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In Memoriam.

George R. Mather, M.D.

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Glasgow, 1896.

IN MOST LOVING MEMORY OF HIM

WITH WHOM IT WAS MY HIGHEST PRIVILEGE

AND PLEASURE TO

CO-OPERATE IN THE LIFE-WORK SO DEAR TO HIM,

THESE FRAGMENTARY PAPERS ARE ISSUED;

AND NOW THAT

HE HAS GONE FORTH TO SERVE HIS GOD ELSEWHERE,

MAY THEY RECALL TO THOSE WHO KNEW

AND LOVED HIM—

THE LARGE HEART, THE KINDLY HAND,

AND THE

LIVING, LOVING PERSONALITY OF

GEORGE R. MATHER.

14 Annfield Place,
Dennistoun,
November, 1896.

IN MEMORIAM.

GEORGE R. MATHER, M.D.

OBIIT 29TH NOV., 1895.

(A TRIBUTE FROM THE SIR WALTER SCOTT CLUB OF WHICH HE WAS A FOUNDER.)

THERE he lay dead who a brief space before
Had made a patriot's speech a heart that told
Full of the chivalry of days of old;
Sir Walter Scott loved well a man who bore
The spotless crest of Paladins of yore,
And such was he who cast in brawny mould
Was fond of gentle things; a heart of gold,
Manly and tender, strong and true he wore.

And so farewell, our friend, a last farewell
To modest worth and unassuming mind!
Within our hearts your memory will dwell
As one whose peer 'twas difficult to find
In high and generous qualities that tell
The noble soul and friends unswerving bind.

WALTER C. SPENS, PRESIDENT.

Dr. Mather and the Hunters.

Dr. Mather and the Hunters.

This little volume will show that a busy professional life is not incompatible with a tolerably close study of other branches of knowledge. Life is a book which, like Nature, he who runs may read; and he who would run well must gather from it the records of the mighty men of the ages that are past.

A perusal of the following pages will show that Dr. Mather devoted much of his spare time to acquiring information concerning some of those who, above their fellow-men, have moulded the thoughts and, to a certain extent, have directed the actions of Scotsmen in this and in the preceding generations. To such studies he had a natural inclination, arising partly from his keenly patriotic spirit and partly from an earnest desire to render honour where honour was due. Thus all the incidents in the lives of such men as Burns, Scott and Carlyle had for him a special interest and attraction. In these particular investigations, however, he was but a fellow-labourer with many others, and did not contribute much beyond an occasional paper to the stock of information.

But to Dr. Mather, and almost to him alone, we owe a revived interest in the history of the brothers William and John Hunter. Strange to say that in this, their native, land these men had almost been forgotten, except by anatomists and surgeons, when Dr. Mather's book, "Two Great Scotsmen," appeared, and again called attention to the deep debt of gratitude which the entire human race owes to the sons of an East Kilbride farmer.

What Isaac Newton was to physical science William and John Hunter were to modern medicine and to biology. They practically founded modern surgery, and added most extensively to our knowledge of natural history and anatomy. Throughout the entire civilised world there are few, if any, who have not been the better, however unconscious they may be of the fact, of the labours and researches of these two men.

Undoubtedly, many men of worth and merit in the world of science have been born in Lanarkshire, but there certainly have been none at all equal to the Hunters. Their stores of knowledge were vast, and that, in the case of William Hunter, they were not one-sided is abundantly proved by the magnificent collection of books, coins, and pictures in the museum which he bequeathed to the University of Glasgow.

It is, however, odd—we had almost said disgraceful

—that the large majority of their fellow-countrymen have been allowed to forget them. For this state of matters there is one obvious and sufficient reason. As they are unequalled and alone amongst Scotsmen in the advances which they made to science, so are they alone in the fact that in their native country no stone or monument recalls their deeds and incites others to follow in the same footsteps.

The children of Caledonia are, as a rule, not behind in commemorating the mighty dead of their country, and it is a matter much to be regretted that whilst London and Oxford have each a memorial of the Hunters, Glasgow and Lanarkshire have raised no statue in their honour. By some it may be said that such men need no monument; that tributes of this kind may be required by men whose chief eminence has been the amassing of wealth, or by men of superficial popularity, but that in the case of the Hunters any such thing is superfluous. The obvious and sufficient answer to any such argument is that when Dr. Mather's book appeared the memory of these men was, amongst their own countrymen, the property of the few; the many had forgotten them altogether.

Had Dr. Mather lived, an appeal would have been made for the funds necessary to erect statues of the Hunters to be placed somewhere in Glasgow. On this he had set his heart; and, by his death,

the cause has lost its best advocate. Many, however, will be glad to know that although the generous man who formed the plan has entered on rest the matter is not to be allowed to die. Already a considerable sum has been promised to the fund, and it is hoped that before long a more general appeal will be made to the citizens of Glasgow and to others interested. To men of science in our midst this appeal will not be made in vain. Others will respond to it as to the last request of a dear friend. We feel sure also that as on past occasions, so now, the merchants and wealthy classes will do their share in honouring the memory of the great and good who have shed an unsurpassed lustre on the district in which we live. By erecting such a monument we not only honour our native land, but we arouse a spirit of inquiry into the lives and works of those who are thus commemorated. And who can doubt that priceless advantages accrue to living men from a study of the labours and toils of the mighty departed who have fought a good fight.

F. F.

Sir Walter Scott and the Genius of Romance.

LECTURE,

WRITTEN TO BE DELIVERED BEFORE

THE SIR WALTER SCOTT CLUB.

Sir Walter Scott

and the Genius of Romance.

The Muses were certain sister goddesses in the Greek mythology, who were supposed to preside over the Arts of Poetry and Music, and the sciences of History and Astronomy. The powers of Memory, Music, and Song were personified into individual goddesses, who were supposed to inspire men with these gifts. The original conception of the Muses must be sought for in that disposition of the human mind which prompts to embody abstract ideas in a sensuous form. Such seems to have been also the origin of the Graces, Fates, Furies, and other mythological personages of those days. The ancients were, no doubt, puzzled about Genius, and they solved the problem by what seems to us a nice conceit. They worshipped those whom they supposed had this wonderful visitant to our spheres at their disposal. This, some would say, is merely a personification or deification of the particular structure or bent of mind which qualifies a man for a particular study or course of life. There were genii, called Tutelary Deities, who presided

over a man's destiny in life, to direct his will and actions and be his guard and guide. But to have the disposal of genius to any man meant much more than this. Genius is a gift as direct from heaven as lightning is an emanation from the clouds. The goddess who had control of the subtle essence called genius, and had this mighty gift in her bestowal, had an immense power. It is mere tautology to speak of heaven-born genius. When ordinary powers advance by slow degrees, your genius soars on rapid wing. But as we cannot have universal genius, so a distinction was made. We have a genius for Poetry, genius for Music, genius for Painting, &c. We say that Beethoven had genius for Music, Raphael for Painting, Burns for Poetry, Newton for Mathematics, Kant for Philosophy; so we may say that Scott was inspired by the Genius of Romance. It has been fantastically said that the Genius of Poetry found Burns at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over him. But it may, with more truth, be said that the Genius, or Spirit, of Romance found Scott in his cradle, breathed into him her own bewitching spirit, and he was led captive at her will. By the wonderful transforming power of this Genius of Romance, Scott was not left to become a legal pedant — a W. S., forsooth! — in the purlieus of Edinburgh. Nay, rather, he was, and through this

means, to be exalted on a mighty pinnacle, to be the admired of all admirers; *alias*, he was to become Sir Walter Scott, the universal.

What is Romance? over which this special Genius presides; wherein lies its wonderful charm? The poet would fain tell us:—

> "'Tis melancholy and mystery,
> The affectation of sage quaintness,—
> An ideal world seen in the clouds,
> When thought itself is clothed in imagery,—
> It is an indescribable ecstacy
> The more unknown the more enchanting."

In plain prose it is defined to be a fabulous relation or story of adventures and incidents designed for the entertainment of readers; a tale of extraordinary adventures, fictitious and often extravagant, usually a tale of love or war — subjects interesting the sensibilities of the heart or the passions of wonder and curiosity. Romance, it may be said, differs from the novel, as it treats of great actions and extraordinary adventures; it vaults or soars beyond the limits of fact and real life, and often of probability. The first romances were a monstrous assemblage of histories, in which truth and fiction were blended without probability; a composition of amorous adventures and the extravagant ideas of chivalry. You have metrical and prose romances. Romantic poetry was first introduced with the spirit

of chivalry. Hence the reason why love holds so prominent a place in romantic poetry. Though chivalry often carried the feelings of love and honour to a fanatical excess, yet it did much good by elevating them to the rank of deities, for the reverence paid to them principally prevented mankind, at this period of barbarous violence, from relapsing into barbarism; and, as the feudal system was unavoidable, it is well that its evils were somewhat alleviated by the spirit of chivalry. Scott appreciated this subtle, yet strong, historic fact, and, with fine artistic instinct, his rough Borderers are draped to advantage in the costume of romantic chivalry. The age of chivalry has been styled the heroic age of the Teutonic tribes. This heroic period of a nation has been compared to the youth of an individual; we find, therefore, nations, in this stage of their progress, distinguished by the virtues, follies, and even vices, to which the youth of individuals is most prone—thirst for glory, enthusiasm, pride, indescribable and indefinite aspirations after something beyond the realities of life, strong faith in virtue and intellectual greatness, together with much vanity and credulity. Though no man of any reflection would wish for the return of the age of chivalry, yet we must remember that chivalry exercised, in some respects, a salutary influence when Governments were unstable and laws little regarded.

The influence which chivalry had upon our hero was very great. The songs of the troubadours in France, the minstrels in Britain, and the meistersingers in Germany, had a great effect upon him.

