him admittance to the highest class of literary periodicals, and the first circle of polite society. In the latter expectation he was disappointed; and with regard to the former, it closed against him the only avenue to distinction then open to him. The editor of the *Meteor* intimated to him that his last work had been the occasion of a "strike" amongst the employés of the office. The compositors (they consisted of four apprentices) had declared that they were not prepared to set MS. containing such utterly outlandish words at the ordinary rates, and that they must have an advance of at least one-sixth on every page they put in type. But these difficulties did not quench the fire of enthusiasm in my excellent friend. He felt he had a work to perform, and set to his task with an ardour and energy which, if applied in any other line, would have brought him to the front of his profession. He first effected a compromise with the editor of the *Meteor*, and since the date of the breach we alluded to has written hundreds and hundreds of columns for it. He has succeeded also in establishing a connection with a monthly periodical in a neighbouring town, and even with an almanac in the metropolis. Through these mediums he pours forth sometimes touching, sometimes defiant reproaches to Fortune; and he still writes on in the confident belief that the day of his acknowledgment by a repentant public is at hand. Now, Joel has been my intimate friend for many years, and strange as it may appear to those who only know him through his writings, he is one of the most good-natured and

merriest of mortals. He has a droll bass voice, which he uses to much effect in recounting comic incidents. So far from existing only on

“The celestial vine
And exhalations of divinity,”

as he has expressly declared in one of his poems, he can eat as hearty a dinner and drink as much liquor as any man in our club. His favourite pipe is a short and well-seasoned clay. As I have hinted, his conversation is not always of that aerial character that one might suppose. He no more thinks of introducing such a topic as “heavenly distilled ether,” than he would think of using his favourite adjective “homerogletical,” or of placing his subject at the end of a sentence. Nay, however much it may shock the readers of the *Meteor*, I positively affirm that I have not unfrequently been entertained with a broadly comic song from him. Thus his life is composed of two distinct and contrary phases, and as he is getting on for forty, I see no prospect of its course being changed.

Another of my friends who comes under this class is not by any means such an agreeable companion as Joel. He is a little conceited old fellow, who was trained as a schoolmaster ; and he is, I believe, without exception the most loquacious person who has ever appeared in history. He is a thorough master of English, when he expresses himself vocally, and a good classical scholar. But from his boyhood he has devoted himself to Eastern literature. His

knowledge of Oriental languages and antiquities is unbounded. He has applied his time and money to collecting a library which, for extent and appearance, I have hardly seen equalled in a private house. I have an instinctive admiration for a mass of books ; and the time he first brought me to his home, I rushed forward with delight to his book-cases, anticipating no common treat from running over the titles. Up to that moment I believed I had a pretty extensive acquaintance with the books generally to be found in the library of a gentleman of taste. I soon discovered my mistake, however, for there was hardly in the range of my eye a single volume I remembered to have met with before. My host was overjoyed at my confusion ; and I learned that he piques himself on discarding every work that could for a moment interest an ordinary reader. The most familiar language, from a common point of view, that he patronises is Hebrew. The only book in English that I could discover on his shelves was one written by himself many years ago, entitled *A Refutation of the Willyburton Cosmogony, wherein the Electrical Theory is demonstrated* ; and I found that even this was made up chiefly of quotations from languages the names of which I could not pronounce. In explaining generally the character of his books, and the principles that had guided him in their selection, he occupied fully three hours, and those I reckon as amongst the most dismal of my life. Whether the mind of my friend has taken its tone from his Oriental studies, and is therefore un-

intelligible to a European scholar, I cannot say; but, as it appears to me, a more sorry compound of frivolousness could not be imagined. Of what value his peculiar attainments have been to himself or anybody else, I am unable to discover. He has not turned them to much account with relation to his social position; for his dogmatic assertion and irritable temper having lost to him about a score of excellent schools, which he held in different parts of the country, he is now reduced to the position of book-keeper in a small commercial house, the proprietors of which retain him partly out of respect for his extraordinary attainments, but chiefly from charitable motives. As to his literary productions, with the exception of that I have just mentioned, which he is never tired of expatiating upon, I can hear of nothing he has done but the compilation of an index to the yearly volumes of a weekly scholastic journal, which he has regularly supplied for the last fifteen years. For this the only recompense he receives is the thanks of the printer, on whom the duty would fall in the ordinary course of events; but as he says, it is not for profit that he does it, and it provides excellent sport for a Sunday afternoon. Even his unceasing researches in Eastern Archæology do not expend one half of his energy. He is constantly hunting after fresh books, inventing new theories, and planning schemes for the disposal of his surplus time. He reads largely from the Bible, but only the names, and that with a view to discover some philological hint. One great object of his

existence is to collect the autographs of the men whom he considers the greatest now living, and in this he has been in a manner successful. He exhibited to me a volume of letters bound in fine morocco, with full gilt ; and although I had hardly before heard the name of one of the writers, I assume that they come from men marvellously learned in Oriental lore. Several of these communications he read to me with much solemnity ; and I have no doubt that while he did so he mistook my attempts to stifle a burst of laughter for indications of emotion proper to the occasion. One from Von Schnock, Professor of Heidelodröckh, ran thus :—

“SIR,—Your views on the Smyrnian inscription I regard as utterly ridiculous. Your suggestion as to the ninth part of my book is extremely impertinent ; and I deem it right to acquaint you that I shall read no more of your stupid communications.”

Another from an English professor was in these terms :—

“SIR,—Before subscribing for such a work as you propose, I should like to know something further of your qualifications than I can obtain from your childish strictures on my maturely considered system of chronology. I have directed my secretary to return your pamphlet. I know nothing of *Willyburton's Cosmogony Overthrown*, and have reason to believe that I ought to congratulate myself upon that circumstance. As to your previous letters, I must state, once for all,

as I instructed my secretary to do before, that I have neither time nor inclination to discuss the questions you propose. Imploring you to trouble me with no further communications," &c.

The tone of these letters is moderate indeed compared with that of others in the collection. However, notwithstanding that on the whole these autographs do not display that amicable feeling towards my friend that I should desire to see, he has gone to considerable expense to have them preserved in excellent style, and treasures them for exhibition to his respected friends as the most valuable of his possessions.

THE RECOIL OF ROMANCE.

AT a little after two o'clock on a balmy afternoon in the thirteenth century, a young horseman might be seen riding at a rapid pace across one of the prettiest tracts of land in England. At one glance the spectator would be satisfied that scarce nineteen summers had passed over his handsome head. His long auburn hair hung in flowing ringlets about his neck and shoulders, with the most charming artlessness, and the sharp, penetrating glance of his hazel eyes riveted the beholder. The fiery charger on which he was mounted, impatient of the curb that was ever and anon applied with an iron hand, plunged and reared itself into the most graceful attitudes. Altogether, the rider and his steed presented a picturesque appearance. The scene around furnished an admirable frame for the picture we have presented. Mountain, lake, river, valley, and every variety of fertile vegetation were all blended together, making at once as charmingly wild and rich a prospect as the refined eye delights to rest on. But the horseman heeded little the tempting scenery: he seemed intent on reaching without loss of time yonder castle in the distance, whose time-hallowed towers majestically frowned upon him. And as the young gentleman has not the remotest connection with our story, and as we shall in all probability never hear of

him again, we shall leave him to pursue his journey, and transport ourselves to a more modern era and a more densely populated district. The young man of whom we write had little in common with the romantic youth that we have just described. He was older, and he did not present a picturesque appearance. His hair was not auburn, but black, and it did not fall in ringlets. He had no charger, and was jogging along quietly on his own legs. He did not seem intent on any design of great moment, but whistled (somewhat incorrectly in the details) a ridiculous comic song breathing no odour of chivalry, and twirled a common ninepenny cane, with no apparent shame for its paltriness. Also, he smoked a small clay pipe, which had obviously not just been filled for the first time. Altogether he was a very ordinary, if not an absolutely vulgar person. Nor had he any redeeming features to recommend him to the attention of the readers of poetry or romance; and I should advise all such persons to pursue no further the history of this unworthy hero, whose name was Peter Snoller. This Snoller was a wholly insignificant character. He had no blue blood, although a good deal of red, in his composition, and so little account did he lay by gentle birth, that he never had the curiosity to inquire who was his grandfather. He had no lands, no money, no position, and no aristocratic connections. He only got £100 a-year as a clerk in a mill, and with that he had to support his old mother (by the way, a very vulgar female), so that it must be manifest that he didn't possess sufficient interest to warrant his admission to the columns

of even a halfpenny miscellany. He had no high mental or moral qualifications: he did not care twopence for literature, and he didn't teach in the Sunday School. The question will naturally occur, Why introduce any mention of such a commonplace person? Only as a protest against the manner in which the world permits such people not only to exist, but actually to seize upon the benefits which ought to be reserved for the high-born and the genteel. This young man (we could not honestly call him a gentleman) plodded on for some years making up his books, and attending to all small matters about the office with that scrupulous exactness which is characteristic of low natures. His salary was increased from time to time, and he didn't seem to have any idea above jogging on in his miserable sphere, and keeping his mother respectable. One day while he was creeping about the office in his usual grovelling style, he observed in a corner a heap of something that looked like rubbish. "What are you going to do with *this*?" he asked of one of the workmen, in his vulgar way. "It's refuse that's to be carted away," was the reply. Snoller examined it attentively for some time, and then put a handful of it in his pocket. *He* didn't mind that it greased his fingers, and would impart an oily odour to his clothes. He reflected a whole week over that thready refuse. At the end of that time he had a long conversation with the proprietor of the mill. This person was almost as vulgar as his clerk; but, to do him justice, he exhibited traces of a properly-constituted mind, by concentrating all his

