James Melvin

James Melvin

Rector of the
Grammar School of Aberdeen

A Sketch

by

David Maſſon

With Appendices

Aberdeen
Printed for the Centenary Committee
M dccc vc

Only 250 copies printed, of which this is No 157.

PREFATORY NOTE

The following Sketch appeared originally in *Macmillan's Magazine* for January 1864, and is now reprinted for the special occafion, and in the special circumftances, explained in the Appendices. Thefe, which I have had the opportunity of reading in proof, have interefted me much, not only as showing how many other still living perfons remember Melvin vividly and share my affection for him, but alfo as containing particulars and anecdotes about him not known to me before. The volume has been edited and seen through the prefs by Mr. P. J. Anderfon, Librarian of the Univerfity of Aberdeen ; and it is peculiarly fitting that this service of refpect to the memory of a recent Aberdonian scholar should have been performed by the man who has the largeft and moft loving knowledge of all the older centuries of the intellectual hiftory of the North of Scotland.

David Maffon

EDINBURGH: June, 1895.

CONTENTS.

		Page
James Melvin		1
Appendix A.	Report of Centenary Dinner	47
Appendix B.	Dr. Hill Burton on Dr. Melvin	83
Appendix C.	Some Reminiscences by Principal Sir W. D. Geddes	86
Appendix D.	Dr. Melvin's Last Version (Communicated by the Rev. W. R. Bruce, Newmachar)	100
Appendix E.	The Melvin Memorial Window in King's College Library	103

ILLUSTRATIONS.

James Melvin. From a painting by James Cassie, R.S.A. —*Frontispiece.*

The Grammar School, Aberdeen, 1758-1862. From a drawing by Sir George Reid, P.R.S.A. 1

Marischal College, Aberdeen, 1682-1840. From a drawing by James Skene of Rubislaw 9

The Melvin Window in King's College Library. From the original design by Mr. J. Hardman Powell 103

The Grammar School, Aberdeen. 1758-1862.

JAMES MELVIN.

THE Schoolhill in Aberdeen, a street of oldish houses, derived its name from its containing the public Grammar School of the town. There had been a Grammar School in the burgh, on or near this same site, for centuries; and in the records of the town frequent mention is made of this School, and of the names of its masters. Its most noted benefactor, in later days, had been Dr. Patrick Dun, Principal of Marischal College, in the first half of the seventeenth century. How many successive buildings of older make had served for the school before Dr. Dun's time, or what sort of building it was lodged in when he took interest in it, I

can only vaguely guess through fancy, and through such occasional entries in the burgh accounts as that of a sum of £38 5s. 6d., in or about the year 1597, for "thecking the Grammar School with hedder."

The School in my time was a plain, dingy building, which had been erected, I believe, in 1757, and which, if it was superior to some of its predecessors in not being thatched with heather, but slated and quite weather-tight, was certainly nothing to look at architecturally. Within a gateway and iron-railed wall, separating the School from the street, and forming a very limited playground in front, you saw a low main building of a single storey, parallel with the street, and having a door with stone steps in the middle, and windows at the sides ; and from this main building there projected towards the street two equally low wings, forming the two junior class-rooms. Two similar wings, which you could not well see from the street, projected from the main building behind, and accommodated the senior classes. The only entrance to the two back class-rooms was through the public school ; the two front class-rooms might also be entered through the public school, but had separate doors from the front playground. The arrangements

inside were simple enough. Each of the four oblong class-rooms had a raised desk for the master in one angle, and two rows of "factions" as they were called—*i.e.*, wooden seats, with narrow sloping writing benches in front of them—along the two sides of the oblong, so as to leave a free passage of some width in the middle for the master, when he chose to walk from end to end. Each "faction" was constructed to hold four boys, so that the look of a full class-room was that of a company of boys seated in two parallel sub-divisions of fours along the walls. In the public school, where meetings of all the classes together took place for general purposes, the main desk, a wooden structure of several tiers, was in the middle of the long side of the oblong, immediately opposite the main door, and there were four sets of somewhat larger "factions," where the several classes sat on such occasions, all looking inwards.