Personifying this Goddess of Romance, let us look for a little at the manner in which she cultivated the soil in which this Genius of Romance was to display itself. She had waited long for a fertile spot to display her skill amid the barren literary surroundings. At what period of the world's history did she discover this green spot for the delectation of the eyes of a longing people? When Europe was convulsed by the French Revolution, and amid the upheaval of the moral forces of the world, who would ever have dreamed that this was the time for the display of the worth of imagination and romance? But it proved the true right time; our country, at least, was waiting for them, and they did indeed come with healing power. When this Goddess, Genius or Spirit of Romance—call her what you will—found her infant prodigy she did not tear him from his surroundings; but we shall see, by looking closely at some features in the life of Scott, and of his education, how he was imbued at every turn by the Spirit of Romance. She took possession of Scott, inspired and controlled him; and it was no sudden achievement, but by absolute devotion to the object in view that the grand end

was gained. The Spirit of Romance grew with his spirit, and it was fostered by his surroundings, apparently by the accident of simple environment. This environment and long traditions had a magical effect. The Border Lairds were really a race of shepherds, in so far as they were not a race of robbers. Professor Veitch, our late lamented president, thought that Scott may have derived from this pastoral ancestry a hereditary bias towards the observation of Nature, and the enjoyment of open-air life. He certainly inherited from them the robust strength of constitution that carried him successfully through so many exhausting labours. And it was his pride in their real or supposed feudal dignity and their rough, marauding exploits that first directed him to the study of Border history and poetry, the basis of his fame as a poet and romancer. In claiming kindred with Auld Wat of Harden, he says: "I am, therefore, lineally descended from that ancient chieftain whose name I have made to ring in many a ditty and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow,"—no bad genealogy for a Border minstrel. Sir Walter Scott's father was the first of his race to adopt a town life, and a sedentary profession. He was a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh. The Scotts were a great riding, sporting, fighting and thieving clan. Sir Walter commemorates, in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," Auld Wat of

Harden, who is well known in Border history. The Scotts were a branch of the Buccleuch family. He always spoke of the laird as his chief. We are told that on one occasion the Laird of Buccleuch had counselled fire and sword against an outlaw; "for," says he, "he lives by reif and felonie." But the King, who was present, put the matter in a nutshell, and rebuked him properly:—

> "Now haud thy tongue, Sir Walter Scott,
> Nor speak of reif and felonie,—
> For had every man his awin kye
> A right puir clan thy name wad be."

There is another Walter Scott whom our poet singles out and speaks of in the introduction to "Marmion," This was his great-grandfather. Also, a Walter Scott surnamed Beardie: he never cut his beard after the banishment of the Stuarts. The poet says:—

> "The vanished race of kings revered,
> And lost his land—but kept his beard."

Sir Walter inherited from Beardie that sentimental Stuart bias which his better judgment condemned. This sentiment was, no doubt, useful to him, however, enabling him to reproduce in his romances the mould and fashion of the past. His father was conspicuous for methodical and thorough industry; his mother was a woman of imagination and culture. The son seems to have inherited the richest endow-

ments of the one, and acquired the best qualities of the other. His mother was a Miss Rutherford, the daughter of a physician, professor in the University. She came of the Bauld Rutherfords, another of the Border clans. She was a motherly, comfortable woman, with much tenderness of heart, and a well stored, vivid memory. Scott says of her himself: "She could draw, without the least exaggeration or affectation, the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me." From such a stock our great hero sprang.

Sir Walter was within two months of being two years old, and could walk fairly well for a boy of his age, when the nurse who had charge of him was awakened one morning by his screams, and on looking at him, saw that his right leg was powerless and cold as a stone. The infant had been seized with paralysis, a disease almost peculiar to old age. He was lame for life; the previously healthy boy was now a pining child. Great care was taken of the young patient, and the pains bestowed upon him were infinitely rewarded. Dr. Rutherford, his grandfather, well advised that he should be sent to his other grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe, on the Tweed, near the ruined tower of Smailholm, in the neighbourhood of some fine crags. A strange story

is told of the nurse who was sent from Edinburgh with the child. It is said she confessed that she was going to murder him (the boy) and bury him in the moss—an uncommon kind of insanity, which fortunately was discovered in time to prevent such an awful calamity. This was not the only danger Scott encountered in the early spring of his existence. The quacks of the country nearly killed him by wrapping him frequently in the skin of a sheep, while still warm from the animal, as they said, to encourage him to crawl. He survived this treatment, however. The air and the exercise at Sandyknowe, and the care taken of him by his grandfather and grandmother, did great things for Scott's constitution. Here, also, his education began. He was committed to the care of his aunt, Janet Scott, who was his first teacher. She told him tales and sung him songs about the old Border reivers, Wat of Harden, Johnnie Armstrong, &c. She was the true nurse of the poet within him. He began, in spite of his lame limb, to stand, walk, and run, and his general health was confirmed by the pure mountain air. He early learned to read, and was fond of reciting the legendary and romantic ballads of the Border. Sandy Ormiston, the shepherd, used to carry him to the hills before he could walk. The boy had no greater pleasure than in rolling about all day long in the midst of the flocks. He knew

every sheep and lamb by head mark. Not only, in these early days, did he rejoice in God's bright sunshine, but in the lurid thunderstorm he saw the bright flashes of the lightning with delight. His aunt took him to Bath. He lived there a year. That fine old city was then in the zenith of its fame for the treatment of rheumatic and nervous ailments. He passed through London, the sights there stamped with uncommon vividness on his memory. He was a short time at a dame's school in Bath, where he tells, himself, he learned more than in any school he ever attended, and never had a more regular teaching of reading. After he returned to Edinburgh, when he was but six years of age, Mrs. Cockburn, the authoress of the modern version of the "Flowers of the Forest," who met Scott in his father's house in George Square, thus describes him: "I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on. It was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted up his eyes and hands. 'There's the mast gone,' says he, 'crash it goes; they will all perish!' After his agitation, he turns to me: 'This is too melancholy,' says he; 'I must read you something more amusing.' When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt that he liked that lady. 'What lady?'

says she. 'Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she is a *virtuoso* like myself.' When asked what he meant by a *virtuoso*, he said: 'One who wants to know everything.'" Scott was, shortly after this, sent to the High School, where he distinguished himself more in the playground than in the classes. Notwithstanding his infirmity, he was a grand football player, great at snowball bickers, took the command in the fights of the boys with the outsiders, and was the first at climbing the Kettle Nine Stanes at the Castle. The following story shows what a keen observer Scott was, as well as a bit of a dodger. He had long desired to get above a school-fellow in his class, who defied all his spasmodic efforts, till Scott noticed that whenever a question was asked of his rival, the lad's fingers grasped a particular button on his waistcoat, while his mind went in search of the answer. Scott accordingly anticipated that if he could remove this button the boy would be thrown out, and so it proved. The button was cut off, and, the next time the lad was questioned, his fingers being unable to find the button and his eyes going in quest of it, he stood confounded, and Scott mastered by strategy the place which he could not gain by mere industry. Often, in after life, Scott said he bitterly regretted this manœuvre. He was an inimitable story-teller. His school-fellows clustered round him and delighted to listen to his old-world tales.

Cowper and Shelley were overborne and broken-hearted in the rough play of a public school. But Scott, Byron, and John Wilson found it their element. This was certainly a testimony to the all-sidedness of the genius of these men. The current idea at one time that Scott was a dunce he combats most effectually in his autobiography with a characteristically conscientious desire not to set a bad example; he solemnly declares that he was neither a dunce nor an idler, and explains how the misunderstanding arose from his irregular attendance owing to uncertain health. His famous teacher confirms this when he says that though many of his school-fellows knew the Latin better, Gualterus Scott was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Left very much to himself throughout his boyhood in the matter of reading, so quick, lively, excitable, and uncertain in health, it was considered dangerous to press him, and prudent, rather, to keep him back. Scott began, at a very early age, to accumulate the romantic lore which the romantic spirit within enabled him to make such splendid use of. As a child, he seems to have been an eager and attentive listener, and a great favourite, having, even then, the same engaging charms that made him so much beloved as a man. About the time of his leaving the High School, he had another severe illness. He tells us: "For several weeks I

was confined strictly to my bed, during which time I was not allowed to speak above a whisper, to eat more than a spoonful of boiled rice, or to have more covering than a counterpane." During this second illness he had command of a circulating library, founded, it is said, by Allan Ramsay. It was rich in the romance of chivalry. Scott has declared "I believe I read almost all the romances, old plays and epic poetry, voyages and travels, histories and memoirs in that formidable collection." It was at this time that the lad began his study of the scenic side of history, and especially of campaigns, which he illustrated for himself by the arrangement of shells, seed, and pebbles, so as to represent encountering armies. He also managed so to arrange the looking-glasses in his room as to see the troops march out to exercise in the Meadows as he lay in bed. Thus was genius silently working within him, preparing him for the future exigencies of his literary life as effectually in his quiet bed when he was not suffered to speak above his breath, as when rambling through the mountains of Perthshire or among the traditional wilds of Liddesdale. He recovered, however, and in his future life was little troubled with indisposition. These juvenile sicknesses had a powerful influence on the development of his mental powers. He went to Prestonpans for sea bathing, where an old military veteran, named

Dalgetty, found him, got fond of him—Who would not? This old pensioner, like the soldier in Goldsmith, "shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won." It is interesting to observe how not a few of the familiar names known to him in his youth or boyhood have been preserved in his writings. Nothing, in fact, that ever flashed on the eye or vibrated on the ear of this extraordinary genius but was in some form or other reproduced on his written page. After leaving the High School, his father sent him to school at Kelso, to be under the care of his gifted aunt, from whom again he heard more and read more of the Border lore. His constant companion was "Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry." Throughout his school-boy days and afterwards, Scott steadily and ardently pursued his own favourite studies. His reading in Romance and History was really study, and not merely the indulgence of an ordinary school-boy's appetite for exciting literature. While at Kelso, in the latter days of his childhood, he revelled in the bewitching scenery of the Tweed and Teviot. He ascribes to the influence of this scenery upon his mind the awakening within him of that insatiable love of natural scenery, more especially when combined with ancient ruins or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, which at once characterised and distinguished him as a writer, and imparted such a warmth

and richness of colouring to all his literary pictures. But to Sandyknowe, Scott always returned with great delight, and to his much loved Smailholm.

Smailholm Tower, the first old-world edifice with which Scott became familiar, might well inspire his youthful imagination. He was, as we have seen, taken to this place before he was two years old. Here the genius of Romance first dealt with him. In this region, Scott received his first ideas of the great storied part which his genius was to illustrate. Then, during long days and nights, his youthful fancy was awakened and delighted by grandmother and aunt, by old servant and neighbours, with legends and Border stories, and old songs and ballads. From everyone he came in contact with, he enriched his varied store. A neighbouring farmer at Sandyknowe had witnessed the execution of the Jacobite rebels at Carlisle. He repeated the facts to Scott, and to this tale of horror, poured into the ears of the boy, we are indebted for the trial and death scenes at the close of Waverley—"perhaps," says Gilfillan, "the most thrilling and tragic matter, out of Shakespeare, in the language." Scott himself tells us the magic power old Smailholm had on his youthful imagination:—

> "Those crags, that mountain tower,
> Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour—
> Though no broad river swept along,

To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale—
Yet was poetic impulse given
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green,
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And lovely honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the lone crag and ruined wall.
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all his round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched the mind,
Of forayers who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew
Far in the distant Cheviots blue—
And home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail, rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with tramp and clang,
The gateway's broken archways rang;
Methought grim features, seamed with scars,
Glared through the windows' rusty bars."