thoughts and energies on the noble object of obtaining an entrance to good society. Although to effect this he sacrificed many thousand pounds sterling, all readers of quality will be glad to learn that he was unsuccessful. At the close of the conversation just alluded to, he said to his clerk, "I shall give it a fair trial, and if it comes up to your expectations, you shall have a half of the profits, after deducting the cost of production." The clerk said something in an ill-bred manner, and without the slightest attempt at polish, about the mill-owner being too generous, or something of that kind. A short time afterwards there was published in those horribly dry business periodicals an account of a splendid new cloth which had appeared in the market, made—nobody knew of what or how. The fashionable journals did not allude to the subject, and very properly too, because their readers had no interest in stuffs being discovered possessing the qualities of great durability and cheapness. In a short time the uneuphonious name of Snoller was famous in the manufacturing world. He became immensely rich, and might, by judicious conduct, in the course of time have secured the patronage of members of society, and even obtained admittance, in a modest capacity, to the aristocratic circle of his county. But the debased nature of the man betrayed itself after his elevation still more than when he occupied his original lowly condition. He cared a thousand times more for a prolonged discussion at the Chamber of Commerce on the fixing of a tariff, than for all the county balls in the kingdom. He spent ten

hours a day in his office, and passed his evenings smoking his clay pipe and drinking home-brewed beer, which he used to ignorantly declare that his mother manufactured better than all the great brewers in the country. Perhaps this despicable Snoller would have escaped any remarks in this place, but for an occurrence which has aroused my just indignation. He might have concealed his base form in the dense smoke issuing from his own mill chimneys, if it had not been that the inhabitants of his dirty town made him the instrument of an open assault on the respectability of the county. It will hardly be credited, but those insensate fools returned him as their representative in Parliament, and rejected the son of the oldest baronet in the county, on the sole ground that he was not acquainted with the requirements of commerce and manufacture. Surely such conduct calls for a word of protest. I have no doubt that my readers will join me in the contempt with which I regard Snoller, for I have taken every precaution to secure that they shall be thoroughly respectable, and to this end have left orders with my publisher, that if the last-named disreputable person, or any one on his behalf, shall apply for a copy of this volume, their request shall meet with a peremptory refusal.

AN OLD BATTLE RE-FOUGHT.

“We can see something of a municipal election contest without going to Batterton,” said Mr. Radcliffe to his friend (a newspaper reporter), who had called to see if he would go with him by the six o’clock train.

“Yes,” said his companion, “but this is quite a special affair. Old Wilkins the ornithologist, who, it appears, is a Roman Catholic, has offered himself as a candidate for the Castleton Ward, and has aroused the no-Popery feeling of the inhabitants to the highest pitch. The meeting is at seven o’clock in the Town Hall, and will be a lively one.”

The speakers were in a large town in Yorkshire, and Batterton was a small town some eight miles distant. The friends took the six o’clock train, and arrived at their destination in about twenty minutes. Although Batterton is only a quarter of an hour’s ride from the larger town, the stranger might believe himself, on arriving there, hundreds of miles distant from the great centre of population in regard to space, and a century in regard to time. Batterton is the centre of an agricultural district, the corn market for a great part of the county, and highly Conservative in principle, being exactly the contrary of the larger town in these respects. The two friends found the population of Batterton in the most abnormal condi-

tion. That the town was in a frenzy of excitement they discovered before they had gone ten yards from the station. The blind walls, usually devoted to the display of notices respecting sales of turnips and farm implements, were covered with election placards. There was a glow of excitement in the streets. The inhabitants looked as if a long entombed dragon of hideous proportions was stalking in their midst; as if they were astounded by its sudden appearance, and incredulous as to where its depredations might end. Bills were thrust into the strangers' hands informing them that the demon of Popery was again abroad, and that unless they girded up their loins to the fight, they might consider themselves as doomed to perish by the Inquisition, and to have those they held nearest and dearest torn from their bosoms and destroyed before their eyes. From these handbills it seemed that it was no imaginary spectre this which had just sprung up, because names and figures were set forth; and the Scriptures were abundantly quoted, to shew that this outrage had been foreseen by the inspired writers, who had specially provided for it by admonitions evident to the eyes of the godly. For instructions as to how they were to proceed to avert the impending calamity, the readers were advised to peruse the placards posted on the walls of the town. The friends consulted what appeared to be the smallest of these placards—a bill about four feet by two and a-half. This bill purported to come from the Committee Rooms of the "United Defence Association," No. 13 Inquisition Yard, Smithfield Place. From it

the strangers learned that however they might have flattered themselves to the contrary, England was at the present moment imminently in danger of falling under the Popish thralldom. Jesuitism in its blackest and most deadly aspect had taken their beloved royal borough by storm, and stalked amongst them, rearing its foul form, and smiling with unruffled confidence, nay, with ghastly contempt, upon their puny efforts to resist it. An embassy from Babylon sat at that moment at 15 Shakle Street, and in cushioned chairs, calmly inviting the suffrages of the electors in favour of Antichrist. Or, in plain terms, that avowed accomplice of Satan and archenemy of the Lord, Arthur Tobias Wilkins, asked the ratepayers to send him to the Council Chamber as the representative of the Third Ward. If the readers had (the bill concluded) left in them one pure aspiration for the truths of the original saints, they were invoked to buckle on their swords, or, in other words, to attend the meeting to be held that night in the Town Hall at seven o'clock.

Before proceeding to the meeting, Radcliffe and his friend went to take tea at a restaurant, where they found the reporters for the local newspapers. Radcliffe had not before mixed in the society of newspaper men, and he took some interest in observing their character. He found them to be a shrewd lot of commonplace people, who spent most of their time in trying to outwit each other. One thing that amused him, however, was their unanimity on the subject of the present contest in the town. They regarded this and all other public movements in the light of persons

on whom they entailed labour without additional recompense, and they seemed to look upon it as the perfection of human folly to hold a public meeting on any subject whatever. That sane persons, with their time at their own disposal, should meet and deliberately lecture each other seemed to them utterly incomprehensible. Such a manifestation of feeling as the present in Batterton would probably, if they had not had an outlet for their pent-up indignation in each other's company, have driven them all mad. On arriving at the meeting, these gentlemen took their place in front of the platform with an air of placid indifference, and even stoicism, which contrasted in a marked degree with the impatience and resolution depicted on the countenances of those around them. Mr. Radcliffe, on the contrary, felt greatly interested to find so much feeling existing on a question which—even if it had had any bearing on the matter of electing a town councillor—had been under discussion for centuries. The hall was a neat one, capable of holding 2,000 people, and exhibited an elegant raised platform at one end and a gallery at the other. The audience comprised every class of person, from the extensive landowner to the farm labourer; and if the last penny of each man depended on the issue of the vote, or rather on the weight of each sentence that fell from the speakers, there could not have been more intensity of feeling displayed.

The bustle and crushing consequent on the gathering gave way when the Mayor rose to speak. He was a quiet-looking Quaker gentleman, and possessed great

influence, which he was so discreet to retain that the shrewdest politician would not hazard a guess as to how he would vote in any question that arose. His words were brief and carefully arranged, with the view of concealing what was passing in his mind. The interest manifested in this election, he observed, was very great. It was a matter of great consequence to have a fit and proper person to represent so important an interest as that of the Third Ward at the Council ; especially looking to the questions that were looming in the future—questions which vitally affected the welfare and prosperity of Batterton. The men that were sent to their Board should be those capable of understanding and grappling with vast questions, and who, at the same time, could command the confidence of the ratepayers and the public. (Universal cheering.) He had long known the electors of Batterton, and particularly those of the Castleton Ward, and he would venture to say this—(Cheers by anticipation)—that they would exercise the greatest caution and discretion in fixing upon their representative. They might not be all agreed on the course which it was best to follow on this occasion, but he dared go the length of saying, that whoever might be proposed as a candidate that night, would, with his friends, receive a quiet and impartial hearing from the meeting, and would be judged of entirely on his merits, irrespective of irrelevant considerations. These remarks met with a very favourable reception, as they were strictly correct, and would be acted upon implicitly.

After the conclusion of the Mayor's address, the

retiring councillor, with the aid of a formidable manuscript, gave an elaborate account of his stewardship (which he had taken just nine months to prepare), including a favourable review of all the speeches he had delivered at the Council board during the past twelve months, and concluding with a poetical allusion to his herculean exertions for the public welfare during the last thirty-five years. A vote of thanks was accorded to him in so summary a manner, that he thought it hardly consistent with a true appreciation of his long and arduous labours in the public cause.

Mr. Allan, who was saluted with an unceremonious volley of groans and hisses, had an inexpressible pleasure in proposing to them as a candidate a gentleman whose name required only to be mentioned in order to excite the warmest feeling of admiration and esteem in the bosom of every rate-paying citizen,—he need not say that he referred to Mr. Fleecem. Whatever might be said by those who succeeded him, he required to say nothing in regard to that honoured gentleman. (A voice—"Least said soonest mended.") The honorary secretary of the Rescued Imbecile Asylum was too well known in that county to need his encomiums. His interest in every social and philanthropic movement which had taken place in that borough for a quarter of a century remained written, he might say, in characters of fire—emblazoned upon their noblest institutions; and for the ability with which he had distinguished himself in every situation in which his fellow-citizens had thought it right and proper and just and wise to

place him, they had only to refer to the columns of the *Batterton Patriot*. (A voice—"I thought he had sold out his shares in the *Patriot*.") It was no part of Mr. Fleecem's policy to introduce Popery to this land. (Great cheering and counter-cheering.) His long connection with the "Farthing Flowers of Scripture Society" precluded any such suggestion. (A voice—"How much did he make of that spec?") Mr. Birken seconded the nomination. He said that the electrical oration of the previous speaker had taken away his breath; and if the subject were an ordinary one, he would be profoundly nonplussed as to what to say. But it was the good fortune of himself and his friends that their theme was an inexhaustible one. Who could convey any adequate notion of the services of Mr. Fleecem to the public cause? He himself (the speaker) was not the man who would attempt to expound the unfathomable. (Cheers and jeers.) Mr. Fleecem was no stranger even to the Council. Thirteen years ago he had sat at that board, and the members had deferred and bowed to his eloquence. (A voice—"What about his running away?") If that gentleman had on a previous occasion felt impelled to retire, he thought it was now universally admitted that his conduct on that occasion was that of a high-minded and dignified statesman. The baseless charges which were at that time put forth had now met with a merited oblivion, and the calumniators, he might say, in the words of the play-writer, had hidden their diminished heads. (Cheers and hisses, renewed several times.) Mr. Fleecem had again come

forward to prove his integrity in that unfortunate affair, and to silence and shame his malignant accusers. (Groans and cheers.) He would conclude by calling upon the assembly to give three cheers for the Queen and the Constitution in Church and State. (Cheers and miscellaneous noises, in which cock-crowing and chirping were predominant, and the counterfeited bray of an ass distinctly recognisable.) Mr. Dorton rose, amidst repeated ebullitions of feeling, to propose as a candidate his respected friend Mr. Wilkins. They had known and respected that gentleman—"Oh, oh," some cheers, and a voice—in allusion to an unhappy equestrian exploit of the speaker—"Whose horse carried him into the green-grocer's?"—they had known and respected that gentleman for twenty years, and he defied the tongue of scandal and malignity itself to cast one slur upon his public or private life. (A gentleman in the gallery here treated the assembly to the refrain of a comic song.) Whatever his notions on religious subjects might be—(A voice in the middle of hall—"Down with King James the Second")—they would find him a good representative for local business. Mr. Warton seconded the nomination. He argued that Mr. Wilkins' success in his scientific pursuits should inspire them with confidence. ("Oh," and a voice—"We don't want no Papists nor beetle collectors," followed by laughter.)