The entire accommodation internally, as well as the look externally, was of the dingiest; nor was it, perhaps, very creditable to the town that, even in the middle of the eighteenth century, they should not have risen to a somewhat loftier idea of the sort of building suitable for a School that was already historical among them, and was still likely to be of

importance. But boys think little of these things; and the low, dingy building had for them many snug, and some venerable, associations. In these rows of "factions," which they thumped energetically with sticks and fists at every meeting, making an uproar till the masters appeared, and over which at other times they leaped in a thousand fashions of chase and mutual fight, roaring out such tags of traditional school-doggrel as—

> Qui loupavit ower the factions
> Solvet down a saxpence,

they could not but have a dim idea that generations of young Aberdonians, either long defunct and in their graves, or scattered abroad in mature living manhood, had sat and made uproar before them. The very tags of doggrel they shouted had come down to them from those predecessors; and in the appearance of the "factions" themselves, all slashed and notched and carved over with names and initials of various dates, deeply incised into the hard wood, there was a provocation to some degree of interest in the legends of the school. It was not in the nature of boyish antiquarianism to go back to the times of those older heather-thatched school-buildings, ancestors of the present, in which the Cargills and

Wedderburns, and other early Scottish Latinists of note, had walked as masters; but some of the traditions of the existing fabric in the days of recent masters, whose names and characters were still proverbial, were within the reach of the least inquisitive.

Among these traditions by far the most fascinating was that of Lord Byron's connection with the school. When, in 1792, Byron's mother had separated from her husband, the profligate Captain Byron of the Guards, she, being by birth a Miss Gordon of Gicht, in Aberdeenshire, had retired to Aberdeen with her little, lame, London-born boy, then not quite five years old, and with about £130 a year saved from her fortune which her husband had squandered. The little fellow, living with his mother in the Broadgate, and catching up the Aberdeen dialect, which he never quite forgot, learnt his first lessons from two or three private tutors in succession, the last of whom he mentions as "a very serious, saturnine, but kind young man, named Patterson," the son of his shoemaker, but a good scholar. "With him," he says, "I began Latin in Ruddiman's Grammar, and continued till I went to the Grammar School (*Scotice* 'Schule,' *Aberdonice* 'Squeel,') where I threaded all the classes to the

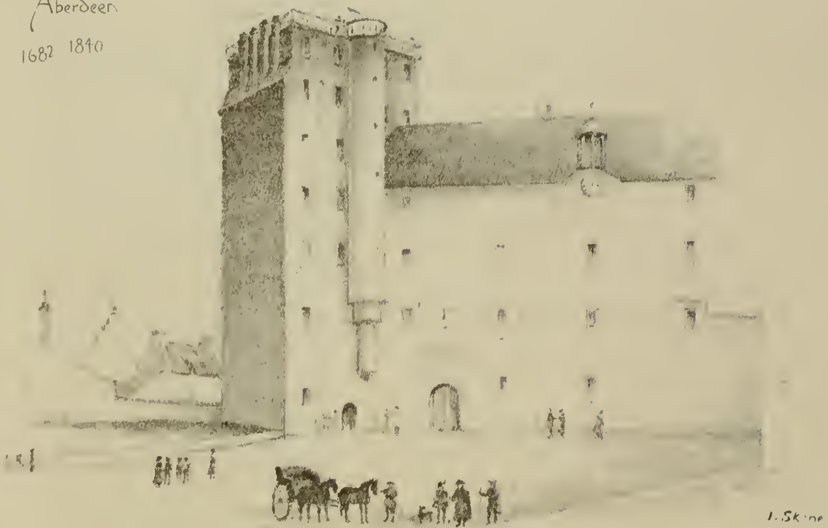
fourth, when I was recalled to England, where I had been hatched, by the demise of my uncle." The fact thus lightly mentioned by Byron was, as may be supposed, no small splendour in the annals of Aberdeen. There were many alive in the town who remembered the lame boy well, and some who had been his schoolfellows. We used to fancy the "faction" in which he had oftenest sat; and there was no small search for his name or initials, reported to be still visible, cut by his own hand, on one of the "factions"—always, I believe, without success. One school-legend about him greatly impressed us. It was said that, on his coming to school the first morning after his accession to the peerage was known, and on the calling out of his name in the catalogue no longer as "*Georgi Gordon Byron*" but as "*Georgi, Baro de Byron*," he did not reply with the usual and expected "*Adsum*," but, feeling the gaze of all his schoolfellows, burst into tears and ran out. But there are half a hundred Aberdeen myths about Byron, and this may be one of them.