Of the infancy and youth of no poet or romancer that I know of have we, from his maturer self, such a description of the inward workings of this genius of Romance, wearing into his very nature the mystic web of glamour, which invested everything he touched

with a nameless spirit. Such were the objects that painted the earliest images on the eye and in the heart of Walter Scott.

Thus, before he could walk, he was made familiar with many of the scenes of his future stories, and from the heights of Sandyknowe he may be said to have had the first outlook upon the promised land of his future glory. The grand old Border keep, round which he has thrown such enchantment, figures in "Marmion," and in one of Scott's earliest ballads, "The Eve of St. John." The author of "Rab and his Friends"—dear old Dr. John Brown—tells us that the "lonely infant" was found, in a thunderstorm, at the foot of the grand old strength, clapping his hands at every flash of lightning, and crying "Bonny, bonny!"—and oft in his boyhood, from the top of the old tower, has he forgot the passing hours as he surveyed the wondrous landscape. Thence he had a wide prospect over all the Border country. The magnificent view includes Dryburgh, where the mighty magician now lies—not dead, but sleeping; Melrose, on which he has cast a light more radiant than the pale moonlight, in which it shows so sweetly; the triple Eildon Hills, with their ever-varying light and shade; and the outstanding Lammermoors, where Scott has fixed the scene of one of the grandest tragedies in any language. Over this landscape, where it has been said every field has

its battle and every rivulet its song, he would realise both the spectacle and the mood of his own heroine—

> "The lady looked in mournful mood,
> Looked over hill and dale—
> O'er Mertoun's wood and Tweed's fair flood,
> And all down Teviotdale."

The genius of Romance never for a moment forsook Scott. He went to the University, and admired Dugald Stewart. He attended the Law Classes. Scott's real University, however, was that library of strangest selection and most miscellaneous variety which he was piling up, partly on his shelves, and partly in the roomy chambers of his brain. Like many other great men who have attended school and college, he was in reality a self-taught man. He became noticeable to all his friends for his gigantic memory, the rich stores of material with which it was stored, his giant feats of industry, his delight in adventure and in all athletic exercises. He was willing to undergo any amount of drudgery, if it would only equip him more thoroughly for his own special purpose. That he might read Romance he learned the European languages. He learned Italian and read Ariosto; he learned Spanish and devoured Cervantes, whose works first inspired him with the ambition to excel in fiction. He also read Romance in French and German, and translated Goethe and rejoiced in Burgon's "Lenore." All that

he read he remembered. His genius had control of his memory, as of his other faculties. He remembered what was necessary he should remember. What a valuable memory, to retain only what was wanted! Scott used to illustrate the capricious affinity of his own memory for what suited, and its complete rejection of what did not, by old Meikledale's answer to a Scotch divine, who complimented him on the strength of his memory:—"No, sir," said the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what suits my fancy; and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I should not be able to remember a word you had been saying."

About this time, Scott met Robert Burns at Professor Ferguson's. At this interview, Burns made a lasting impression upon Scott. The story of the meeting of the Bards of Scotland is worth repeating. The effect produced on Burns by a print representing a soldier lying dead in the moor—his widow beside him, and a child in her arms, on the one side; on the other, his faithful dog. Beneath the picture were the lines of Langhorne:—

> "Cold on Cervadian hills or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe—her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Saw the sad presage of his future years—
> The child of misery, baptised in tears."

How the eyes of the hapless Bard of Coila glowed with pity as he read the line—

"The child of misery, baptised in tears."

Burns put the question, who was the author of the lines? No one could tell. The boy, Scott, whispered it was an obscure poet called Langhorne, and occurred in a neglected poem called "The Justice of Peace." Burns at once recognised the hive, the treasure-house from which the knowledge was drawn. Burns turned to the boy and said, "You will be a man yet." That look, and the tears through which it shone, haunted Scott's memory to the last; and those ardent, burning eyes of the poet, which gleamed like dewy stars, to him never set.

Scott was now apprenticed to his father, but law was not his vocation by choice—though I verily believe, had the genius of Romance not possessed him, he would have made a very great lawyer. We find from Scott's works that he was thoroughly conversant with Scotch law. As Hutton says, his love of romantic literature was as far as possible from that of a mind which only feeds on romantic excitement; rather was it that of one who was so moulded by the transmitted and acquired love of feudal institutions, with all their incidents, that he could not take any deep interest in any other fashion of human society. Now the Scotch law was full

of vestiges, records of that period—was, indeed, a great standing monument of it; and, in numbers of his writings, Scott shows with how deep an interest he had studied the Scotch law from this point of view. The law, which sometimes caused such sudden transformations, had subsequently a true interest for him as a romance writer, to say nothing of his interest in it as an antiquarian and historian, who loved to re-people the earth, not merely with the picturesque groups of the soldiers and courts of the past, but with the actors in all the quaint and homely transactions and puzzlements which the feudal age had brought forth. But Scott was not an apprentice after his father's heart. He was too fond of "raids"—so persistently did he trudge over all the neighbouring counties in search of the beauties of Nature and the historic associations of battle, siege, or legend. On one occasion, in coming home with one of his companions, their last penny had been spent days before, living latterly on drinks of milk from the peasant women and the hips and haws on the hedges, he remarked to his father how much he had wished for the power of playing on the flute, in order to earn a meal by the way; old Mr. Scott rather grumpily replied, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a gangrel scapegrace." We must remember that Scott created the taste by which he was enjoyed; that he had

great difficulties to contend with; that, owing to his father's feelings and his own connection with the law, in his early days he was half ashamed of his romantic studies, and pursued them more or less in secret with a few intimates. Scott, however, stuck to the law, and gained preferment. He had by this time joined the Speculative Society, at a meeting of which he read a paper on "Old Ballads." This interested Jeffrey so much that he got to know Scott, and they became friends. The topics which at that time engrossed his young contemporaries (the future founders of the *Edinburgh Review*) were economical and political. Scott's genius held him on his way; his favourite themes were of the old world—the bent of his mind was historical.

When Scott was twenty-one he was called to the Bar. In his father's office he, at all events, acquired a freedom in the use of the pen and habits of application, which were of essential service to him in his literary career. He seems to have read hard for four years at least; but almost from the first he limits his ambition to obtaining some comfortable appointment, such as would afford him leisure for his favourite literary pursuits. The atmosphere of the Parliament House had great influence upon Scott. His peculiar humour as a story-teller and painter of character was first developed amongst the young men of his own standing at the Bar. They

were the first mature audiences on which he experimented. Certainly a much severer test than when, at Lucky Brown's fireside, he tells us, "my tales used to assemble an admiring audience," and happy was he that could sit next the inexhaustible narrator. Duns Scotus, as they used to call him out of compliment, was *facile princeps* at providing entertainment for his brother briefless barristers, by the stove where they assembled to discuss knotty points of law and help one another to enjoy the humours of judges and litigants. It was to this market that Scott brought the harvest of the vacation rambles, which it was his custom to make every autumn for some years after his call to the Bar. He scoured the country in search of ballads and other relics of antiquity; but he found also and treasured many traits of living manners, many a lively sketch and story, with which to amuse his compeers on his return.

Scott's profession, in addition to supplying him with a competent livelihood, supplied him also with abundance of opportunities for the study of men and manners. Characters of all shades and types find their way into Courts of Law. The wonder is that so much technical drudgery did not take every particle of Romance out of him; but such was the power, elasticity, and strength of his genius that his daily attendance in open Court seems rather

to have helped him in giving an atmosphere of reality to his representations of the lips of the past. When Duns Scotus was absent from the stove he was always to be found in the library poring over old books and manuscripts. I verily believe he had this youthful audience in his mind's eye when he enlarged his public. By the time he was twenty-one he had acquired such a reputation for his skill in deciphering old manuscripts that his assistance was sought by professional antiquarians. This early assiduous, unintermittent study was the main secret, combined with his genius, of Scott's extempore speed and fertility, when at last he found forms into which to pour his vast accumulation of historical and romantic lore. He was, as he said himself, like an ignorant gamester, who keeps up a good hand till he knows how to play it. That he had vague ideas of playing it from a much earlier period than is generally supposed, there is not the slightest doubt. When Turner,—Scott's friend—the great painter, was asked what genius was, he said, "Hard work." Well, if it does not altogether constitute genius, it is at least an immense aid to it. Hard, persevering toil filled the garners upon which the genius which Scott possessed was perpetually at work, arranging, sifting, and making ready for distribution. The period of receptivity was a long one. Scott's genius did not flower early: he

was thirty-four before he published his first poem. But when the period of production came, with what prodigious rapidity he spun from his brain thin silken webs of thought, which clothed the minds of the people as with a garment. Carlyle, in his fine appreciation, but somewhat cynical criticism of Scott, could not understand the rate of speed—he had not dreamt of the tremendous labour which had produced the fertility, and the time it took to cultivate the soil. Carlyle accused Scott of want of finish—marvellous this for one who, by terse, home-spun vigour of words, had set the world at defiance.

What occupied Scott's attention chiefly was the ballads of Scotland, and in connection with these he performed a noble work. It had long been Scott's delight to collect the ancient ballads of his native land, from persons on the spot. This harvest was storing his imagination with wealth, which he was to pay back a thousand-fold. He had felt a strong desire to visit Teviotdale, and collect the ballads and traditions which were floating there, especially those riding ballads which he believed to be still treasured among the moss-troopers. During some years he made raids into Liddesdale, exploring all the valleys, familiarising himself with the scenery and manners of the people, and meeting with every class, making himself equally at home in the minister's manse and the farmer's kitchen hearth.

From the remote period when the Roman Province was contracted by the ramparts of Severus, until the Union of the Kingdoms, the Borders of Scotland formed the stage upon which were presented the most memorable conflicts of two gallant nations. They first overwhelmed the barriers of the Roman power in Britain. The subsequent events in which they were engaged tended little to diminish their military hardihood, or to reconcile them to a more civilised state of society. It would be throwing away words to prove, what all must admit, the general taste and propensity of nations, in their early state, to cultivate some species of rude poetry. Thus it happens that early poets almost uniformly display a bold and original cast of genius and expression. They have walked at free will, and with unconstrained steps, along the wilds of Parnassus. No wonder, then, that Scott fixed his genius for Romance and had ardent love for such poetry, and longed to make a collection of the works of the primitive and bolder poets. The "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" is such. Mr. Motherwell says—"Fortunate it was for the heroic and legendary song of Scotland that the work was undertaken, and still more fortunate that its execution devolved upon one so well qualified in every respect to do its subject the most ample justice. Long will it live—a noble and interesting monument of his un-

wearied research, curious and minute learning, genius, and taste. It is truly a patriot's legacy to posterity; and, much as it may now be esteemed, it is only in times yet gathering in the bosom of futurity—when the interesting traditions, the chivalrous and romantic legends, the wild superstitions, the tragic songs of Scotland have wholly faded from the living memory—that this gift can be appreciated. It is then that these volumes will be conned with feelings akin to religious enthusiasm, and their strange and mystic lore will be treasured up in the heart as the precious record of days for ever passed away—that these grand, stern legends will be listened to with reverential awe, as if the voice of a remote ancestor, from the depths of the tomb, had woke the thrilling strains of martial antiquity."