Before the last speaker had time to resume his seat, there sprang upon the platform a little gentleman in black, who had been born with a natural

scowl of indignation, which he had carefully cultivated from his youth. He wore a coat of great length for so small a man, and he looked as if he knew exactly his mission on earth, and was determined to accomplish it. He was the district corresponding secretary of the "Sacred Alliance for the Total Overthrow of Satan and his Satellites." His chief occupation during six months in the year was addressing crowds in the market-place of the town, and exasperating to a degree of anguish a considerable portion of the inhabitants by his philippics; for the other six months he disappeared on a preaching tour through the provinces, to the great relief of the High Churchmen, the handful of Roman Catholics, the proprietor of the theatre, and the "Licensed Victuallers' Association of Batterton." He was a man of great activity and energy, though small, and on this night he soon succeeded in establishing himself in the front part of the platform. He was hailed with the same kind of cheering and hooting that had been accorded to the other speakers, but intensified in a threefold degree, because of his decidedly representative character. He dwelt first on the geographical aspect of the question. He desired to be informed, to begin with, whether he stood at that moment within the confines of his own Gospel-loving England, or in a dark valley of priest-ridden Spain; whether he addressed an audience of enlightened Englishmen, or a mob of benighted Portuguese? Were they actually in the land of the martyred Reformers, and within two miles and a half of the spot were a

glorious citizen of that borough had less than two hundred years ago died by the hand of an assassin for his attachment to Reformation principles? Alas! it was even so. Yet they were then, that night, called upon to begin anew the struggle on first principles, and to draw the sword against a pack of renegades—he could not call them Protestants—who, if they possessed one drop of the blood which warmed the breasts of their ancestors, would have been the first to aid them in this fight. But those cowardly deserters—(Tremendous uproar and hisses)—He was not to be put down. (Cheering.) It was no doubt a part of their nature to hiss—(Hear, hear, laughter and cheers)—but neither their hiss nor their venom—(Cheers)—would prevent him from freely expressing his opinion at this critical juncture of the nation's history. (Cheering.) Those miscreants did not come openly forward in their true character, but in the guise of toleration and freedom of religious belief, to support a system which was essentially antagonistic to the very existence of virtue and religion. It was still true that a devil could turn himself into an angel of light.

Here the interruption was renewed, and a choleric individual behind the speaker took hold of the latter by the collar, asking if he meant to refer to him as the devil. An interference of the friends of the orator led to a rush to the platform from the body of the hall. A general commotion ensued, which ended in the orator being carried on the shoulders of his antagonists towards the window at the top of the platform. His

blows and kicks infuriated his assailants to such a degree, that they hurried him to the open window, and deliberately threw him into the street. This violent measure produced instantly a perfect stillness in the assembly, so that the heavy thud caused by the fall of the unfortunate man rang distinctly through the hall.

The whole assembly was horror-struck ; the feeling of having assisted at a cool murder pervaded their minds, and no one dared to move or speak until the Mayor rose.

In a tremulous and reproachful voice, he called the meeting to order. He said it was to be deeply deplored that Englishmen could not meet and dispassionately discuss their views in a constitutional manner, without provoking language leading to outrage as disgraceful as it was dangerous. Being himself very willing that every man should have an opportunity of expressing his sentiments, he had not that evening interfered as soon as he might have done, and perhaps should have done, to prevent——

At this point a great commotion was observable in the back part of the hall, where the people seemed to have suddenly fallen into a humour of merriment, which little accorded with their recent solemn aspect. Those on the platform turned their eyes to the gallery, and were amazed to behold, his hair disordered and his whole person besmeared with mud, the unmistakable and irrepressible orator who had just made his exit from the window at the other end of the hall. Although not many seconds had elapsed since his

summary ejection, he had already gained the most prominent position in the gallery. Without leaving the Mayor time to apologise for his hasty departure, he resumed his discourse at the point where he had left off. It had been the policy of that nefarious combination, he said, at all times when they found themselves with superior material strength, to endeavour to extinguish the truth and the light ; but before they accomplished their purpose, in this instance, he would remind them that there were still some limbs to be broken on the rack, some lives to be sacrificed at the stake. He himself was still present to warn the inhabitants of Batterton of the machinations and snares with which they were environed. The tragedy of St. Bartholomew was again to be enacted, the fires of Smithfield were to be relighted——

By this time the audience had recovered from their panic of remorse ; their sympathy with the orator in his recent downfall had passed away, under the apprehension of an infliction which they dreaded still more than the perpetration of a murder, before their eyes. They knew that the words the orator had just spoken were but the exordium of a discourse for which he had once received a prize, and which he had attempted to recite at every public meeting, at which he had been allowed to speak, for the past fifteen years. His friends were anxious that he should go on, for they had never had an opportunity of listening to much more of the discourse than they had had that evening, the speaker having always been silenced, at about the same point, on a plea of irrelevancy. This plea, they

held, could not be urged in the present instance at all events, and they invited him to proceed, notwithstanding the vehement remonstrances of the chairman. A further observation that the speaker contrived to make, heard above the uproar that ensued, "that the star of truth, about to break in resplendent effulgence, could not be obscured," suggested the application of a practical test to a light of the Jesuitical party, who instantly proceeded to the gasometer and shut off the gas.

Mr. Radcliffe and his friend made the best of their way to the station, and had reached their destination half an hour afterwards. The reporter arrived at his club in a short time, having disposed of the meeting, in the report which he made of it for his newspaper, in a very few lines; but he afterwards wrote out the fuller account, which I have presented to my readers, for the benefit of those who take an interest in surveying different phases of intellect.

HEROISM IN ART.

“WHAT splendid images do I now behold ! What charming, sweet figures ! How sad they are : they weep, they love me so much. Bring my palette, quick ! What a picture I am going to paint ! Now,—now I shall vanquish Raphaël.” These were the dying words of the great Flemish painter, Wiertz ; and they furnish us with the keynote of the character of the most daring genius of modern times. They express the predominant presence of the object to which his life was devoted—some great achievement in his cherished art. The marvellous works of Wiertz are acquiring a deeper and more widespread interest as years roll on, and there never were, at any former period, so many students of his pictures and his history as there are at the present day.

A compatriot of Rubens, and, as many regard him, a rival of his glory, Wiertz was born six years after the commencement of the present century. The most prominent feature of his mind was the primary essential of all greatness—an illimitable, never-slumbering ambition. Though the first incidents of his infant life exhibited his taste and genius for artistic pursuits, he indulged the early dream of possessing the epic pen of Corneille and the baton of Mozart, as well as the chisel of Michael Angelo and the brush of Rubens.

It was not until he was prostrated by a serious illness that he abandoned the hope of universal greatness, and devoted himself to rivalling the deeds of Raphael and of Rubens. Having, however, consecrated his efforts to the highest department of art, he never once faltered in the fulfilment of his heroic resolution.

Accepting as his maxim that "to succeed is only a matter of time," he pursued his end with a pertinacity and self-abnegation, which are without a parallel in the history of art. Attracted to Antwerp by the fame of Rubens, he went there to study, solitary and unfriended, with nothing to rely on for support or encouragement but his devotion to art, and his indomitable will. Living in a miserable garret, he cheerfully endured the severest afflictions of poverty, convinced that he was on the certain road to success, undiverted by the seductions of luxury and ease. His austerity would not have prevented him from having, in the intense severity of a Belgian winter, a little fire in his cell; but this he was unable to afford, and he applied himself to his studies, wrapped in his bed-clothes to keep himself warm. That he was half-starved in the daytime, and half-frozen at night, were not, however, the only hardships he suffered in Antwerp. He was scorned and jeered at by the crowd, who regarded him as a crack-brained eccentric. They did not perceive that he was rapidly marching on towards renown, and they looked upon his attachment to his beloved spouse, his darling art, as an indication of insanity. But this concerned Wiertz little, when he could spend

his days with Rubens, and his nights in contemplating his coming triumphs, of which he never doubted. "If I do not equal Raphael," he said, "it will be death which shall have prevented me." Already he had begun to put in practice the philosophy of his life. Reflecting, studying, working incessantly, his little garret soon became crowded with designs, paintings, and pieces of sculpture—expressive of his fitful moods—which would lie unfinished for a time, and then be completed with sudden rapidity when the artist found himself in the humour to dispose of them.

One day a wealthy amateur was attracted to Wiertz's wretched abode. After admiring the collection, he offered a large sum of money for a little sketch, which Wiertz had just finished. "No," said the poor boy scornfully, turning away from his visitor, "keep your gold; it is the death of the artist." The heroic resolution never to accept money for his pictures, he observed religiously till the hour of his death. Many years after the incident alluded to, when a foreign prince offered him £12,000 for his "Triumph of Christ," he refused to part with it, on the ground that at some future time he might find something in it to improve. As he never sold any of his pictures, and yet was dependent on his labour for his subsistence, it may be asked how he lived? Well, his wants were few; he ate only bread, and drank only water; and when his funds were insufficient to provide him with these modest necessities, he painted a portrait, and lived upon the proceeds until they were exhausted,

applying himself to his proper work with an intensity of purpose which increased with his years. His first reason for refusing to sell his pictures undoubtedly took its rise in his high conception of the mission of the artist. He always expressed his disapproval of what he regarded as the mean side of Rubens' character—his trading in his pictures. "If it were left to me," said Rubens, "to choose a scene from the life of St. Peter, I would fix upon the martyrdom of the saint, and represent him nailed to the cross, with his feet upwards, a subject which would produce a remarkably fine work. *However, I leave the choice of the subject to him who pays the highest price.*" This Wiertz considered to be subjecting the *artist* to the *merchant*, and his soul revolted at such a sacrifice. But there is now no doubt that Wiertz had another motive for retaining his pictures in his own possession. He had early conceived the project of bequeathing to his country a great museum of paintings by his own hand, as a certain means of transmitting his name with a halo of patriotism to posterity. The idea was a bold one; but the genius and industry of the man rendered it hopeful of attainment, and it has been realised in a manner which completely vindicates the original design.