The School was a grammar school in the old sense of the term as understood in England as well as in Scotland. It was exclusively a day school for classical education in preparation for the University. In fact, down to my time, it was all but

entirely a Latin school. The rudiments of Greek had recently been introduced as part of the business of the higher classes ; but, with this exception, and with the farther exception that, in teaching Latin, the masters might regale their classes with whatever little bits of history or of general lore they could blend with their Latin lessons, the business of the School was Latin, Latin, Latin. Since that time there have been changes in the constitution of the seminary to suit it to the requirements of more modern tastes in education. There is now more of Greek, and express instruction in Geography, History, and I know not what all ; but in those days it was Latin, nothing but a four or five years' perseverance in Latin, within those dingy old walls. Although the usual age at which boys entered the School was from eight to twelve, it was assumed that the necessary preliminary learning in matters of English, and in writing and arithmetic, had been gone through beforehand ; and, though there were public schools for writing, drawing, and mathematics, equally under the charge of the city authorities with the Grammar School, and which the pupils of the Grammar School might attend at distinct hours for parallel instruction in those branches, these schools were not attached to the Grammar School, and

attendance at them was quite optional. So, on the whole, if you were an Aberdeen boy, getting the very best education known in the place, you were committed, at the age of from nine to eleven, to a four or five years' course of drilling in Latin, five hours every day, save in the single vacation-month of July—tipped only with a final touch of Greek; and, this course over, you were expected, at the age of from thirteen to sixteen, either to walk forward into the University, or, if that prospect did not then suit, to slip aside, a scholar so far, into the world of business. A four or five years' course, I have said; for, though the full curriculum was five years, it was quite customary for readier or more impatient lads to leap to the University from the fourth class.

This exclusive, or all but exclusive, dedication of the School to Latin was partly a matter of fidelity to tradition; but there was a special cause for it in the circumstances of the intellectual system of the town, and, indeed, of that whole region of the North of Scotland, of which the town was the natural capital. The School was the main feeder of the adjacent Marischal College and University of the City of Aberdeen, and it also sent pupils annually, though not in such great numbers, to the other


Marischal College
Aberdeen
1682 1840
J. Skene

neighbouring University and King's College, Old Aberdeen. Those two Universities, now united into one, were the Universities to which, for geographical reasons, all the scholarly youths of that northern or north-eastern region of Scotland which lay beyond the ranges of attraction of the other three Scottish Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and St. Andrews, were naturally drawn. Whatever young man looked forward to a University education in this extensive region—of which Aberdeenshire itself and the adjacent county of Kincardine formed the heart, but which had Forfarshire, Banffshire, Morayshire, Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, and even more distant northerly parts, for its fringes—thought of Aberdeen, and of one or other of its two Universities, as his destination while that education should be going on. The tendency from the Highland, and generally from the more northerly districts, was rather to King's College, while from Aberdeen itself, the eastern and lowland parts of Aberdeenshire, and from Kincardineshire and Forfarshire, the tendency was rather to Marischal College. But, to whichever of the two Universities the predisposition might be, the possibility of giving effect to it was, for many who cherished it, a matter of long preliminary anxiety. There were in that region