We have drawn particular attention to the Border Minstrelsy, because it contains the accumulated material out of which he hewed the best of his later works—a chaos through which the fragmentary lights of his creative genius were everywhere sparkling. Scott was now Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and soon became well known and blessed as the "Shirra." He was also Clerk of the Court of Session—the duties of which office, Lockhart tells us, rendered the post no sinecure. He discharged its duties faithfully for twenty-five years, during the height of his activity as an author. His ambition, however,

was to be able to use "literature as a staff, not as a crutch." He had been busy since his boyhood collecting Scottish Border ballads, and studying the minute details of Border history. He began to cast about for a form which should have the advantage of novelty, and a subject which should secure unity of composition. I believe we should have had Border manners portrayed in prose but for an accident. Scott had engaged all his friends in the hunt for Border ballads and legends. Among others, the Countess of Dalkeith interested herself in the work. This lady happening to know an old legend which clung to the district in which she lived—a legend about a tricky hobgoblin—she asked Scott to write a ballad about it. He agreed with delight. Nothing could have suited Scott better. To suggest a subject to an artist does not always produce the best result, but her ladyship's hint was in the right direction. From childhood, Scott's memory had been stored with fantastic relics of a legendary past. The subject grew in his fertile imagination, till incidents enough gathered round the goblin to furnish a framework for his long-designed picture of Border manners. It was in the year 1805—the year in which Nelson died in the cockpit of the *Victory*, in which Austerlitz was fought and Napoleon was crowned King of Italy, amid all the wild storm of trampling hosts and falling kingdoms—that Scott

put forth his first poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

It was a bold stroke of Scott to compete with those exquisite old ballads. He had been collecting the materials on which his genius was to feed "like fire to heather set." He had been educating the public taste to the pitch when such a poem as the "Lay" would be well received. He knew he had genius within him kindred with the authors of the ballads, and he hoped that by grafting the interest of a story on their beautifully-simple structure, and connecting epic unity with their dramatic and lyrical spirit, he would not be entirely eclipsed in the comparison; and the event proved that he was right. The success of the poem was marvellous. The finest minds of the age were interested, and Jeffrey, Charles James Fox, and William Pitt all expressed delight. Scott had invented a new style of poetry, and had interested the world in an entirely new theme. The harp of Caledonia had but just begun to sound to the master-hand of Burns, when he was snatched prematurely away; and it had remained silent till Scott awoke it again with loftier, if not tenderer strains, and then there were one or two passages which—in their sweetness and finish, as well as in the patriotic feeling which breathed through them—had seldom been surpassed. Such was the description of Melrose by moonlight, and such is that noble burst—

Such passages have long had a hackneyed look, from the frequency of quotation; but conceive their effect on Scottish and Border blood when first published. What a sensation they produced! As it was, all Scotland instantly recalled them with the case of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and felt truly that a kindred genius to Burns had risen in their midst. The public were delighted with verse that could be read with ease and even with exhilaration—verse in which a simple, interesting story was told with brilliant energy, and simple feelings were treated, not as isolated themes, but as incidents in the lives of individual men and women. Mr. Ruskin has testified with what fidelity he describes the scenery which was familiar to him. His outdoor life was the secret of his power. He had himself ridden over the hills his heroes scale in mad flight or pursuit. His genius fitted him to interpret all this; and he did interpret it, to the immeasurable delight of his readers. His handling is always simple, and his subject always romantic; but, though romantic, it is simple almost to bareness. A certain ruggedness and bareness was of the nature of Scott's idealism and romance. It was so in relation to scenery. He told Washington Irving that he loved the very nakedness of the Border country. "It has something," he said, "bold and stern and solitary about

it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, with its ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my honest grey hills, and if I did not see the heather once a year I think I should die."

I do not intend to follow in minute detail the other poems of Scott. Suffice it to say that in each there is the same romantic interest, the same healthy feeling, the same steady hand, the same freshness of imagination and sentiment. "Marmion" was received with great expectations, and it literally fulfilled them. The wine was growing richer. Jeffrey handled it rather roughly, however. Scott's wife noticed that Jeffrey had done so. She was said to be wanting in character; but Joanna Baillie, a capital judge, praised her highly, and her want of character is not corroborated by the following story:—Jeffrey was asked to dine with Scott. He was doubtful, after his scathing article (which, it is now admitted, was utterly uncalled for), whether he should go. Scott kindly pressed him, and received him graciously. Mrs. Scott behaved to Jeffrey during the whole evening with the greatest politeness; but fired this parting shot, in her broken English, as he took his leave, "Well, good-night, Mr. Jeffrey; dey tell me you have abused Scott in de *Review*, and I hope Mr. Constable has paid you very well for writing it." She never spoke to him again.

Justice was done to the genius of the author, and the Battle of Flodden was praised as more Homeric than Homer. But "The Lady of the Lake" has always been, as a whole, my favourite among Scott's poems. I imbibed it before I could read. My mother came from Edinburgh, and was passionately fond of Scott, and could repeat "The Lady of the Lake" by heart. Gilfillan says we love it for the delicious naturalness and interest of the story; the breathless rapidity of the verse, reminding you of the gallop of the gallant grey, till it sank in death; the freshness of its spirit, like morning dew sparkling on the heath flowers: its exquisite characters;—and from the scenery of the poems—Glenartney's hazel shade; the wild heights of Uam-Var; lone Glenfinlas; Ben Ledi's heaving sides and hoary summit; the down-rushing masses of Ben Venue; Loch Achray, as sweet as when Allan Bain uttered his thrilling farewell; and the gnarled defile of the Trosachs, in which, to fancy's ear, the horn of Fitz-James is heard still sounding for evermore. In the unmixed delight afforded by this poem there is no parallel in literature, save in two or three of Scott's own novels, or in a few of Shakespeare's plays. Walter Savage Landor justly magnifies its closing verses as unequalled in princely dignity and gracefulness.

We now come to the main work of Scott's life.

We are told that Scott left the field of poetry because Byron beat him; but, to my mind, that was not the reason. Scott's poetry was as perfect of its kind as Byron's was. The genius of Romance, which had taken possession of Scott, revelled in variety. We have, from the earliest time, metrical romances and prose romances. This genius would have her hero excel in both. The former partook of the work of the light-horseman, and were pure romances. "Marmion" was chiefly composed in the saddle, and we are told that the Battle of Flodden was dashed off by Scott when at quarters with the cavalry at Portobello, and that in the intervals of drilling he used to walk his fine black steed up and down by himself on the sands, within the beating of the surf, and now and then he would spur his horse and plunge into the surf, and go off as if at the charge, with the spray dashing about him. Now, in his prose romances, he had a wider field. These stories are rightly called romances. No one can avoid observing that they give that side of life which is unromantic quite as vigorously as the romantic side. In the novels, the business of life is even better portrayed than its sentiments. Indeed, it was because Scott so much enjoyed the contrast between the high sentiment of life and its dry and often absurd detail, that his imagination found so much freer a vent in the historical romance

than it ever found in the romantic poem. Yet he clearly needed the romantic excitement of picturesque scenes and historical interests too. To describe the Waverley Novels is not now required. Their characteristics are well known wherever the English language is spoken. There is a confident ease in Scott's way of telling his story, which no other writer of fiction has possessed in the same degree. He has made history live, and his portraits bear the impress of reality. Scott never strains after effect. He accomplishes greatest effect by the simplest means. It is this simplicity which makes the Waverley Novels so unique. The genius and the power displayed are mostly the same, no matter what the subject chosen. Dawson says it is a full, rich stream, flowing on with no sense of effort, with great strength and majesty, sinking at will into a placid current, or swelling into an overwhelming torrent. Scott had never to wait for inspiration. He was always inspired, ready to write, and wrote with a keen sense of vigour and enjoyment which made the work a pastime and delight rather than a labour to him.

Had not disaster overtaken Scott, and shattered his fortunes in the fulness of his fame, the world would never have known his true greatness. His works had revealed the greatness of his genius; adversity revealed the greatness of his character. The man was greater than his works. The last

scenes in the life of Scott are unsurpassed in literature for grandeur and pathos. They still live before the student of literature, and they serve to reveal the genuine nobility of the man. The genius of Romance did not spoil Scott as a man, as genius has spoiled many a man. The picture of Scott fighting with such adversity is a noble one. He met his end with perfect calmness. His last words to his children were tinged with a true and noble piety. So, amid the mourning of the world, Scott passed away, having fought a good fight, and won the victory. He left behind him a splendid fame, a stainless reputation—above all, a great legacy of imperishable genius; and, of the thousands of pages he had written, there was not one that he wished blotted out, as he lay on his death-bed.

The Genius and Character of Burns.

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE DENNISTOUN BURNS CLUB.

25th JANUARY, 1892.

The Genius and Character of Burns.

The toast of the evening was proposed by Dr. George R. Mather, as follows:—

I rise to give you with the very greatest pleasure "The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns." A gifted and genial critic, writing of Robert Burns, begins by saying, "Great men, great events, great epochs grow as we recede from them, and the rate at which they grow in the estimation of men is in some sort a measure of their greatness." Tried by this standard, Burns must be great indeed, for, during the long years that have passed since his death, men's interest in the man himself, and their estimate of his genius, have been steadily increasing. Carlyle, writing of Burns in 1828, states that he could then number six biographies of him, but since then the number has steadily increased. Lockhart, the great and ruthless critic of men and morals, has anatomized our Bard in his own masterly and trenchant style. John Wilson ("Christopher North"), in the meridian of his powers, employed his meteor pen

in his own unrivalled manner on behalf of the Ayrshire poet, and his eulogies, given to the world orally and otherwise, shall endure with the language. Carlyle, from beneath his shaggy brows, has spoken of him in generous sympathy. We join with "Delta" in his lines—fresh, strong, and beautiful:—

> "To the champions of his genius
> Grateful thanks we duly pay—
> Currie, Chambers, Lockhart, Wilson,
> Carlyle—who, his bones to save
> From the wolfish fiend, detraction,
> Crouched like lions round his grave."