The life of Wiertz at Paris and at Rome presents no feature of romance or variety of incident. It is a record of unwavering, monotonous labour such as we seldom find in the history of an artist. He occupied himself with nothing that would for an hour distract him from his artistic pursuits. He lived at

Paris very much as he did at Antwerp, working constantly and enduring extreme privation. If, as sometimes happened, he desired to spend a couple of hours at the theatre, in order to pay for admission he was obliged to go without any dinner. He spent much of his time in examining the works of art stored in the museums; but what seems to have been an object of still deeper study to him, was the animated stream of human life ever flowing along the great arteries of the French capital. Having received all the education that the North could afford him, Wiertz naturally looked with a longing eye to the home of art—to that land stored with the works of three thousand years. Imitating the example of his illustrious predecessor, he departed for Rome, but in what circumstances? When Rubens went to Italy he was attended by a princely train of admirers and retainers, and his visit to a ducal castle or a city was made the occasion of prolonged rejoicings. The only companion of Wiertz when he entered Rome was a little trunk, which contained all his possessions; and when he was struck down by fever at Milan, he was treated as a pauper in the public hospital. But his reverses, which were to a great extent of his own seeking, only led him to greater assiduity in prosecuting his labours. When Wiertz returned from Rome to his native country, he carried with him a striking proof of his wonderful powers. It had been the habit of the Academy of Antwerp to receive from each of their students on his return from Italy a little specimen from his brush. Generally, it was a small landscape,

a face, or at most a small group of figures. But Wiertz was no ordinary student, and for his trial sketch he selected a canvas of thirty feet in length. When the treasurer of the Academy was called upon to pay for the carriage of the picture, he started back in amazement at the size of the parcel, and then refused to receive it, on the ground that he would be squandering the funds of the institution to pay for the conveyance of a thirty-feet picture by an untried young man. And the celebrated Homeric study, the "Death of Patroclus," for which fabulous sums were afterwards offered, was only rescued from the hands of the carriers by the timely benevolence of a wealthy gentleman of taste.

On his return to Belgium, Wiertz was assailed by all the minor artists, aided by the art-critics of the newspapers. For the latter class he always entertained supreme contempt, and some of his most successful minor works, as well as the most powerful passages of his writings, were composed in reply to their vituperation. No one who has visited the Wiertz Gallery at Brussels can forget the irresistible comicality of the sketch representing the porter who has been soothed to sleep, in the most natural manner, by the dulness of *L'Etoile Belge*. So far from being discouraged by the shrieks of displeasure with which each of his great works was received, Wiertz welcomed them as a stimulus to greater triumphs. As he scorned the social comforts which other men coveted, so he received with satisfaction the bitterest attacks of his critics. "Our enemies,"

he said in his epigrammatical way, "are the greatest friends of our glory."

When we consider the general and unceasing opposition which he encountered, and the hardships and vicissitudes of his strange career, we contemplate with wonder the vast results which his self-denial and devotion have secured as a legacy to his native land. When Wiertz expired, on the 18th June, 1865, the task he allotted to himself was not completed; yet what an example did he leave of what may be accomplished in a single life! The secret of his *mate* painting, by which he succeeded in uniting all the advantages of fresco with those of oil-painting on canvas, was buried with him in the grave; his literary works, although they gained rich laurels when published, are now forgotten; but his life and the works of his hand, now the property of his countrymen, entitle him to be called the last of the line of painters and statuaries who saw no object on earth worth striving for but the immortalising of their sublime conceptions, and who experienced no glow of pleasure that did not come to them from distinction in their art.

A FOSSILISED RELIC OF THE PAST.

HAS the reader who may happen to dwell in the city ever had occasion to visit a quiet country town, and to reside there for a few weeks at a time? I mean during a period when it existed in its normal tranquillity, and not when it was stimulated to unaccustomed stir by some object of common attraction or commotion. If so, has he not ever afterwards retained an unaccountable affection for that particular town; and has he not felt awakened within him an uncontrollable interest when he heard pronounced, or saw in print, the name of the place where he lived in a kind of prolonged fit of astonishment at the absence of the wonted movement around him? This is at least my feeling in regard to Carwick, where I once enjoyed a species of making reverie lasting over three months. Perhaps in my case, however, the feeling was intensified, if not produced, by the peculiar nature of my occupation during that time. My business was to consult many documents connected with the annals of the town and neighbourhood, in which were included the files of the local newspaper, extending over a period of thirty years. When I felt inclined for work, I pored over these records; and when I was not, I looked out languidly on the town. From reading carefully the old bound volumes of the news-

paper, I came insensibly to regard Carwick as a very important place. How the greatest events dwindled to insignificance in those columns, in comparison with the most trifling incident relating to Carwick! In one column alone you might read in rapid succession, the results of a war on the Continent, a great debate in the legislature, and a whole group of national calamities; while it required the next three columns to convey an adequate understanding of the proceedings of the Carwick Municipal Council. At first this discrepancy appeared to me absurd, then it seemed excusable, and after some days I came to regard it as perfectly natural and proper. I traced a number of active lives through the mildewed pages. Now I would come upon the name of a candidate for the town council, whose career and pursuits were described and discussed at length, this being his first public appearance; then I would read that he was rejected; by and by that he came forward again and was elected; next that, after some reverses, he was raised to the highest municipal dignity; then the announcement of his retirement, after which his name would only occur at intervals, when he was spoken of with respectful brevity; a long way further on would appear a few prominent lines stating that "his condition was such as to give rise to considerable apprehensions among his friends;" then his career was sketched once more, this time surrounded by a black border, and prefaced with a curt announcement of his death; the next paper contained an account of his funeral, and that was the last mention of *him*.

So vivid did I find these brief histories in the newspapers, that when I thought of taking a stroll in the old churchyard and glancing at the tombstones, I seemed to be moving amongst people that were known to me at some distant period. I made few friends during my stay in Carwick; it was with the town and its memories that I became acquainted through my researches. Such was the attachment that I in this way acquired for the place, that I have several times since gone out of my way to visit it; and I now set down a few of my observations upon it, thinking that perhaps they may arouse sleeping memories in the minds of my readers with regard to dreamy blanks in their lives.

THE TOWN.

Carwick is a small town on the borders of Scotland, prominent in ancient history, but unfrequented and unknown at the present time. It is familiar to us by name, and has been often described by romancers who have had no notion of its true characteristics; but it is only visited now-a-days by some solitary tradesman on business. Notwithstanding, it is an interesting spot, and possesses many attractions for the lover of a quiet retreat and the literary pilgrim. It is surrounded by charming scenery, affording fine combinations of the wild with the pastoral. The town itself stands on an eminence; on one side a fine river flows smoothly past through a country presenting all the phases of meadow and woodland,

and on the other the precipitous rocks are ever lashed by the waves of the German Ocean. Environing the town, and supported by a high parapet, stands a deep and firm stone wall—the most striking relic of the stirring times when it was subject to an almost constant state of siege. The wall stands out at some distance from the town, and is separated from it by a bright belt of green sward. This open ground serves the public as a recreation-place, and upon it in summer the annual fair is held. A walk round the parapet supporting the walls, which can be performed easily in a quarter of an hour, discloses a varied panorama of landscape, from the fields and meadows to the windings of the river, and then to the unbounded view of the ocean.

Fortunately for the health and comfort of the people of Carwick, the open space between the Walls (as the old warlike girdle is locally named) and the town is vigilantly preserved from encroachments on the part of adjoining proprietors. All aggressive projects of the latter were definitely ended by an occurrence which took place a number of years ago. Threats had at various times been thrown out by owners of property in the neighbourhood, that they would turn a portion of this vacant ground to use, by cultivating it for their own benefit. One of the most enterprising of the proprietors, ambitious to extend the limits of his vegetable garden, one morning aroused his work-people early, and ordered them to remove the railings which marked the boundary of his plot, so as to embrace a portion of the com-

mon. At the same time he had transplanted the bushes which circumscribed his enclosure, and, in order to increase the force of the experiment, he planted a quantity of vegetables in the newly reclaimed land. They had not time to take root in their new position, however, when the rash owner received an official communication (direct, it was whispered, "from Mr. Privy Council himself"), the precise purport of which has never publicly transpired. It was daily expected, for some time afterwards, that the culprit would be locked up in the local gaol to await his trial at the highest criminal court; but it was subsequently explained by Mr. Turncow (who felt that the burgh held him responsible for the justification of its rights in such matters), that the sentence had been commuted to payment of a heavy fine, which had been duly transmitted. We ought to mention that, simultaneously with the document referred to, there arrived at the house of the defaulter several legal dignitaries, who uprooted the offending bushes and onions, making a point of destroying them in the process. For many months after this the whole population put themselves to great inconvenience to walk over the ground attempted to be closed against them.