of North Britain many well-to-do families, perfectly able to send their sons to either of the two Aberdonian Colleges, or even, if they so preferred, to Edinburgh or either of the English Universities; but in that region, more perhaps than in any other even of North Britain, there has always been a numerous class of whom it may be said, in Sydney Smith's sense, *Musam tenui meditantur avena*, "They cultivate the Muse, or the best rough Muse they find accessible, on a little oatmeal." In other words, the ambition after a University education existed among a wider and poorer class in that region than is found to cherish a similar ambition elsewhere. The town of Aberdeen is included in this statement. The notion of a University education as possible descended very far down indeed among the ranks of that community—far below the level of those families who could sustain by their own means the very moderate expense that was necessary with the University actually at their doors. To what is this to be attributed? Partly, if you so choose, to the breed of the folk; but considerably, at least, to a more palpable social cause. This desire for a University education exists there so widely, penetrates there so deep down in society, because in that region, more than in any other part of Great

Britain, the means have existed from time immemorial for gratifying the desire.

That part of Scotland has long had a peculiarity, of which I have often thought that the whole British world ought to hear, despite its natural antipathy to overabundant information respecting uncouth Scottish matters. That peculiarity is its Bursary System: I say *is*, for I hope it still exists. But what is a bursary, and what is or was the Bursary System of that Aberdonian region of Scotland? A bursary, in Scottish academic phraseology, is what a scholarship or exhibition is in English—a small annual stipend granted to a young man going to college out of funds bequeathed for the purpose, and tenable by him while he is at college. All the Scottish Universities have such bursaries at their disposal, founded by lovers of learning in past centuries; but the two Aberdeen Universities were peculiar in this (St. Andrews alone, I think, coming near them in the practice), that the greater number of the bursaries were put up annually for open competition to all comers. There were more private bursaries in the gift of certain families, or of the professors, and bestowable by favour, or on the bearers of certain names; but each of the two colleges—King's and Marischal—had about twenty public bursaries to be

disposed of every October by open competition. The bursaries were of small amounts, ranging from £5 a year to £20 a year; but, invariably, by the terms of the foundation, each bursary more than covered all the expenses of the college classes. Now, it was this Bursary System—as familiarly known over the whole region concerned as the Aurora Borealis in its nightly sky—it was this Bursary System that had generated and that sustained there a habit of looking forward to a University education among classes in which otherwise such a habit could have hardly been possible. Though the well-to-do youths in the town or in the country around might not care for a bursary, save for the honour—and it *was* reputed an honour, and, when obtained, was kept as such by many to whom it could have been of no substantial consideration—yet for a scholarly boy of poor family in one of the third-rate streets of Aberdeen, or for a poor farmer's son on Donside, following his father's plough and dreaming of a college life as the furrow came to the field's edge, the thought that would murmur to his lips would still be "A bursary: O for a bursary!" With many their going or not going to college depended on their winning or not winning, at the proper time, this coveted prize.

One can see what influence such an agency might have been made to exercise over the schooling and intellectual activity of the region within which it operated—how, just as the India and Civil Service Competitions have affected the education of the whole country in these days, and swayed it in particular directions according to the subjects set for the competitions, so, on a smaller scale, even the frugal Bursary System of the North-east of Scotland might have been managed so as to stimulate, within its range of action, not one but many kinds of study. After the time of which I now speak, there *was* a change to this effect in the administration of the bursaries, and they were conferred after an examination testing proficiency of different kinds. But down to the time with which I have here to do the competition for bursaries at both colleges was solely in Latin, and even mainly in one peculiar practice of Latin scholarship—that of turning a piece of English into Latin. The competition took place with great ceremony every October in the halls of the two colleges. All who chose might come, and no questions were asked. A lad from Cornwall or from Kent, who had never been in Aberdeen before, might have entered the hall on competition-day, taken his place with the rest, and fought for a bursary with