There have been many who have vindicated the name and fame of Robert Burns from those who have had the little wit, but the heartless malignity, to dishonour the one and disparage the other. We in Scotland have had poets and poets; but immeasurably out of range of comparison with any native predecessor or successor stands out in the story of the ages the Ayrshire ploughman. He splendidly illustrates the maxim that the poet is born, not made. Burns' parents were thoroughly Scottish folk, imbued with all good and godly principles, drawn not only from the unfailing storehouse, "The Book of Life," but inspired habitually, too, with bright and stirring memories of old—of the days when Scotland was still an independent power—when Wallace or Bruce could place his back

to the everlasting hills, and defy all the might and all the chivalry of England.

"Scotland! dear to him was Scotland
In the glory of her story,
When her tartans fired the field,
Scotland! oft betray'd, beleaguer'd,
Scotland, never known to yield,
Dear to him her Doric language—
Thrill'd his heart strings at her name;
And he left her more than rubies
In the riches of his fame."

I say Robert Burns, the ingenuous, dark-eyed boy, had, by the circumstances of his birth and boyhood, every ennobling influence to nourish him into the Bard of his country. Bonnie Ayrshire, in which, near its chief town, Burns first saw the light, in a clay-built cottage reared by his father's own hands, may well be—aye, is—right heartily proud of him this day. It was on the 25th of this month, 1759, that, as he himself says—

"A blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew hansel in on Robin."

It did something more. Not long after his birth, the storm-wind of the tempestuous season nearly made an end of the cottage, blowing down its gable, and, in the dark of the winter morn, mother and child had to be removed for safety to a neighbour's house.

As years passed by, he removed to the small farm of Mount Oliphant, and he remained there till 1777, when the lease ended, he being then in his eighteenth year. What would we not give for a portrait of him then, ere sorrow had tried him, or passion had wasted him—when the raven curls had no mildew of care, and the lofty brow no furrow?

It is quite apparent from the records of these early days that the family tutor, honest and, no doubt, pretty well learned (Murdoch), was a most potent agent in developing the faculties of the boys. Their mental training was thorough. They were taught not only to read, but to parse; to give the exact meaning of words, and so forth, in a style which even now, with all our vaunted School Board system, is, I suspect, not attempted—at all events, is not so successfully carried out as in that humble cottage some hundred and twenty years ago. There is no room at all for sage, moral, reflective remarks about Burns having gained his learning by inspiration. He toiled and moiled over spelling-book and grammar, slate and copy-book, just as lads like him are in myriads all over the land doing now. When he had gained facility for the perusal of books he read voraciously, and in this way he attained command of that sweet, pure, but copious and most varied style which we find him exhibiting in

his letters. All the youngsters of the family at the Mount had the same crave for mental improvement as had Robert, and, did there exist materials for such a picture, how interesting it would be to have realised what we are told of someone entering the farm-house at meal-time, and finding the whole family seated, each with a spoon in one hand and a book in the other. Such a scene would admirably have suited Wilkie to portray; and, indeed, now that I have mentioned that illustrious artist, let me remark in passing that he, more than any other British artist, alive or dead, was the Robert Burns of the canvas.

At this time Burns' life was a very hard one; but the family kept together, and warm affection bound as in one all its numerous, hard-working members. Robert had been at school before this, and out of his scanty income old Mr. Burness managed to employ a tutor for him and his brother. What a fine man old Mr. Burness must have been —one of Nature's true nobility. Murdoch, the tutor—no mean man himself—writing from London in later years, is lavish in expressions of love and veneration for old Mr. Burness, in whose two-roomed cottage—"a tabernacle of clay"—there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. Murdoch goes on to say, "He spoke the English language with more propriety than any man

I ever knew with no greater advantages." This had a very good effect on the boys, who talked and reasoned like men long before others. Oh, for a world of such! He was worthy of a place in Westminster Abbey. Carlyle describes him as a man worth going far to meet—manly to the core, and religious; in essence honesty incarnate. "The secret of Scotland's greatness," says the *Times*, "is oatmeal"; a champion of the Free Kirk says it is Sabbatarianism; a zealous Presbyter says it is hatred of Prelacy. John Nichol asks if it does not rely as much on the influence of a few men of such character as old Mr. Burness has been described to be.

Someone has said that the best of the poet is always the man, and Robert Burns was the embodiment of all that was manly. He was buirdly in person, a very ploughman to look at; but his form was crowned by such a head as kings, mere earthly rulers, do not often wear. Beneath that broad and massive brow, the dome of thought, the palace of the soul, there swam an eye of lustrous, liquid black, which spoke of the true poetic fire within, that suffused his whole being. It was said of him in his prime that when you clasped his hand, it burned yours; and there was throughout all his being a force—call it electric, or magnetic, or what you will —that made him, by God's hand, of the true poetic nature. By the methodical ell-wand of men he can

never be appreciated; he did not wish, he did not need to be. The story is told of a very great philosopher, that, after reading through the two mighty poems of Milton, gave his verdict in interrogative form—"After all, what do they prove?" No one with a heart in his bosom who reads and knows Robert Burns, unless his brain has turned in the process, would ask the same question. For these poems are full of the most generous sentiments, the interfusion of which tends to bind men brothers over the world; they kindle anew feelings of patriotism, which make us proudly revere the great and glorious past, and resolve to guard at sacrifice of heart's blood what our fathers won for us; they preserve under consecrating light the memories of home—its duties, its joys, and its sorrows; they soothe us in the hour of heart-wreck, when all is dark and drear; and they cheer us as no jovial songs of any time have ever done, in our hours of sociality, when innocent mirth rules high.

The highest and best standard by which to try any poet is his truthfulness to Nature. William Pitt, the great statesman, said of Robert Burns' poetry that he could think of no verse since Shakespeare that had so much the appearance of coming direct from Nature. Many-sidedness, it has been said, is the highest proof and test of genius. Take for illustration the very greatest name in litera-

ture. Shakespeare has left to us, in his immortal dramas, creations so very various that it might well be said of him that he was not one, but all mankind's epitome. Juliet and Portia, Lady Macbeth and Ariel, Shylock and Hamlet, Romeo and Coriolanus, Caliban and Rosalind—each and all characters wide as the poles asunder. You will find the same kaleidoscopic power in our own Scott, and intermediately Robert Burns exemplified his multifariousness of genius in poems so utterly diverse in sentiment as "Tam o' Shanter," or "Scots Wha Hae," that mighty strain which one has said might be the marching music of humanity for ever. He painted, with a power that no ship-load of painters like Blake or Fuseli could have approached, the Witches' Dance in Auld Alloway, and Tam o' Shanter's mad ride for life when out upon the honest, bewildered farmer sallied the hellish legions, and pursued him to the key-stane of the Brig. It was the same hand that wrote the "Prayer in Prospect of Death," the same addressed "Thou Lingering Star of Lessening Ray," in strains so exquisitely soft and pure that, as has been said, they could only have emanated from their author under feelings which an angel might envy, but which no angel can ever share. We have no power of calculus for estimation of a chameleon-like gift such as this, and yet it was possessed in rarest

degree by the humble ploughman, whose lot it was to live in penury, and, while yet his summer of life should have been at its brightest, to be laid low by the icy hand of death.

Burns was not without that ambition which is a necessary and natural adjunct of genius. We find him, when he was about 25 years of age, expressing the earnest wish that he

> "For puir auld Scotland's sake
> Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
> Or sing a sang at least."

And so, when the harvest failed at Mossgiel, as it did, he may have conceived very naturally the idea that if he did not succeed as a farmer, he might become a national poet. And this desire he was enabled to fulfil, not by any fortunate change in his circumstances or access of fortune, but by resolutely bending all his energies to his object, regardless of the world's concerns. This was indeed the spring-time of his genius, though the autumn of many a hard literary life has seen no such fruit as the product of its harvest; for, within a period of eighteen months—in quick succession, too—besides numerous minor pieces, were produced "Hallowe'en," "To a Mouse," "The Jolly Beggars," "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "Address to the Deil," "The Auld Farmer's Address to his Auld Mare," "The Vision," "The Twa Dogs," "The Mountain Daisy."

I find eminent critics disagreeing as to which of his poems is most worthy of the writer. I deem such prying criticism as very paltry and unworthy indeed, although I am compelled to acquiesce in Lockhart's remark that "The Cottar's Saturday Night" of all his pieces, is the one whose exclusion from the collection would be most injurious, if not to the genius of the poet, at least to the character of the man, and certainly it is the one poem which has most endeared his name to the more thoughtful of his countrymen. But there is another of his poems to which most competent judges assign an even higher place than this. It is the poem of "Tam o' Shanter" —full of weird imagery and thrilling, dramatic, and panoramic incident. This has been declared to be the greatest poem of at least two centuries. It contains the greatest witch dance in literature. Had he produced no other, it would have immortalised him. We know of single poems that have done so for their authors. Gray's "Elegy" is one, Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore" is another, "The Song of the Shirt" is another, Motherwell's "Jeanie Morrison" is yet one more, and I might add—though slightly—to the number. But it may safely be said there is not any composition in any language to be found except this of Burns, which, for one hundred years now, has held its own unique place in literature, and is likely to do so till admiration

of poetic genius shall die out of the hearts of men. I would ask you to read and admire Burns' "Elegy on Matthew Henderson," whose history has been unfortunately lost sight of; see how the birds, the flowers, all Nature is laid under tribute to do homage to his friend:—

"Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens;
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens;
Ye burnies, wimplin' doun your glens,
Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming strang wi' hasty stens
Frae linn to linn!

Mourn, little harebells, o'er the lea;
Ye stately foxgloves, fair to see;
Ye woodbines hanging bonnilie
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when every grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at its head;
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed
I' the rustling gale;
Ye maukins, whiddin' thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlew, calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood,
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels,
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks, at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far worlds wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r
In some auld tree, or eldritch tower,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r
Sets up her horn;
Wail thro' the dreary, midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year;
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear;
Thou Simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay green flowery tresses shear
For him that's dead.

Thou Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear;
Thou Winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost!"

Read and inwardly digest his "Epistle to a

Young Friend." If Burns was a sinner, he knew, felt, and confessed it, and held up the sin to everlasting disgrace. He shudders when he says—mark the words—

> "But, och, it hardens a' within,
> And petrifies the feeling"—

turns the best of the man into stone. If remorse can teach, and who will deny that it can, here is a sermon in two lines, most powerful and telling, and as practical a one as ever was written. Let us not be too sore on Burns. His detractors would pull him down—dry as summer dust—they never felt the tempter's power. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean." What a compendium of sound advice the "Epistle" contains. I am inclined to forgive Burns much after writing this *vade mecum*—

> "The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
> To haud the wretch in order;
> But where ye feel your honour grip,
> Let that aye be your border;
> Its slightest touches, instant pause,
> Debar a' side pretences;
> And resolutely keep its laws,
> Uncaring consequences.
>
> When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
> Religion may be blinded;
> Or if she gi'e a random sting,
> It may be little minded;

But when on life we're tempest driven,
A conscience but a canker;
A correspondence fixed wi' heaven,
Is sure a noble anchor.