The narrow, clean, and well-paved streets of Carwick have their source in the High Road—a thoroughfare which the residents believe capable of accommodating six vehicles abreast, and as there is little likelihood of its being put to the test in this respect, they will probably remain of that opinion. On the south side of the town the streets slope down

to the river: on the north they begin at the High Road with great propriety, but begin to get more intricate as they proceed, and generally end in hopeless confusion. In the centre of the town, dividing the High Road into two narrow lanes at this point, stands the great architectural feature of the district—the Town Hall. This building, though of very moderate size, is to the inhabitant of Carwick the very ideal of immensity. The body of the building seems to have been intended for a Methodist Chapel of humble character; and the spire is of classical simplicity, being not altogether unlike a straightened cucumber. This antique edifice is to the denizen of Carwick at once an object of pride and of reverence. From his infancy it has occupied no small portion of his daily thoughts. It is one of his earliest recollections. At school, at play, in the workshop, in the stillness of night, he hears in the belfry of that steeple the familiar, sombre clang which reminds him that his hours are passing on. In whatever part of the town he stands, one of the four faces of its clock is looking down upon him, making him more merry or more sad, and altogether exercising a mysterious influence upon his life. If he does not see its ubiquitous face, it will not fail to remind him, in sonorous, solemn voice, of its unceasing watchfulness. From that turret the impressive, if not melancholy intelligence is conveyed to each household that another death has occurred in their little community; and in a slightly modified tone (caused by a relaxation of energy, and a quickened movement on the part of the bellman and his

assistant) the announcement goes forth of every joyful event—the arrival of Christmas, the marriage of a leading burgess, or the election of mayor.

The indications of life within the borough are not remarkably brisk. The most conspicuous sign of trade consists of five vegetable stalls, ranged in front of their premises by the owner of greengrocery establishments in the High Road, in the vicinity of the Town Hall. These erections are elaborately fitted up every morning, and carefully taken to pieces at night. For what purpose this is done afforded a wide subject for speculation to an intelligent stranger who happened to visit these parts. After some reflection, he attributed it to the force of tradition and habit, as he could discover no intelligible reason why the servant girls who called for the day's vegetables, and the boys who purchased some fruit on their way to school, should not have been served with equal facility inside the premises. There are two rows of shops of moderate size in the High Road, the attendants of which seem to have a good opportunity for meditation and self-improvement, both as regards the cultivation of their minds and the adjustment of their neck-ties. The shopkeepers conduct their business in strict conformity with the august spirit of the neighbourhood. They give way to no passion for novelty or display: their transactions are effected with as little change as possible in the arrangement of their premises. The hollow loaf of superfine sugar, and the supposed web of genuine tartan, that form the most conspicuous objects of the windows, are taken in

at Christmas, and after being dusted, are carefully replaced in as nearly as may be their original position. The retail houses are entirely in the hands of native talent: people from the cities would never suit, because of their habit of rubbing away the windows, and their general ungovernable habit of knocking things about.

Passing from the shops to the public buildings, it is noticeable that the Post Office, the Corporation Chambers, and the branch banking establishment are rarely tenanted with more exalted officials than a junior clerk to each; and it is not probable that the duties of those young gentlemen are of an onerous kind, otherwise the fact could not be explained that they may frequently be surprised in a game of cards or draughts with the elder newsboy. As for the opposition newsboy, he prefers to bury himself in a dark nook behind his own counter, where he sits reading works of the imagination, obtained at cost price with his weekly parcel from London.

The people of Carwick form a distinct race. They speak differently and live differently from the inhabitants of every other town in the kingdom. Each resembles the other in personal appearance to some extent, and in the manner of living, almost completely: indeed, they are, as a rule, related by blood or marriage, more or less closely. They are exclusive, and regard a person who has resided amongst them only five or six years as a complete stranger. Most of them are able to live comfortably, but they have acquired their means only by long-continued industry and penurious economy. Their recreations are of a limited class,

and are indulged in very sparingly, and these partake more of the material than the intellectual character. No theatre or musical entertainment could thrive there, but athletic sports flourish. The people of Carwick devote little time to reading. Their supply of literature is circumscribed in its extent, and but poorly patronised; the stock of books in the two stationers' shops (which is entirely confined to the windows) has not been altogether changed within the memory of man. The study of the inhabitants is restricted chiefly to the local newspaper, published on the Friday morning, and more particularly to that portion dealing with district matters or the state of the markets. The paper is supported by gentlemen of the shire, connected with a great political party, who hold the unfounded impression that their principles are being advanced by this means. How this journal does not further the interests of these political partisans, and how it does promote the interest of others who could not be called warm partisans of any party, does not come within the scope of my subject. I took some trouble to discover how the inhabitants disposed of their leisure hours, and my first discovery was, that these were employed much more actively than their business hours. When the offices and shops are closed, the working population betake themselves to their abodes, where they enjoy their evening meal. After this the elderly men stroll to their own particular taverns, where they sit smoking and playing dominoes over a glass of ale till the night is pretty well advanced, leaving their wives to discuss, in little social circles, their own and their neighbours'

domestic concerns. But the mode in which the young men spend their evenings is strikingly peculiar. Before stirring out of doors they array themselves elaborately before a mirror; after which, having set themselves off to their satisfaction, and applied a few finishing touches to their hair, they make for the Town Hall, glancing from time to time at the more effective parts of their attire. On reaching the mighty edifice, they commence without delay the night's amusement, which consists in parading with an erect figure, a powerful step, and generally military air, the footpath of the High Road, from the Town Hall to the wall of the town (a distance of two or three hundred yards), and back again. This exercise is performed with great precision; indeed, although a large proportion of the male population of the borough engage in it nightly, there never occurs the slightest confusion or irregularity. The right hand of the path is kept in going forward, and the left hand in returning; and such is the punctuality of the movement, acquired by diligent attention and uninterrupted practice, that the turning of the corner is performed not only with exactness, but even with a graceful flourish. It generally happens that the junior female population are running to and fro in large numbers, on the opposite side of the road, about the time when these operations are proceeding; but as each of them carries a basket, and appears intent upon household affairs, there is no reason to suppose that there exists among them a regularly constituted organisation, such as that which I have described. The march of the young men is

maintained with unflagging spirit until darkness prevents them from being seen to advantage, when they gradually disperse, calling, as they leave the field of their exertions, for just one glass of ale and a pipe before withdrawing to their homes. The events of the night, though not to be comprehended by a mere stranger of a few years' standing, afford endless topics for conversation in the workshops during the following day. It is only to be observed further, with regard to these operations, that on Saturdays they are commenced in the afternoon, and that on Sundays the scene of action is changed to a rugged path on the banks of the river, which leads from the town to a pleasant plantation about a mile distant.

THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE.

From one of the most unfrequented lanes of Carwick there issue weekly, according to the exciting or tranquil character of the times, from 480 to 520 copies of the *Carwick Guardian and Farmers' Rights Protector*. The office from which this sheltering angel spreads its friendly wings of logic and rhetoric over the surrounding landlords, guiding their actions and aiding them by its counsels, while it ruthlessly strikes down the birds of prey that hover about, ever conspiring to devour them and seize upon their property, is modest in its pretensions, and looks and smells as if it had formerly been occupied as an oil manufactory. As it was here that I consulted the volumes I have already spoken of, it will be readily understood that I took a particu'ar interest in the

building, and made the character of its inmates my special study. I found my investigations highly profitable, as they revealed to me a phase of life with which I had no means of becoming acquainted in the city. This may explain why I dwell minutely on some apparently unimportant details. I shall commence by indicating the nature of this quaint, country establishment. It consists of two storys, in the upper of which alone any signs of life are visible on ordinary days.

Here the columns of the *Guardian* are put in type and arranged, previous to being sent to the machine-room downstairs for the weekly impression; and in the little room at the corner the original matter is prepared, including the leading article, the "Remarks on Current Events," and the occasional "Letter from our Paris Correspondent." A poetical stillness reigns in the neighbourhood, except on the publishing day, when a crowd of the inhabitants with astonishment realise the triumphs of machinery by gazing through the dusty windows at the gigantic cylinder, which requires the united strength of a man and boy to move backwards and forwards.

But it was the composing-room that I always regarded as the centre of attraction of the establishment. Not only is it of consequence because of the important functions it performs in the production of this mirror of public opinion; but the persons engaged in this department are of a class extremely active in supplying the public with literature, and I was naturally curious to know something of them. The

composing-room is not large, but there is sufficient room for all practical purposes. We find on entering that it is rather dull in appearance, as the windows are well pasted to prevent the inmates being seduced from their work by the lively prospect of the chimney-pots and the gable of the granary opposite ; but here and there are scratches which admit gleams of bright sunshine. By the light of these we see that the room is a disorderly, lazy-looking place, and numerous streaks of brightly illuminated dust are brought into prominent notice by the sunbeams. On the large square table in the middle of the room (called "the stone," apparently because it is composed of wood and metal) there stand several columns of type of last week's issue, which will meet the eyes of contributors again on Saturday next. In the midst of these we can discern engravings in metal of an enormous pair of spectacles and an improved turnip-cutter, which have embellished every impression of the *Guardian* from time immemorial. The furnishing of the office is simple, consisting chiefly of a press for casting "proofs," and two rows of type cases, at which are posted about eight or nine youths, ranging from ten to twenty years of age. This, with the exception of the machineman and the cross-looking old fellow in the corner, who is engaged reading a "proof," constitutes the operative staff of the *Guardian*. That old man is referred to as the manager, and he is entrusted with the difficult task of preserving order amongst his youthful companions, and keeping them at their work.

To a casual observer these premises may appear dull and uninteresting, but to the occupants every corner possesses its history and associations; the whole scene is suggestive of past and future events, pleasing and painful. To the eyes of these young men the initials carved on each of these cases contain the record of a life really begun, and to some extent spent, within these walls. They pass their days here week after week, and year after year; and the oldest of them can give strange accounts of who were there when he came, and they in their turn could tell wonderful tales about who were there when they came; and, in short, tradition carries them back from era to era into what they generally regard as a remote period of antiquity. Their quiet work and the gloominess in which they pass their days conduce very much to meditation; and it seldom happens that a youth is within those walls for a year without becoming an ardent student of what may be called *Guardian* archæology. Not unfrequently hours of their leisure time will be spent in discussing the lives of the illustrious departed; for every man who has breathed the atmosphere of this room for a considerable space of time becomes at once a historical and a somewhat sacred character. We might glance for a moment at the workers, and see if we can comprehend their ways.