whatever force of Cornwall Latin or of Kent Latin was in him. The temptation was not such, however, as to attract many such outsiders; and it was generally some forty Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire, Forfarshire, Banffshire, or Highland lads, out of about one hundred and sixty who had assembled in Aberdeen for the competition, that were made happy by obtaining the bursaries of the year. But, as it was by skill in Latin that the feat was to be done, one can see what a powerful premium was thus put on Latinity all over the territory interested. Even the common parish schools of the region gave some attention to Latin, and any parish school that had within twelve years or so sent two or three lads to Aberdeen who had been successful in obtaining bursaries had celebrity on that account. Naturally, however, even if a country lad began his Latin with his own parish schoolmaster, he would, if possible, finish with a year or two at the grammar school of the nearest town. There were several such grammar schools of some distinction in that far-north region; and Old Aberdeen had a grammar school of its own, acting more expressly as a feeder to King's College. But Aberdeen Grammar School proper, the grammar school of the main city, was the school of greatest note. And so, on the whole, if the school had been

aboriginally a Latin School, this influence of the bursary system, in the centre of which it was situated, had helped to make it more and more tenacious of its original character. It was a case, I doubt not, partly of cause and partly of effect.

How far back in time the influence of the bursary system had been in operation in the territory I do not know ; but I should not wonder if it were to turn out, on investigation, that some form of the influence had to do with what is, at all events, the fact—that for more than two centuries Aberdeen and the region around had had a special reputation in Scotland for eminence in Latinity. The greatest Scottish Latinist, or at least Latin poet, after Buchanan, had been Arthur Johnston, born near Aberdeen in 1587, and educated at Marischal College ; his *Parerga*, *Epigrammata*, and other Latin poems were first given to the world, between 1628 and 1632, from the Aberdeen printing press ; and among his fellow-contributors to the famous *Delitiæ Poetarum Scotorum*, or collection of Latin poems by living or recently-deceased Scottish authors, printed at Amsterdam in 1637, several of the best, after himself, were also Aberdonians and Marischal College men. From that time Aberdeen had kept up the tradition of Latin scholarship.

My readers may like to know what was the expense of education at this Aberdeen Grammar School about which and its connections with a paltry bit of the land of oatmeal I have been making so absurd a fuss. Ten shillings and sixpence a quarter for each boy—that was the expense. Even that was grumbled at by some as too dear, and it was a rise from what had formerly been the rate. Ten shillings and sixpence a quarter for the very best classical school education that was to be had, for love or money, in all that area of Scotland! The wealthiest and most aristocratic parent, if he kept his son on the spot, could not, by any device, do better for him in the way of schooling than send him to precisely this school—the historical school of the place. The sons of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, were there mixed—all on the equal platform of ten and sixpence a quarter; save that, if a boy was lucky enough to be called Dun, he paid nothing. Add six and sixpence a quarter for attendance at Mr Craigmyle's writing school, and six and sixpence a quarter for attendance at Mr. James Gordon's mathematical school—at which two public schools it was usual for the Grammar School boys to take instruction at separate hours—and you have the almost total school expense for each boy as under five-and-twenty

shillings a quarter. Extras, such as French, German, fencing, music, and other kickshaws, were then very rare indeed in Aberdeen; they were to be had, I know, but it was as turtle and champagne were to be had. As for dancing, Heaven only knows how Aberdeen boys, whom I have since seen reel-dancing magnificently as full-grown men in Hanover Square Rooms, came by the rudiments of that accomplishment. I believe it was done by many at dead of night, on creaky floors in out-of-the-way places in the Gallowgate, with scouts on the look-out for the clergy. The only difference, in the matter of expense, between the wealthier and the poorer boys attending the Grammar School was that the former generally had private tutors, who went to their houses in the evening to assist them in preparing their lessons. Such supplementary private tuition was cheap enough. A guinea a quarter for each evening hour so spent was what many a Divinity student was glad to get; and two guineas a quarter was the maximum. It is a curious illustration what differences of tariff there might be in those pre-railway days between portions of the country not far distant from each other, that the rate of payment for exactly the same kind of private tuition in Edinburgh was then two guineas a month, or three times the Aberdeen

rate. By a migration from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, if it could be managed and pupils bespoken, an Aberdonian dependent on teaching might at once triple his income. This attraction did operate, among other things, in luring Aberdonians southwards—an unfortunate thing for England ; for, once in Edinburgh, the Pict might not stop there.