Adieu, dear amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting;
May prudence, fortitude, and truth
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughmen's phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may you better reck the rede,
Than ever did the adviser."

As a writer of love lyrics and songs, only one bard of our time is ever named beside Burns—Thomas Moore, of Ireland; but, although Moore's patriotism is quite undoubted, he utterly wanted that kind of patriotism which is hot as fire in "Scots Wha Hae," for it alone is worth all Moore's national songs together. Moore's melodies are fine, though at times artificial; they have pathetic tenderness and brilliancy of fancy, beautiful words, pure morals, and fine music. They have not, however, the vigour, the truth to Nature, and the deep, passionate feeling of our own great national poet. And indeed, Moore pretty well laid himself open to Hazlitt's sneer that he had turned the Harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box. Moore was supposed, and with some reason too, to be something of a sycophant. To such a charge Burns was no more

amenable than to being a negro. His manliness it was which led him into many a scrape with his would-be patrons, and their patronage was small at best. Through the influence of one or more, he received an appointment in the Excise. All that could be done by the country he had glorified was to send the Bard to gauge ale firkins—so says Coleridge. He did his duty in a kindly, honest way; but he was on the wrong side of politics, and he was allowed to drudge on, without recognition and without promotion.

Burns was the song writer of Scotland, and, through her, of all the world, and well qualified he was to be so. Burns loved every thing, from the wee mousie that ran under his plough, up to Mary in heaven. For many a noble, inspiring lay we bless his gentle memory. Manly and sweet were the songs that, amid all privations and turmoil of body and spirit, he sang to us—for us. Witness "A Man's a Man for a' That." What says Ebenezer Elliot:—

"Stern mother of the deathless death,
Where stands a Scot a freeman stands;
Self-stayed if poor, self-clothed, self-fed,
Mind mighty in all lands.

No wicked plunder need thy sons,
To save the wretch whom mercy spurns;
No classic lore thy little ones,
Who find a Bard in Burns."

Yes, it has been truly said by Campbell, he carries us into the humble scenes of life not to make us dole out our tributes of charitable compassion to paupers and cottagers, but to make us one with them on equal terms; to make us enter into their passions and interests, and share our hearts with them as brothers and sisters of the human race. Then we have "Tam Glen," "Gae fetch to me a Pint o' Wine," and how many more? One more, at all events. Wilson says of it that Burns penned it on one of his visits between Ellisland and Mossgiel to his future wife, under such homely inspiration, as precious a love offering as genius, in the passion of hope, ever laid in a virgin's bosom. His wife sung it to him that evening, and, indeed, he never knew whether or no he had succeeded in any one of his lyrics till he heard his words and the air together from her voice.

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly lo'e the west;
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best;
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But, day and nicht, my fancy's flicht
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air;

There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings
But minds me o' my Jean."

A song writer without a peer Burns undoubtedly was, and we find the ruling passion strong in death. His wife being unable from her condition to attend him, her place was supplied by the affectionate tenderness of Jessie Lewars, sister of a brother gauger. To this dear lassie humanity is indebted for her tender care of our poet during his last hours. Burns addressed to her his last and sweetest song—

"Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee."

In every land on which the sun of civilisation has arisen, the name of our Scottish Bard, Robert Burns, shall be cherished with an admiring love, that, through the long future years, shall suffer no abatement—no decay. His glory is undying.

"First the banks o' Doon beheld it,
Then his own land was its span;
Now the world became his empire,
And his home the heart of man."

Provanhall.

CONTRIBUTED TO THE PAPERS OF THE REGALITY CLUB, GLASGOW.

APRIL, 1894.

PROVANHALL.

An able writer has given us, in a former paper of the Regality Club,* a good idea of the extent and history of the lands of Provan, or Barlanark as they were formerly called, situated to the east of Glasgow. What is attempted here is merely to give a few additional particulars anent a portion of the lands—Provanhall—which still retains the old name of Provan, the only part of the estate which does so, except Provanmill, which lies nearer Glasgow.

The whole of the broad acres of Provan at one time belonged to the Church. Archbishop Turnbull, to whom we owe the foundation of our University, and who contributed in no small degree to the growth of the old city of Saint Mungo, was styled, in 1447, the Prebendary of Balernoch or Lord of Provan. One mile eastward of Provanhall, at the extreme end of the lands of Provan, stood the Castle of Lochwood, one of the Episcopal residences.

The whole of Glasgow on the north side of the

* First Series, p. 8.

Clyde, with a considerable landward tract around it, formed, at the time of the Reformation, one parish. In 1596, the landward portion was set apart as a separate parish, under the name of the Barony Parish. The minister of this parish officiated in the Crypt of the Cathedral, long known as the Laigh Kirk. Sir Walter Scott well describes this dismal old sanctuary, when he brings Rob Roy and Francis Osbaldiston to worship here. By-and-bye, however, the parishioners got a new church close to the Cathedral, and, until quite recently, people from the uttermost bounds of the parish found their way on Sundays to the Barony Kirk. The landward part of this large parish was disjoined from the Barony in 1847, and is now the parish of Shettleston.

As was told in the former paper, Sir Robert Hamilton sold Provan, on 3rd September, 1667, to the town of Glasgow. The town as landlord did not escape from the troubles of the age, for we read in the Minutes of Glasgow Town Council, of 5th October, 1678:—"The quhilk day, the said Magistratis and Counsell, considering the irregular carriadge of Johne Hamiltoune, their tennent in Provand, throw his keeping of the Conventickles, and how the Secreit Counsell is incensed against the toune for suffering him to doe the samyne; for perverting, therefor, they hereby ordain Johne

Barnes, their Baillie of Provand, to eject and cast the same Johne Hamiltoune out of the said lands, and to secure his guids and plenishings, ay, and until the toune be satisfeit of the rent, and that he bring in the keyes of the tounes house till the samyne be disposed upon, and for this effect appoynts the said Jon. Barnes to tak with him such persons as he thinks fitt, and for doing thereof this shall be his warrand."

Exactly one hundred years after the purchase the Town Council of Glasgow, who had feued out the lands in 1719, closed their connection with the lands of Provand by selling the superiority. They had incurred a heavy debt through the building of Saint Andrew's Church, and, it is said, made the sale to pay off this debt.

The Lands now known as Provan Hall are thus described in the advertisement of Provan in 1729*:— "The Hall Mailing, including therein the Mansion House and Yards, Kiln and Barn burdened with South Mains, having the use of the House called the New House the first year, and at the end thereof to carry away the Stones and Timber, and with Liberty of casting of Peats at Gartmartine Moss in South Mains for their own use, consisting of 55 Acres one Rood, or thereby, Rentaled at 23

* *Regality Club*, First Series, p. 42.

Bolls, and of Valuation 42 . 07 . 6. The Teynd whereof is 14 . 12 . 2."

The Mansion House of Provanhall, and the Estate, passed through several hands after they were sold by the Town Council of Glasgow. In the end of last century they belonged to John Buchanan, son of the deceased Doctor John Buchanan of Provanhall, formerly of the Island of Jamaica. The lands had before belonged to George Hamilton, Merchant in Glasgow, and were by a Decreet of Sale dated the 8th day of March, 1780, pronounced by the Lords of Council and Session adjudged to William Coats, Merchant in Glasgow. William Coats sold them to Willam Allison Jamieson of London, Mariner, in 1781, and he re-sold them to Dr. John Buchanan in 1788. Dr. Buchanan bequeathed the Estate to his son John Buchanan, who had two daughters. The younger, Elizabeth Buchanan, married Reston Mather of Budhill, who died at the advanced age of 82 years; she still survives, and her eldest son William Mather succeeds to the Estate.

Provanhall lies about five miles to the east of Glasgow, and may be reached easily on foot by a pleasant country road. Holding direct east by Duke Street, we pass on the right the old house of Netherfield, now divided up into workmen's houses; on the left, Haghill; and at the Sheddens, taking the Carntyne Road, pursue our journey by the old

powder magazine. We then pass Gartcraig House, of which mansion, with its old dovecot standing in the fields, you get a fine glimpse. On through the clachan of Lightburn, we then have a view eastwards which embraces the woods round Springboig, Larch Grove, Earlybraes, and Barlanark, passing Bertrohill with Wester and Easter Cowhunchollie, the former now Cranhill and the latter Queenslie.

Turning sharply to the left on ascending Queenslie Hill, we have a commanding view of the old Manor house of Provanhall and its terraced garden, which has a good southern exposure. Crossing the Monkland Canal, we enter the avenue, and nearing the house from the west, we are struck with the privacy of the old home, shaded by fine old beeches and sycamores. Provanhall consists of a house of two stories facing the south, and another building—also of two stories—to the north, with a court-yard between. On the east, from which the best view is got, the houses are connected by a wall with a picturesque gateway. The date over the gateway is 1647, and from the appearance of the buildings this is probably the date when they were erected. The front house has been considerably altered, but the back building, access to the upper floor of which is got by an outside stair, is but little changed from what it must have been at first.

The gateway, six feet two inches wide, forms an

interesting feature of the architecture of the old place. The jamb stones of the gateway are moulded with cavettos, and are finished with a seventeenth century moulded cap. Above there is a moulded arch rather flatter than a semicircle, the centre voussoir forming a keystone, stopping the archivolt, and enriched with simple carving. Above the archway is a panel, surmounted by a gable which rises above the copestone of the wall. On it are the cinquefoils of the Hamilton family, the date 1647, with the initials R. H. for Sir Robert Hamilton. The etching by Mr. Cameron gives a good view of this gateway. Outside of and to the right of this archway are the remains of a very large old yew tree, now quite dead. When we enter the court-yard shown in Mr. Cameron's sketch, the front building now occupied as the dwelling-house is on the left. The back building once occupied in the same manner, but now used as stores, stables, etc., is on the right. The Ground Plan of the buildings, prepared by Mr. Keppie, Architect, shows their plan. The walls of the back building are thick, and the ground floor is vaulted with a barrel vault. The principal apartment on this floor has a large fire-place extending right across the room, with an enormous flue now built up. The upper floor is reached by an outside stair from the court-yard, and the rooms are lit from dormer windows, front

and back, which break the line of wall picturesquely enough. These upper rooms have at one time been well finished, and there are still remains of plaster cornices, chimney pieces, and panelling. At the north-east corner of the back building a round turret still stands. This back building is well shown in Mr. Cameron's drawing. The present farm buildings encroach upon, and somewhat mar, the character of the fine old Manor house.