Without doubt, the most important member of this community is Mr. Joseph Wilks. Of course, we leave out of view the crusty old gentleman in the spectacles, for he is regarded as a gloomy emissary of tyranny

and slavery, separated from the rest of the establishment by a wide gulf of supreme atrocity, quite supernatural in its heinousness. He has no thought, no sympathy in common with any other of the inmates; he is given up body and soul to the pursuit of his own wicked ends. While darkly brooding over a proof, his eyes are fixed alternately on each of the two rows of "cases," and he seems to do all the reading with his spectacles. If he is not thus engaged, he is maliciously plotting to catch somebody throwing a type, and his sole pleasure in life consists in threatening his subordinates with instant dismissal. In this pastime he indulges so frequently, that each of the staff is ordered off at least once a week—the extreme sentence being always mitigated to the payment of fines, ranging in amount from a penny to a shilling, according to the enormity of the offence. This inhuman monster we leave out of view, and so come back to our original statement, that Mr. Joseph Wilks is without doubt the most important person in the office. Although he looks tall alongside of his companions, he is really short and stout. He wears an expression of knowing gravity, and is greatly respected amongst those about him as being the only regular journeyman, and also as a person of deep knowledge and wide experience. His acquaintance with events far beyond the reach of the oldest memory in the *Guardian* office is marvellous, both in its extensive range and in its minuteness; and his dignity is further augmented by the circumstance that he has seen something of travel. He is a comparatively old man,

having seen twenty-three summers (not to speak of the winters). In his earlier days he was ambitious, and the spirit of adventure led him abroad in search of exciting scenes. When he had been about four years on the *Guardian*, he was one morning missed from his post in the office, and was next heard of in a large town about forty miles distant, where he had obtained a situation on a paper of great respectability. The mode of business there was, however, entirely distasteful to one of his reflecting mind. The routine work had to be executed with a degree of despatch and accuracy to which he was a stranger; and this did not accord with his deliberate movements and his dislike for diligence in matters of mere detail. He continued in this new sphere for about three months, when he received a communication from the proprietor, which, Mr. Joseph informed his friends, contained a high eulogium on his professional attainments and habits; and as he is a person of strict veracity, there is no room for doubt that this was so. On receiving this complimentary communication, however, he returned to his native place, and expressed his willingness to resume his old position on the *Guardian*, and he has held it ever since. In the course of his journeyings, Mr. Joseph appears to have fallen in with many strange persons and extraordinary adventures; and his masterly descriptions of this period of his life have awakened a thrilling interest and astonishment in the minds of his admiring friends ever since his return.

While we are contemplating the active scene before

us, the dreaded eyes of the manager are removed from the two "frames" for a short space of time, for he is called away to a consultation in the "editor's room." A feeling of relief instantly pervades the whole composing atmosphere, and the moment the door is closed behind him, Mr. Wilks seizes the opportunity to resume the account of a reminiscence with which he was entertaining his fellow-workers on a similar occasion three days ago. It is a corrected and somewhat improved edition of an adventure which he has detailed several times before; but his listeners are now more absorbed in attention than ever, for it seems to increase in interest with every narration. There is exhibited something like excitement as Mr. Wilks, in slow and studied periods, approaches a climacteric point, and it is apparent that he is dallying with the feelings of his audience. Now he stops in the very middle of an effective sentence, and by way of varying the entertainment a little, he draws back his right hand and hits his companion a playful dig in the ribs, which removes the centre of gravity from the stool on which that youth is perched, and nearly results in his being deposited on the floor. The apprentice thus distinguished by Mr. Wilks is a rough, undeveloped-looking lad of about fifteen, with a peculiar head of hair, which is quite undistinguishable from the handful of cotton-waste with which he has been oiling the machine. This hair is endowed with a vitality quite independent of the action of any other part of his body; and the moment he is struck, it ruffles up, twists, and writhes, lashes itself up into a terrible fury,

and finally settles into the shape of a crown in outline. "I'll tell you what, Wilks," he exclaims wrathfully, when he has resumed an erect position, "you won't do that again"—and a burst of laughter rings through the whole establishment; for every member of that community believes a jest of Mr. Wilks to be the height of humour, except when it is directed against himself. "Now," says Mr. Wilks in a calm, conciliatory tone, as if he had just been seeking an opportunity to enforce a moral lesson, "it's of no use to adopt threatening gestures to any one here, much less to me. Why can't you go on with your work quietly, heedless of a slight interruption like that? It's a matter of little consequence after all; it will be all the same fifty years hence." After a little consideration, the youth seems satisfied with this reflection; and he resumes his work, while Mr. Wilks proceeds with his narrative, only making a slight digression to report a conversation he had held in the course of the transaction he was describing. "Then," he says, "I inquired of this remarkable individual, whether it was the fact that in that quarter they positively ate shrimps with a knife and fork. He assured me it was the case." "Bah!" incredulously exclaimed his right hand companion, who was still smarting in the region of the ribs; "my father told me that the inhabitants of that place are just like other people in every way, and that they do nothing of the sort." "Oh, ho!" said Mr. Wilks quietly, "so my informant was not able to use his eyes; and your father knows all about it, that has never been outside

Carwick all his life, as I understand ; nor your grandfather before him, who has been confined to the house for twelve years of rheumatics. Ha, ha, ha !” he added, quite pleased with the originality of the idea.

Another loud general laugh followed this satirical and crushing reply, and the interrupter, feeling himself no match for public opinion, subsided into silence, his hair, however, assuming several contemptuous and defiant attitudes.

Mr. Wilks now proceeds with his narrative without further interruption from this quarter ; but on turning round, in the middle of a telling sentence, he discovers, fixed upon him menacingly, the dreaded eye of the overseer, who has entered stealthily and unperceived. The historian coughs, and skilfully mutters something about a “proof,” to make it appear that he has been instructing his companions on a matter relating to their business, then goes on with his work in thoughtful silence.

SHAKESPEARE'S PROFESSION FINALLY DETERMINED.

[AFTER THE STYLE OF HIS BIOGRAPHERS.]

THE time has now arrived when we can, by the light of modern researches, fix with accuracy some of the most important circumstances in the life of the Immortal Bard.

The birthplace of Shakespeare is a town called Stratford, situated on the River Avon, which at this point is crossed by a bridge of fourteen arches. The latest authorities place it in latitude fifty-two degrees thirteen minutes; and it is a remarkable fact, overlooked by all his biographers, that by following the same degree of latitude, and putting the second figure first in the number of minutes, you have at once the latitude of Berlin, the centre of a swarm of critics who have done so much to swell the bulk of Shakespearian literature, by opening up fields of speculation as to the meaning of passages that we had innocently supposed to be apparent in their simple English dress. In a direct line west from Stratford lies Cardigan Bay; and it would have been my duty to shew the effect of the silent but potent influence here in operation in the flow of the Gulf Stream, but that I have learned that a German professor is engaged in a profound work on this point, considered in its bearing on *The Tempest*.

The lives of several learned men have been devoted to the perusal of ancient documents, with a view of ascertaining the occupations followed by the ancestors of Shakespeare's father, on his wife's side, and passages have been found in ancient records which throw a marvellous light on this subject. My present object is to glance at the most important of these, and finally settle this question in the public mind.

It is placed beyond a doubt that "Robert Arden, of Wylmcote, in the paryche of Aston Cauntlow," executed a will on the 24th November, 1556, and by this will he made a number of bequests, which there is every reason to believe were received with satisfaction, as far as they went, by the beneficiaries. The only point on which cavilling critics have succeeded in casting uncertainty is, whether Shakespeare the poet was ever connected with this family; but that a daughter of one of the testator's numerous family married a person of the name of John Shakespeare has been asserted, and, we may assume, believed, by more than one respectable writer, who published his speculations on the subject little more than a century after the death of the great dramatist. What could be more meet than that the name of Arden, which is in itself poetical, and has been applied to numerous objects in nature that are highly suggestive of sublime meditations—such as Arden Park—what could be more meet than that such a name should be linked to the never-dying one of Shakespeare? Every true admirer of the poet must feel indebted to the man who first conceived the notion of effecting this union.

Now I arrive at the momentous question, What was the name of Shakespeare's father, and what was his trade? In regard to the first part of the question, the biographer can triumphantly appeal to indisputable records. The parish clerk of Stratford has earned for himself the gratitude of posterity for all time, by placing the following entry on the register of the little church of Stratford—that venerable pile that almost conceals its humble spire in the shadow of the old beech trees, within reach of the murmur of the classic Avon rippling gently past, viz.:—

“1564,
“April 26,
“Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere.”

Did the parish clerk, in tracing those words, looking across that smiling landscape into the dim vista of the future, discern on the horizon any trace of the vast ocean of German commentary to which that name would give rise? We have, unfortunately, little to guide us in these reflections; but on the entry itself the biographer can take an unassailable stand. Here the scholar with even a slim knowledge of the dead languages is in a position to satisfy himself by a perusal of the entry that the name of the poet's father was John. It is not so clear which John it was, for occasionally the name occurs with the prefix “Magister,” and at other times without it. But this difficulty has been removed by later investigations. A penetrating writer has ingeniously suggested that,

when the entry occurs without the prefix, it is possible that the clerk has forgotten or neglected to put it in. Surely the reader who has a knowledge of human nature, and who can sympathise with the multifarious duties of a parish clerk of that remote period, will admit that this is no extravagant theory. Yet, by accepting this simple solution of the problem, we are enabled to understand that all the entries relate to one man, and that that man was the father of William Shakespeare.