But my hero is waiting. A word or two more from Byron shall introduce him. " The Grammar School," says Byron in his reminiscences of his Aberdeen boyhood, " might consist of a hundred and fifty of all ages under age. It was divided into five classes, taught by four masters, the chief teaching the fourth and fifth himself." Save that the total number of pupils had increased to two hundred, or even latterly to between two hundred and three hundred, this succinct description of the Aberdeen Grammar School in Byron's time holds true of it at the time over which my recollection extends. The three under-masters then were Mr. Watt, Mr. Forbes, and Mr. John Dun. Watt and Forbes, or, as they were called, irreverently, " Wattie" and " Chuckle," were two old men—the one white-haired and feeble, the other tougher, leaner, and with a brown wig—whose days of efficiency, which may have begun with the century, were now over. As each of the under-masters carried his class on for

three years continuously, and then handed it over as the fourth class to the care of the chief master or Rector, himself going back to receive the new entrants, it was not uncommon for careful parents to keep back their boys till it was Mr. Dun's turn to assume the first class. He was a much younger man than the other two, kept splendid order, and was, indeed, a most excellent teacher. His class was usually twice or three times as large as that of Forbes or Watt—commencing at eighty or ninety strong in the first year, and always debouching at the end of the third year into the rector's charge not only well kept up in numbers, but so well trained that each third year's wave of "Dun's scholars," as they were called, was welcomed by the rector as his most hopeful material.

The name of this rector of the Aberdeen Grammar School was Dr. James Melvin. For some years of his connection with the school he had been but James Melvin, A.M.; but the degree of LL.D. had been conferred on him by Marischal College. He was also a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, and on rare occasions would occupy the pulpit for one of his friends; but he did not usually figure as a clergyman or place the designation "The Rev." before his name. Living in Belmont Street, close by the Grammar School, with his good old mother and his devoted

sister presiding over his bachelor household—a very conspicuous member of which was a splendid and sagacious Newfoundland dog called Cæsar—he stepped over to the school every morning, Cæsar bounding before him as far as the school gate ; there he spent three hours every forenoon, and again two hours every afternoon, in teaching the two senior classes in the right-hand back class-room ; and, during each winter session at Marischal College, he did additional duty as Lecturer in Latin ("Lecturer in Humanity" was the official title, according to that strange hyperbole of our forefathers which viewed Latin as "Literæ Humaniorum," the literature of the more civilised folks)—a post to which he had been appointed in consequence of there being at that time no regular or endowed Latin chair among the college professorships. In this simple but not unlaborious round of duties—from his house in Belmont Street to the School, from the School to the College, from the College or School back to his house in Belmont Street, where he would generally have the evenings all to himself in his library—was Melvin's life passed. And yet it is in this man, thus plainly circumstanced in his native place, and whose name can hardly have reached England, though some fame of him since his death has spread into the south of Scotland,

that I would seek to interest the reader. My best reason is that he is still of unique interest to me. I have known many other men since I knew him—men of far greater celebrity in the world, and of intellectual claims of far more rousing character than belongs to Latin scholarship; but I have known no one, and I expect to know no one, so perfect in his type as Melvin. Every man whose memory is tolerably faithful can reckon up those to whom he is himself indebted; and, trying to estimate at this moment the relative proportions of influences, from this man and from that man encountered by me, which I can still feel running in my veins, it so happens that I can trace none more distinct, however it may have been marred and mudded, than that stream which, as Melvin gave it, was truly "honey-wine." It is long, at all events, since I vowed that some time or other I would say something publicly about Melvin. For I know no other notion of historical, or any literature, worth a farthing, than that which rules that the matter of which it consists shall always be matter interesting to the writer, and *previously unknown* to the reader.