Leaving the old court-yard and coming round to the front, an extensive prospect opens to our view. We look over the Valley of the Clyde, rich with cultivation, the fine hill of Dechmont forming a prominent feature in the landscape. Close under the house lie the old Meadow of Provanhall and the remains of the Loch, still the haunt of the wild duck, and formerly the fish pond. One of the most interesting features of the place is the terraced garden, lying full to the sun, with borders of sweet, old-fashioned flowers. The lower part of the garden is reached from the centre by a double flight of steps to the right and left, the space between forming an arbour adorned with the trailing ivy-leaf toad-flax and traveller's joy. Anyone who has seen the famous garden at Drummond Castle must be struck with the identity of design and feeling shown in this garden.

Provan Hall is indeed a pleasant spot, and in the

days of old, before the country round was grimy with coal pits and the various appliances and accompaniments of civilisation, must indeed have been charming. The monks were thoroughly justified in its selection as a place of abode. Their cure was for the immaterial part of man, but they never ceased to care for the physical part, the wants of which were ever present to their minds.

Obituary.

OBITUARY.

[*Reprinted from the "Glasgow Medical Journal" for January, 1896.*]

THE annual dinner of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, which was held on Friday, the 29th November, 1895, will long be remembered by those who were present on account of the startlingly sudden death of Dr. George R. Mather, within a few minutes after he had responded on behalf of the Volunteers to the toast of "The Navy, the Army, and the Reserve Forces." Shortly after beginning his speech he requested the permission of the President to make use of his notes, on the ground that he had not been feeling very well of late, and had had some hesitation as to the wisdom of his undertaking this duty. Beyond this incident, which certainly was not customary to him in public speaking, nothing unusual was observed during the course of his reply. After following his notes very closely for a few minutes, he laid them aside, and concluded by a fervid peroration, delivered with great vigour in his usual impassioned style. He sat down amid great applause, and immediately

afterwards his friend, Mr. Tom M'Ewen, the artist, who was seated on his right, began to sing the ballad, "Ca' the yowes to the knowes." During the singing of the second verse of this song, Dr. Mather was observed to be slipping from his chair, his breathing having become somewhat suddenly stertorous. He was at once carried by willing helping hands into the vestibule of the hall, but in the course of a minute or two his breathing ceased and his heart had stopped. The tragic event, as by a magician's wand, changed the house of mirth into a hall of mourning, and the Fellows of Faculty, on leaving the sad scene, felt that the pains of death had not seized their departed brother alone, but had in some measure taken hold upon themselves.

Dr. Mather had been in the enjoyment of his usual robust health till about two months before his death, when he began to suffer from paroxysms of pain in the lower sternal and epigastric regions. During the first month of their occurrence, at least, the attacks of pain did not, to his great relief, spread into the left shoulder or arm. The seizures were usually induced by exertion, especially if undertaken soon after a meal, and they frequently terminated in a free eructation of wind. The pain was of an overpowering character, "bringing," as we have heard him say, "the sweat over his

forehead." In the intervals he felt perfectly well, and was sometimes days without an attack. The possibility of the affection being angina pectoris was ever before him, although he was willing to persuade himself that the pain might after all be simply of gastric origin. On one occasion, in the evening, after an unusually severe attack, which had commenced while attending a Royal Infirmary Managers' meeting, he permitted, with considerable reluctance, a medical friend to auscultate his heart; but the cardiac sounds were found to be perfectly pure. In full knowledge of the gravity of his condition, and during the last week or two, evidently with a clear conception ever before him of the possibility of sudden death, he calmly determined, while giving up his night work, to persevere with his daily duties, a determination quite characteristic of the man.

At the time of his death, Dr. Mather was 56 years of age. He was the son of Dr. Matthew Mather, who practised for many years in the village of Shettleston, removing in 1851 to the house at 11 Annfield Place, Dennistoun, where his son George continued always to reside. Dr. M. Mather died in 1863, of typhus fever contracted in the discharge of his professional duties, and was succeeded by his son, who had taken his degree of M.D. at the University of Glasgow in 1861.

About eight years ago, Dr. George R. Mather

married Miss Jessie Glen, eldest daughter of a well-known Glasgow engineer. Much sympathy has been expressed for Mrs. Mather in her bereavement. There were no children.

Dr. George Mather used often to speak of the Mearns district as his "calf country," and in this part of Scotland the Mathers had for many years been established as substantial farmers, of good old Covenanting stock. In judging of the personality of George Mather, we cannot neglect the influence of his ancestry upon his whole life and mode of thought. From his Covenanting forefathers he had inherited both that deep religious feeling and reverence for things Divine, which, though never obtrusive, were always felt to be present by those who were intimate with him, and that fervent Scottish patriotism and love of Scottish literature and song which permeated his whole being. He was one of the kindliest and most generous men we have ever known, in spite of a massive frame and a rugged face, which, not knowing him, would have prepared one to find in him a disciplinarian of the strictest kind. He was beloved by his patients, and especially by the poorer of them, for his warm-heartedness and the anxiety of his care for them. Passing along George Street on the day after his death, in a tramcar, two elderly women of the working-class were seated beside us. The one said to the other—

"His feyther wis ma doctor afore him; there's mony'll miss him."

Dr. Mather was widely known as a patron of art and a collector of pictures, especially of those of Scottish artists. His judgment and taste in all matters pertaining to painting were valued by all. But even when we regard him from this point of view we cannot get rid of the ancestral influence. His father, we have been informed, was a musician of no mean ability, and on a visit we once made with Dr. George to one of his farmer relatives, we were struck by the quaint arrangement of old china in the best room, and by the fine old Chippendale furniture which had been handed down from a past generation. The collection of pictures made by Dr. Mather is an exceptionally fine one, and he frequently lingered with pleasure over his finer examples. He bought pictures because he delighted in them, and loved to look at them. The Sabbath morning before his death, along with his wife he had looked at almost every picture on his walls. In literature, his favourite authors were Scott and Burns. He was one of those instrumental in founding the Glasgow Scott Club, and he succeeded Professor Veitch as President of that body. In science, his hero was John Hunter; although, with that rare justice which he always displayed, he was inclined to think that the claims of the elder brother, William,

had been somewhat underrated. He used to say if there had been no William, there could have been no John. Hence when he wrote his book *Two Great Scotsmen*, he made it a joint biography of the brothers William and John Hunter. He thought it was a shame that no volume on the Hunters had ever been issued from the Glasgow press, and he determined to remove this by issuing his own work in the centenary year of John Hunter's death. Dr. Mather's book, which was well received, was reviewed in our issue for May, 1894, where some account of it will be found. The similarity of his death to that of John Hunter, the great man whom he reverenced so much and loved so deeply, is a coincidence too striking not to be mentioned in a notice like this.

Dr. Mather's whole professional life was passed in active general practice in Dennistoun. His practice had gradually grown to be one of the largest in this district of the City. His periods of relaxation and holiday were few and short; and these, as we have seen, were spent amongst his pictures and books, or in visiting the historic localities of his beloved Scotland. During the early part of his career, he served a full term of years as Dispensary Physician to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and at one time he seems even to have meditated leaving the laborious work of general practice, and estab-

lishing himself as a teacher and pure physician. But the opportunity for this never came, and he laboured on quietly and faithfully among his numerous patients to the day of his death. Among his professional brethren, not only in Dennistoun, but over the whole of Glasgow, he was held in the highest esteem, as a skilful and wise practitioner. When the Eastern Medical Society was founded two or three years ago, he was unanimously elected its first President; and only the month before his death he had been elected a Member of Council of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, an office for which he allowed himself to be nominated chiefly on the ground that, if elected, he thought he would be in a better position to further a movement which he had deeply at heart—the erection of a statue in Glasgow to the brothers Hunter. About a year ago, he had also been chosen by the Faculty to represent them at the Board of the Royal Infirmary, and in the discharge of his duties as a Manager, as in all his other work, he was most faithful and painstaking. He was in all respects a most modest and unassuming man, and the professional honours which latterly had begun to come to him were altogether unsought, and were a true indication of the high respect in which he was held by his professional brethren.

His funeral, which was a public one, took place

from the Faculty Hall on Tuesday, 3rd December, 1895. Between three and four hundred gentlemen, including the Fellows of Faculty and the Officers of his regiment of Artillery Volunteers, assembled, so that both of the large halls in the Faculty buildings were filled to overflowing. In the New Hall the service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. M'Ewen of Sydney Place U.P. Church (Dr. Mather's minister), and by Dr. Burns of the Cathedral; in the Old Hall by Dr. Marshall Lang of the Barony, and Mr. Somerville of Blackfriars. The Fellows of Faculty and the Officers marched before the hearse as far as Hope Street, where they separated into two lines, allowing the cortege to pass between them. The shops in Dennistoun were closed during the funeral, and large numbers of Dennistoun people lined Duke Street while the procession passed. The President and Council of the Faculty, with a large company of mourners, accompanied the remains to their last resting place, beside his father, in Shettleston Churchyard.

J. L. S.

By Rev. Alex. Rattray, M.A.

Something like a shock of surprise and dismay fell upon many hearts as the tidings circulated from lip to lip of the sudden demise, amid the most painful and affecting circumstances, of the fine-hearted man whose name has been a household word among us. Seated at the festive board, which his presence never failed to adorn, surrounded by professional brethren—many of them the friends of his youth—all of them the admirers of his genius, there came to him that sudden and imperative call which we must all obey, and which few amongst us are better prepared to answer.

There are some men who live so much in the public eye, whose lives have been so busy and so useful, whose career has been spread over so many years, the circle of whose influence has been so wide, and who have touched so many centres of social activity and left their mark upon them all, that they hardly need a biography, however brief, for every one has learned to know them, and every one has learned to love them. Of this number was George Mather. Early in life he succeeded to the practice of his respected father, and for thirty years has been occupied, with no

appreciable intervals of rest or leisure, with the duties of his laborious profession. There is not a profession on the face of the earth so exacting as the medical. It demands at the hand of a man so large a portion of his time, such incessant and restless activity, a strain so great and unrelaxing on brain and heart, a devotion so unwearied and unselfish, a well-spring of fresh and living sympathies, which no painful and sometimes fatal familiarity with suffering is able to exhaust. Dr. Mather was equal to all these exigencies. He was a wise physician, cautious and painstaking, not leaping too rapidly to conclusions, but first making sure of his case and then of its treatment. He was all his life a busy man—far too busy. He was sought after, far and wide; and if it was not easy to get hold of him, those who succeeded in doing so had unbounded faith in his sagacity and skill.