We now reach a point at which we are without these obvious landmarks that have guided us hitherto. What was the trade of John Shakespeare? I confess at once that in this instance I do not agree with previous biographers; and, indeed, it is obvious that if I were at one with them in all particulars, there would be little use in my writing anything further on the subject. John Shakespeare has been variously described as a woodman, a butcher, a hozier, a landed proprietor, and a glover; and also as having belonged to different other occupations. I approach this part of my subject with great respect for the labours of previous investigators. I know that each of those businesses which has been ascribed to John Shakespeare is the result of long and conscientious researches by erudite men whose conclusions are worthy of every consideration. Yet I venture, with all modesty, to affirm that they have been all mistaken. But what is the fact the most extraordinary is, that they seem all to have overlooked the most natural explanation of the whole difficulty, and that which is at the same time the most

easily reconciled with the almost universal knowledge of the poet. That John Shakespeare dealt in gloves, is proved by the fact that a mark occurs, in the records of the Stratford Corporation, of two sticks joined at one end, and branching out so as to form two sides of a triangle—viz., a glove stretcher. That he was a butcher, is evident from the passage afterwards penned by his son, in which he exhibits a knowledge of the technical details connected with the “bearing away the calf” to the “bloody slaughter-house.” That he pursued the several other avocations referred to, is equally demonstrated by circumstances and passages to be found in the works of his son. How is it possible to understand that all these trades could be united in one man? By assuming that he was a *general merchant*, or, as we should now say, *agent*, selling on commission! That being so, what is more natural than that the young poet should travel for his father’s house? How otherwise could he have come into such close contact with the people of every trade and profession whose habits and manners he has so accurately described? In this line of business there would, doubtless, have come under his observation the playful Caliban, an infinity of Shylocks, and the persons of every variety of occupation whom he afterwards so dexterously classed under the head “citizens” in his historical tragedies. Supposing John Shakespeare to have been successful (and with such a genius of a son for his traveller, master of every art of trickery and cajolery—as manifested in the portrayal of his villains—he could not have been anything else), is it not in

accordance with the spirit of those times that he should have sought to invest his honestly acquired savings in real property? Thus we cannot hesitate to believe that he was also a landed proprietor. The only matter which is not at first sight sufficiently explained by our theory, is Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of legal phraseology. But what is more likely than that the elder Shakespeare, in his extensive dealings with rascally tradesmen, should have become involved from time to time in a lawsuit? Such events would happen, and doubtless the processes, as they "dragged their weary course along," would be familiar in all their details to the intelligent son, who took so active a part (as we have seen) in looking after his father's affairs. The only objection that could be urged to this view is, that the legal knowledge of Shakespeare, judging from such passages as—

“*Sessions* of sweet silent thought,”

and

“That fell *arrest*,
Without all *bail* shall carry me away,”

seems to have been more applicable to the criminal than to the civil department of the law. But this gives an opening for a stream of surmise which respect for the deceased must deter us from entering upon. That the great dramatist should have been

“Arrested without all bail,”

no true lover of his works could allow himself for a moment to believe.

ALONE AT CHRISTMAS.

"I HOPE Heaven may preserve this grand old Institution," said Willy Ernest to himself, as he pushed his way through the gay crowd that thronged the busiest town in the centre of Yorkshire on Christmas Eve. He was a young man, and spoke enthusiastically, even when addressing only himself.

Yet at all seasons of the year Willy, who was unfortunate enough to have a good deal of sentiment in his nature, felt most melancholy at Christmas, and on this occasion a sense of sadness stole upon him and overcame him altogether. He was far from his home, and although he had several general invitations from acquaintances, he did not feel that he could with propriety avail himself of them at this season. It seemed to him strange that at this particular period of the year—when all the world seemed to forget its griefs and bitternesses, and to be moved only by feelings of good-nature and joy and gladness—only he should be downcast and gloomy: yet he could not conceal from himself that he sighed at the approach of Christmas, and felt relieved when it had passed. This unusual feeling had not been peculiar to him only of late years: it had haunted him from his earliest youth. It proceeded from no affectation; on the contrary, it was a feeling from which he shrank; and

to-night he tried to catch a little gaiety of spirit from watching the amusing incidents that occurred everywhere around him, but it was in vain, and he traced his steps to his lodgings. When he had reached his snug room, and sunk into his arm-chair, beside the fire which his kind landlady had again trimmed just before he entered, he no longer attempted to restrain the thoughts that would force themselves upon him notwithstanding all his efforts. Vivid visions of all the Christmases he had seen passed before him : he had arrived at another stage whence he could review the incidents of his life-journey. The shadows of other festive seasons were before him, and he could now look back on events which he had then eagerly anticipated. He remembered how, year after year, when the little family group were gathered together on Christmas Eve, his mother would say, trying to conceal a tremulousness in her voice, "We are again together, but it is God only who knows whether we shall not be separated before another Christmas;" and he remembered how sad he used to feel when he reflected that there would come one Christmas night—far, he fain would hope, in the future—when at least one of their number would be out of the reach of their voices, and unable to receive or return their greetings. He thought of the last time she had uttered this sentiment in his hearing, and of the long, long letter she had written him last year, saying how unhappy she was because he had been from home. Could he feel joyful this Christmas—now that she had gone for

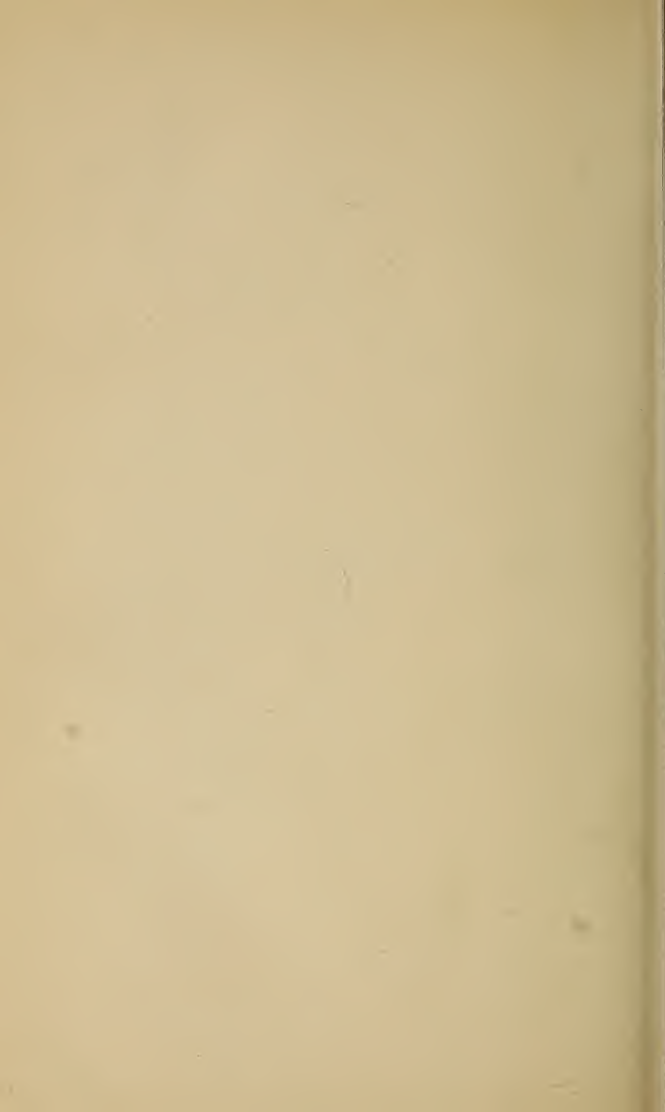
ever? Although he passed for a manly fellow in the world, he had to confess to himself that his nature was very soft, and he only found relief for his sorrow in long and bitter weeping. Many other shadows passed before him,—little things that had appeared to him trifling when they occurred, but that now gave rise to many painful reflections. How many of his actions now appeared to him unkind and ungenerous! How he longed to ask forgiveness of many people that he could never hope to see again! Chained by unpleasant memories, he sat lone and sorrowful for more than two hours, when he was startled by the vibration of what appeared to be an anthem sung by a thousand voices. He turned his eyes to the window and listened. The sweet moonbeams, strengthened by reflection from a vast sheet of newly-fallen snow, were struggling for entrance to the chamber against the bright gaslight, and the tones of what seemed to him a divine melody fell upon his ear—

“ Christians, awake ! salute this happy morn,
Whereon the Saviour of this world was born.”

It had just struck twelve, and the young people of the town were ushering in Christmas.



VERSES.



[THE following Verses are the production of a wayward son of ERIC, and are here published as a melancholy example of the degenerating tendency in the youth of the present age. It was the desire of his father that this eccentric young man should be trained to a serious profession, and in fact he has pursued his studies not unsatisfactorily, except that now and again he breaks forth into an erratic fit of idleness and folly, not to say madness, in the course of which he pens these unaccountable rhymes. ERIC recommends them to the attention of anxious fathers, who may, by a careful perusal of them, possibly discover some remedy for the strange affliction of which they are the outcome.]

TIM GOODMAN.

A MODEL PEASANT.

TIM GOODMAN was a peasant bold
That always knew his place,
And never ate his bread and cheese
Without a lengthy grace.

He never passed the Parson or
The Squire or Farmer Dread,
Without a very humble bow
And baring of his head.

Though when they'd turned, he oft was seen
(By casual passers-by)

To put his finger to his nose,
And slowly close one eye.

He used to teach in Sunday School,
And never drank no beer
(Because he'd joined the Band of Hope)
When any one was near.

And every night, at ten o'clock,
He used to say a prayer
For Queen and Lords and Commons, and
The Capital's Lord Mayor ;

And all the aristocracy
Of various degrees ;
Then all the borough magistrates,
And all the good J.P.'s ;

Then all the mill-owners around,
And large brewers of beer ;
And all his "natural masters" with
Ten thousand pounds a year.

He headed a petition once,
In which it was set forth,
That he and all the labourers
Got more than they were worth ;

And that the Squire would favour them
(If they dared thus to speak)
If he would from their wage deduct
Two shillings in the week.

He never missed a day from Church,
From Sunday to the next ;
He spent his evenings all at home
In writing out the text.
But speaking of Tim and the Church,
Sad is it to relate,
That one day he departed with
The contents of the plate.

CODGERS' HALL.*

[AFTER MR. ALFRED TENNYSON.]

COMRADES, leave me here a little, to collect my
scattered thoughts,
'Midst the merry chink of glasses and the clang of
pewter pots.
'Tis the place and all around it, as of old the cobblers
bawl.
Dreary gleams the feeble gaslight in the smoke of
Codgers' Hall,—
Codgers' Hall, that into Fleet Street and the old
familiar tracks,
Sends forth hollow yells and screeches, roaring into
cataracts.

* A well-known discussion forum of long standing, in the vicinity of Fleet Street, London.

Many a night, in yonder dingy corner, ere he goes to
rest,
May be seen the great O'Brien slowly sloping to the
west—

After sundry pots of porter, and a glass or two of gin,
And a half-a-dozen speeches—his instalment to the
din.

Here about Fleet Street I wandered, nourishing a
youth sublime,
Not on fairy tales of science, or the long results of
time—

But on good, sound English beefsteaks, and pint pots
of double stout,
Which I swallowed pretty freely,—till I oft began to
doubt

Where I sat, and how it happened, that I could dis-
tinctly see
Two for every single gas-lamp—"and the wonders
that could be."