Melvin, it is now the deliberate conviction of many besides myself, was at the head of the Scottish Latinity of his day. How he had attained to his consummate mastery in the Latin tongue and

literature—how, indeed, amid the rough and hasty conditions of Scottish intellectual life, there could be bred a Latin scholar of his supreme type at all—is somewhat of a mystery. In England, with her longer classical school-drilling, protracted to a later age than in Scotland, and then with her system of University Residence, and her apparatus of College Fellowships to bring scholarship to its rarest flower, the development and maintenance of a style of profound and exact scholarship which Scotland cannot rival, save in a few exceptional instances, is to be expected. And the fact, more especially in Greek learning, corresponds with the expectation. But there *are* exceptional instances—instances of Scotsmen, and not Scotsmen only that have been at the English Universities, who, by private labour aiding a natural bent of genius, have, in Latinity at least, carved themselves up to even the English standard of exquisiteness, albeit something of a national type may still be discerned in the cast of their Latinity, and it may be recognised as the Latinity of the countrymen of Buchanan, Johnston, and Ruddiman. In later times the bent of natural genius that could in any case lead to such a result must have been very decided, and the labour great and secret. In the case of Melvin I can suppose nothing else than that the

traditional muse of Aberdonian Latinity, still hovering about the region and loth to quit it, became incarnate in him at his birth, by way of securing a new lease of residence. The ascertainable incidents of his life, at least, are no sufficient explanation. Born in Aberdeen, of poor parents, in 1794, he had passed through the Grammar School a few years after Byron had left it—his teachers there being a Mr. Nicoll and the then rector, Mr. Cromar ; he had gone thence to Marischal College as the first bursar of his year ; and, after leaving College, he had been usher at a private academy at Udny, near Aberdeen, and then undermaster in Old Aberdeen Grammar School, where the chief master was a Mr. McLauchlan, of some note as a Celtic and classical scholar. In 1822 he had been invited by his old master, Nicoll, then in declining health, to be his assistant in the Aberdeen Grammar School; and, on Nicoll's death, he had been appointed to succeed him, after a public competition in which he distanced the other candidates and won extraordinary applause from the judges. The Rector, Cromar, dying in 1826, Melvin, though the youngest undermaster, had again, in public competition, won the unanimous appointment ; and on the 24th of April in that year—in one of those assemblies of the city magistrates, city clergy, college professors, and other

dignitaries, not forgetting the red-coated town's officers, which took place in the main schoolroom, to the great delight of the boys, on gala days, and always at the annual Visitation and distribution of prizes—he was installed, at the age of thirty-two, into the post which was to be his till death. The office may have been worth £250 a year. His appointment to the Latin lectureship in Marischal College, which may have been worth £80 a year more, came soon afterwards.

Whatever start he may have had in the lessons of Nicoll and Cromar, and whatever firmer grasp of rudimentary Latin he may have got in teaching it at Udny and under McLauchlan in Old Aberdeen, Melvin's scholarship must have been the result of an amount of reading for himself utterly unusual in his neighbourhood. The proof of this exists in the superb library, one of the wonders of Aberdeen, which, even with his moderate means, he had managed to collect around him. There was nowhere in that part of Scotland, probably nowhere in all Scotland, such another private library of the classic writers and of all commentaries, lexicons, scholiasts, and what not, appertaining to them. To see him in his large room in Belmont Street, every foot of the wall-space of which, from the floor to the ceiling, and

even over the door and between the windows, was occupied with books filling the exactly-fitted book-shelves, was at once a treat and a revelation to a native of those parts. And the collection of this library must have been begun early in his life. His surviving sister, who was considerably his junior, says that her first recollections are "not so much recollections of him as of books and him." From the first he had catalogues of books sent to him from all quarters, and he was always purchasing. He had complete sets of the fine old editions of the Latin classics, Dutch and English, with some of the later German; and his collection of Mediæval Latin literature was probably the completest in Scotland. The most obscure and out-of-the-way names were all represented. In Greek literature his collection was nothing like so full; there were even extraordinary gaps in it. Among the Latins he abounded most in editions of Horace—having, as he once told a friend, a copy of Horace for every day in the year. And so, among these Latin classics, and the commentators and grammarians of all ages illustrating them, he had read and read, till, at the time of his appointment to the Grammar School Rectorship, his knowledge of Latinity was probably already more extensive, original, deep, subtle, and delicate than that of any other scholar within the limits of North Britain.