But to say this is, after all, to say little. Of wise and accomplished and considerate physicians we have still amongst us not a few. Dr. Mather was a physician, but he was something more. He was an all-round man, many-sided in his tastes and sympathies. All the world knows how keen and appreciative was his eye for the beautiful in Nature and the beautiful in Art. The pastime of his life was the gathering together that fine collection of paintings which many of us have admired, and

which was worthy of admiration, for to most of them are attached the names of genius and renown. Nor was he narrow and selfish in his possession of these rich treasures, but ever ready to respond to the calls made upon him to make a loan of the choicest of them all, for the delectation of the public, in gallery or exhibition.

Dr. Mather was a Scotchman of the Scotch—that kind of typical character which we remember in Christopher North and Blackie, and many another, whose enthusiasm for everything belonging to their "ain countrie"—its language, its songs, its literature, its war heroes, its singers and minstrels—is something of a passion, and whose eloquence is never more flowing, never more delightful, than when expatiating, with flourish of the hand and rapture in the eye, on the incomparable merits of Burns and Scott. A Border ballad, a Border story, especially if it was new to him, to whom almost nothing was new, fired his blood, as the war-horse responds to the trumpet-call.

When he tried his own hand at literature, his pen had a *verve* in it which showed with what happy a facility he could grasp his subject, and with what power and grace of expression he could adorn it. His subject was a noble one, being a monograph of the Hunters, two of the greatest anatomical geniuses whom the world has ever seen, and whom

he delighted doubly to honour because they were Scotchmen. It is a very good test of the merits of his work that, while universally admired by the profession, to which it is, of course, more specially interesting, it could be read, and was read, with particular satisfaction and pleasure, by many who had no technical knowledge of the subject.

This fine spirit has fled from us; and when we think of him at this moment, it is not the accomplished physician, nor the Art lover, nor the facile and eloquent speaker that is in our thought, but George Mather the man. He was much more than all his gifts. His peculiar gifts were known to few. But how many knew and loved the man! What was it attracted them? Well, there was an honest, downright simple-heartedness about him that was very charming. He had a bright and happy disposition, and a pleasant, gently humorous way of looking at many things which was captivating and infectious. He would seize you by a button in the street, tell you a good story, and send you away with a twinkle of laughter in your soul which kept you cheery all the day. The kindly gleam in his eye and the ripple of his pawky speech were enough to knock the blues out of the most melancholy of men on the most melancholy day. The daily flower on his breast was a token of the beautiful spirit that beamed beneath it. The milk

of human kindness flowed through him from head to foot — a perennial fount. He did not only minister to the sick; he lingered over them, and watched for hours by their bedside. One of his patients has told us how he sat by her side for six hours, holding her hand in his, and only speaking now and then to say how sorry he was that nothing could be done to ease her pain. "When the eye saw me, then it blessed me." How many of God's poor could say that of George Mather? How many pensioners had he? Nobody knows. I have some little knowledge of one of them. The Doctor fed him, clothed him, gave him decent lodgings—was the only one who ever dropped a kind word into the ear of that piece of forsaken human loneliness.

I do not suppose Dr. Mather cared much for the distinctions of creeds or churches. His religion was a life, and may, perhaps, be expressed in the words that were said long ago of a good woman—"She loved much." Farewell, bright heart!

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be!
There should not be a shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.
Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest;
But not cypress nor yew let us see!
For why should we mourn for the blest?

By Mr. Alexander Lamont.

The Dark Angel, with his winnowing wings, is never very far from some home or other in our midst. How often have we all felt in our experience that even sunny-eyed Laughter ever carries beneath the folds of her dazzling robes a harp which, when strangely struck, can give forth strains as sad as any that were ever sung by Babel's streams! How often, in the brief pauses of our loudest mirth, are we suddenly compelled to be still and listen, only to find that

> The air is filled with farewells to the dying
> And mournings for the dead.

Death, even in its most circumscribed aspect, has a tragic dignity about it which there is no getting over, and always brings sorrow in its train. But there are circumstances which invest the dark visitation with a startling significance, and encompass it with a wide-spread grief and a universal gloom. Such a calamity is Dennistoun's destiny to-day. A few brief days ago we were in the rich possession of Dr. Mather, in his genial, manly presence, his cultured mind, his wise, safe counsel, and his priceless professional skill; and now, as we write,

he lies in his last sleep, in the sacred hush of the chamber of death, and all of us feel the poorer thereby.

The story of his tragic passing-away has been touchingly told in the newspapers; how that he had been attending the annual dinner of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons; how that, as Surgeon Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st L.A.V., he replied to the toast, "The Army, Navy, and Reserve Forces," remarking, at the same time, with his fine, native chivalry, that, as he had felt very unwell, he would have preferred to stay at home, but that, out of a strong desire to do honour to his friend, the President, he had persuaded himself to attend; how that, on being next called upon, Mr. Tom M'Ewan sang, in his own matchless manner, "Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes;" and how that, when the singer had rendered, with that exquisite *abandon* which many of us have so often admired, the pathetic line—

I could dee, but canna pairt,

Dr. Mather fell slightly forward in the swoon in which he was carried, as by a silent barge on a smooth river,

To where, beyond these voices, there is peace.

Dr. Mather has been closely, we can almost say affectionately, identified with Dennistoun during

the whole of his professional career—and that has compassed more than thirty years—having succeeded to the practice of his father, a man, who like his son whom we have just lost, left a fragrant memory in the hearts of all who knew him. As regards Dr. Mather's professional *status* in Dennistoun, it is no disparagement to any of his able and distinguished medical *confrères* to say that, from his inborn genius, his consummate skill as a physician, and his vast and lengthened experience, the other members in Dennistoun of that noble brotherhood to which he belonged, generously conceded to him the premier place. Sometimes, in those extremely delicate experiences of the profession, medical consultations, he was somewhat strong and tenacious in his own opinion, but even then he was ever ready to give good reason for the faith that was in him; and in no case did he ever permit a professional difference of opinion to interfere with professional etiquette or personal friendship. At the sick-bed, too, he was a genial physican, and often brought sunshine to the sick heart, as well as healing to the frail frame. And now that he has gone to his rich reward, we are able to say that on more than one occasion when he knew that, for the one at whose bed he was standing, "the sands of Time were sinking," he would direct her to Him who has left for her, and for us all, the blessèd invitation—

"Come unto Me, ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But Dr. Mather was more than a physician. Like Dr. Moir of Musselburgh, the immortal "Delta" of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, of "Horae Subsecivae" fame, and author of the matchless "Rab and his Friends," he was a man of broad and liberal culture, and in his social and public life finely demonstrated that the life of a medical practitioner was quite commensurate with a passionate love for literature and art. His dear, devoted, and worthy partner in life, Mrs. Mather, and his other friends who knew him best and loved him most, knew how passionately fond he was of everything in art, science, and literature that would elevate the soul. He was not only a lover of art, but a generous patron of it also, and his collection of paintings is one of the most valuable in Glasgow.

With all that is lofty in literature Dr. Mather had the warmest sympathy; and whilst he deplored the failings of our national bard, he worshipped his transcendent genius, and had an unbounded admiration for his patriotism and manly independence. One of the founders of the Sir Walter Scott Club, he ever interested himself in its prosperity, and, at his death, was senior vice-president. And now that he has passed away, many will recall, with pathetic

interest, the noble eulogium which he passed upon the Club's first president, Professor Veitch, when the sweet "minstrel of the Border" entered into his rest.

That Dr. Mather was gifted with the literary faculty in no mean degree has been amply shown in his able and learned book, "Two Great Scotsmen: William and John Hunter." This book we know to have been in every respect a labour of love; and the manner in which the author has traced the career of those two great brothers, from the time they left the farm of Long Calderwood, in the parish of East Kilbride, till they attained to European fame, is a triumph of careful study and literary skill. The book is, without doubt, the best biography of the Hunters which we possess.

When Dr. Mather was lovingly engaged on that biography, which is alike an honour to the two great brothers, to the Faculty, and to himself, it was beautiful to see his admiration for his two distinguished countrymen. Nor shall we ever forget his reading to us one evening, with quivering voice and moistened eyes, his account of the death of William. Its conclusion was:—"Turning to his friend Dr. Coombe, he said, 'If I had strength enough left to hold a pen, I would write how pleasant and easy a thing it is to die.' He died as he lived—master of himself—

Like one that wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

And how strangely similar was Dr. Mather's departure to that of his ideal hero in science, John Hunter!—similar, and yet not similar, inasmuch as the great surgeon died through excitement brought on by anger, whilst our friend was called away having his great, genial heart in love with all men, and with one of the sweetest lines of song ringing in his ear. He thus picturesquely describes John Hunter's end:—"In October, 1793, the end came. At a meeting of the Governors of St. George's Hospital, where he had ardently espoused the cause of two young Scotch students who had misunderstood some new rule, the feeling ran high, and some remarks were made which incensed the great surgeon. Apparently under the influence of strong excitement, Mr. Hunter left the room, and had scarcely entered that adjoining when he fell dead in the arms of Dr. Robertson, one of the physicians of the Hospital, who had followed him. So abruptly, if not untimeously, ended that great career. One is reminded of the warrior's dying speech:—

Mine be the set of tropic sun,
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disc, like battle-target red,
He rushes to his gory bed,

Dies the clear wave with ruddy light,
Then sinks at once and all is night."

And so we leave our friend with the old Roman salutation with which we began this modest tribute, *Ave atque Vale!* — "Hail and Farewell!" His loving and beloved wife, with bowed head and stricken heart, utters it from the holy of holies of her sacred grief. His dear sister and many other kinsfolk repeat it with sad hearts; and all of us, far-off yet reverent, echo the call. And as we leave his mortal remains at the grave, we call to his spirit, in the words of our dear and departed friend, Professor Veitch, to his beloved John Brown, the author of "Rab and his Friends,"—

Thou truest friend, thou warmest heart,
Where art thou now? my spirit cries.
Within the veil I see thee stand,
And round thee are the pure and wise.

Dr. GEORGE R. MATHER.

Since thy retreat into the shadowy land,
That summon'd thee with swift imperiousness,
Earth hath lost something of her gladsomeness—
Thy loving, generous heart, thy glowing hand!
Nature engraved thee with her noblest brand—
A man whose like we may not see again;
Somehow, thou had'st the cunning magic wand
That waves, and we succumb in soul and brain.
To-day thou liest dark—in the great gloom
That floats from 'neath the Visitor's black wing;
But through the heavy cypress of the tomb
We trace the stars, and hear the angels sing.
For one fleet while thy presence cheered us—now
The heavenly radiance gleams upon thy brow.