In the spring the sordid merchant, by the lull in trade's
depressed:
In the spring his giddy daughter in her gayest robes
is dressed ;

And in spring the young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love—
That's to say, he thinks how best he can some wealthy
heiress move.

I myself had once a cousin with a hundred thousand
good,
And a tidy little mansion neatly nestled in a wood ;
And it was my fondest wish that I should some day
master be
Of that tidy little mansion, and the moorland to the
sea—

Where we could with opera-glasses fleets of stately
ships discern,
That we knew were unseaworthy,—certain never to
return,—

But we never let our pleasure by such trifles be
obscured,
For we knew the prudent owners were all heavily
insured.

This may seem to have small bearing on the subject
of my lay,
But it still affords some index to what I have still to
say :

For as matters stand at present, no one will, I think,
gainsay,
That a hundred thousand should not readily be thrown
away.

So I loved my Cousin Nancy with that passion without
bounds,
That the human heart can lavish on a hundred thou-
sand pounds.

Now you must not for a moment think I want you to
suppose
That she had a graceful figure or a finely-chiselled
nose.

And, indeed, to speak it plainly, it were folly to deny
That she had *not* hair of chestnut,—nor had she a
hazel eye.

When I thought that I had won her, then it was she
ran away
With a lanky, long-legged captain; and I plaintively
did say—

“ Oh! my cousin, shallow-pated! oh, my Nancy, mine
no more!”

Then alluded to a moorland, and a barren, barren
shore.

[Though I must admit the moorland no more rele-
vancy bore
To the subject of my sorrow than the barren, barren
shore.]

[Here 372 stanzas are lost. They were carried away by the
domestics, by mistake, and were used, it is supposed, to cover
pots of preserve.]

But I'm told she led that captain such a miserable life,
That he would with joy have given back the money
with the wife.

I confess that now I often, very often, thank my stars,
For the wayward thought that led her with that valiant
Son of Mars.

But when I was disappointed by the object of my
love,
When I thought of my affection she should so un-
worthy prove;

Then I scarcely could contain my indignation and my
wrath,
And I gave it hot to every one who came across my
path.

And the burden of my tale, when I reflected on 't, was,
"Zounds!

I have lost that splendid mansion and the hundred
thousand pounds."

Sad and sorrowful I pondered o'er that ill-assorted
match—

Pondered over many methods for a happier despatch.

Thought of strangling a policeman—(O capricious,
wilful sex!)—

As a pretty expeditious mode of "handing in one's
checks."

But a still more grim and awful, ghastly process still I
found,

In the thought of riding twenty minutes in the
"Underground!"

Then a list of deadly poisons straight before my mind
uprose—

"Half-a-dozen shilling-claret would provide a potent
dose."

"Now I have a plan," I murmured, "that will speedy
riddance give :

Codgers' Hall will free my spirit. No man there can
hear and live.

"There the idiot, rabid ravings of the madmen (I've
heard say)

Kill the sinking, gasping victim dead upon the second
day."

Thus it was I went to Codgers',—holding it (from what
I heard)

Fatal as the barest bodkin,—but I wasn't all pre-
pared

For the double death awaiting weary pilgrims there
ensnared.

Quick and mortal the wild language striking on the
helpless ear;

Maddening the fiery torrents, laden with the fumes of
beer;

But the quickest, vilest, deadliest of the influences
there

Are the vapours pestilential floating in that midnight
air.

"I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's
ground,

When the ranks are rolled in vapour and the winds
are laid with sound."

[Here, in passing, I would say that I pretend not to
expound
How the ranks are "rolled in vapour," or the winds
are "laid with sound."]

But to succumb to asphyxy—to ingloriously die
(In the absence of a trumpet or a sympathising sigh)—

From the fumes of bad tobacco and inferior gin,—I
say,
That I'd rather spend a cycle and a quarter in Cathay.

No! I fly from the O'Brien, while as yet I have the
power,
For the process of asphyxy must commence in half-
an-hour.

Oh! I see the blatant promise of his spirit hath not
set,
Fruitful founts of inspiration will flow from his fancy
yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Codgers'
Hall—

Now for me smoke-wreaths may gather, now for me
the cobblers bawl.

Comes a vapour through the portal, stifling all whereon
it blows;

Runs the most experienced *gamin*, with his fingers on
his nose.

Nor is Codgers' purified by wind or hail or frost or
snow,
And the mighty cloud arises, moving westward, and
I go.

A MODEL SONNET.

[Written with a snipe's quill, at sunset, in a few seconds of
leisure, and only printed at the special and urgent request of
many friends.]

HERE now I stand all lonely on a peak,
Waiting the first faint glimpses of the moon,
Which I reasonably suppose will soon
Appear—the first time for at least a week.
“Why do I in such circumstances seek
To see the first dim glimm'ring of the moon?
Is it that I would crave of her some boon,
Like modern savage or like ancient Greek?”
To such unhallowed question I reply—
“Thou dost not comprehend the poet's soul.
Their natural habitation is the sky;
And though they scan the earth from pole to pole,
’Tis ever in the firmament they find
Their metaphor of the most effective kind.”

“EXCELSIOR!”

[AFTER MR. H. W. LONGFELLOW.]

THE swampy state of Illinois
Contained a greenish sort of boy,
Who read with idiotic joy—
Excelsior!

He tarried not to eat or drink,
But got a flag of lightish pink,
And traced on it, in violet ink—
Excelsior!

Though what he meant by that absurd,
Uncouth, and stupid, senseless word
Has not been placed upon record—
Excelsior!

The characters were very plain,
In German Text, yet he was fain,
With greater clearness to explain—
Excelsior!

And so he ran, this stupid wight,
And hollered out with all his might
(As to a person out of sight)—
Excelsior!

And everybody thought the lad
Within an ace of being mad,
Who cried in accents stern and sad—
Excelsior!

“Come to my arms,” the maiden cried:
The youth grinned sheepishly, and sighed,
And then appropriately replied—
Excelsior!

The evening sun is in the sky,
But still the creature mounts on high,
And shouts (nor gives a reason why)—
Excelsior!

But ere he gains the topmost crag
His feeble legs begin to lag;
Unsteadily he holds the flag—
Excelsior!

* * * *

Now P. C. Nab is on his track:
He puts him in an empty sack,
And brings him home upon his back—
Excelsior!

Nab takes him to a lumber store,
They toss him in and lock the door,
Which only makes him bawl the more—
Excelsior!

TRANSLATIONS.

EIN TRINKSPRUCH.

[FROM THE GERMAN.]

THAN the throat that doesn't drink,
Than the glass that doesn't clink,
Than the lips that never move
In a smile or song of love,
Than the eye that never weeps,
Than the heart that ever sleeps,
Is there anything more sad?

But the burning love unsung,
And the war-song ringing bold,
And a Rhine wine not too young,
And a maiden not too old—
Little mouth and sparkling eyes,
And a glass of ample size,
Is there anything more glad?

THE HAPPY BRIDEGROOM.

[FROM THE GERMAN.]

I.

IN the stream the ice-rocks glisten ;
Biting frost-winds urge me home ;

Moon and stars are my companions,
Wand'ring high in heaven's vast dome.

Flies my quick, hot breath before me,
Tempering the chilling breeze ;
Crystal icicles are clinging
To the bushes and the trees.

But I still press forward merrily,
Tho' the cold winds sharper blow ;
And my heart bounds light and joyous—
'Tis straight to my love I go.

II.

Hoary beads my locks besprinkle
When I reach the little gate,
Where my loved one stands to greet me—
Ever watching, soon or late.

And the mother, too, is waiting ;
And the tender-hearted dame,
Frightened at my chilly aspect,
Stirs the embers into flame.

Is she cold? Then let her stir them,
And the wood may crack and blaze ;
But *our* young hearts, glowing, fear not
Bleakest blasts of wintry days.

In thy arms, my dearest maiden,
All the charms of spring are mine !
For to me thy cheeks are roses,
And thy smile is bright sunshine.

THE VALLEY.

[FROM THE FRENCH OF DE LAMARTINE.]

My weary heart, bereft of hope's last ray,
No more shall seek to scrutinise its fate.
Give me, O valley of my youth ! a day
Of peaceful shelter, while for death I wait.

Here is the hidden pathway to the dale ;
The wand'ring branches, in my progress pressed,
Throw o'er my form an interlacing veil—
A shelt'ring shade of silence and of rest.

Beyond, two brooks beneath the leafy boughs
Wind round the valley from a secret source,
Till to the wave of one the other flows—
They mix, and end a brief and nameless course.

The wave of my short life has ceased to roll :
In silence and for ever it has run.
But these pure streams are limpid, and my soul
Has never shewn the reflex of a sun.

Their pearly bed, the shading, fresh'ning plant,
Enchain me where these streamlets glide along ;
And child-like, lulled by one monotonous chant,
My spirit sighs in concert with their song.

'Tis to that spot, encased by walls of green,
The narrow view unbending wearied eyes,

I love to trace my steps, and there unseen
Hear but the brooks, and look but to the skies.

In life I've felt and loved too much, and now
I come, still breathing, to seek Lethe's shore.
Sweet stream, be thou my Lethe ; teach me how
I can forget, that I may grieve no more.

My heart is now in peace, my soul is still :
The troubled voices of the world I hear
But as the last faint echoes in the hill
Of noise scarce reaching the uncertain ear.

A moment I shall rest in this retreat,
Like hopeful traveller who, when he sees
The city gate, will stay his weary feet,
To catch a last breath of the evening breeze.

From my feet, too, I shake the dust away :
All journeyings at this point ever cease.
Let me, too, breathe, if only for a day,
That calm—forerunner of eternal peace.

Your days, as short as the expiring year,
Like shadows to the hill, decline in gloom.
You, then, betrayed by friends, without a tear,
Lonely descend the pathway to the tomb.

But Nature now extends her arms to you ;
Go rest your head upon her loving breast.
The world may change, but she is ever true ;
The constant sun shall guide thee to thy rest.

Here all the glories you have lost behold!

Leave thy vain projects with thy hopes and fears,
Follow the sage Pythagoras of old,

And hear with him the music of the spheres.

THE END.