A slight monument of the style of Melvin's Latin scholarship, and especially, as a competent critic has said, of the *curiosa diligentia* in minute matters for which he was remarkable, remains in a Latin Grammar which he compiled for the School soon after his appointment to it, and which was used in the School incessantly, from the lowest classes upwards, as supplementary to the Rudiments. This Grammar, which went through three editions, consists, in the first place of a series of rules in Etymology and Prosody, all in Latin Hexameters, partly made by Melvin, partly mended and borrowed by him from preceding grammars of the kind—the whole of which had to be got by heart gradually by the boys. The Latin rules, however, are bedded in an explanatory English text elucidating obscure points and giving additional information. Then—at least in the edition now before me—there are occasional critical footnotes, correcting or questioning the views of former grammarians as to the genders, declensions, quantities, &c., of particular words. From these footnotes I will cull a few morsels that seem especially Melvinian :—

Gender of Homo.—"The authority of Plautus has been alleged to prove that *Homo* may be used with a feminine adjective; *Hominis miseræ misereri*, Cist. IV. 2. 21. But the passage thus quoted is corrupt. Correct editions have, *Homines misere miseri*. I should not

have mentioned this mistake, which has long ago been exposed by Vossius, had it not found its way into Ainsworth's Dictionary, and been suffered to remain in the latest editions. It is much to be regretted that a book in such general use should abound, as it does, with such inaccuracies. But even the best Dictionaries--those of Gesner, Forcellini, Scheller, etc.—though certainly they do not deceive the unwary consulter by such citations, are not in every instance correct in marking the genders of nouns. In justice to Ainsworth, it must be added, that the original edition of his Dictionary, in 1736, the only one that he superintended, is not disgraced by the erroneous quotation here noticed, and is also free from several of the other blunders which subsequent editions, though otherwise improved, are found to contain."

The word Pollen.—"After the most diligent research, I have not been able to determine with certainty either the termination or the gender of *pollen*. Ruddiman quotes *pollen* as used by Celsus (V. 19. § 4); and so indeed some editions have it; but in others, and those the most correct, there is no such word. Priscian says that Probus and Cæsar declined it *pollen,-inis*, neut. Charisius, according to the same Priscian, makes it *pollis,-inis*, fem.; but Phocas says it is *pollis,-inis*, masc., like *sanguis*. In Isidorus (XX. 2.), we find *polles*, which seems to be a mistake, but whether for *pollen*, or *pollis*, is uncertain. Some of the ancient Glossaries have it *pollinis,-ls*, masc. Cato, Pliny, and Mela use *pollinem* as the accusative, but in what gender, or from what nominative, cannot be known. Serenus, a poet of little authority, has *madida polline*."

Ablative singular of Par.—"Vossius, Messieurs de Port Royal, Ruddiman, and many others, say that the masc. or fem. substantive *par* has in the abl. *pare* only; in proof of which *two poetical* authorities are produced. Some also confound *par*, com. gen. (an equal, a mate, &c.) with *par*, neut. (a pair). But they are two distinct words; and, in prose, have both *pari*. Thus; *Cum illo tuo pari*, Cic. Pis. 8. § 18. *Sine pari*, Plin. VIII. 21. § 33. *In ejusmodi pari*, Cic. Pis. 12. § 27.

&c. But the com.-gen. word has sometimes E; as, *Cum pare contendere*, Sen. de Ira, II. 34. § 1."

Spondaic Alcmanian Tetrameters in Horace.—"This ["Mensorem cohibent archyta"] is the only instance in Horace of a Spondee for the third foot of the Alcmanian Tetrameter; though unskilful Prosodians find another in the following line of the same poet, (Od. I. 28. 24.)

Ossibus et capiti inhumato.

But it is to be observed that the first two syllables of *ĭnhŭmato* are short, and that the verse is to be scanned without eliding the *i* of *capiti*; thus,

ōssibŭs | *ĕt căpĭ-* | *-tī ĭnhŭ-* | *-mātō.*"

Scanning of Latin Sapphics.—"As the division of a *simple* word often occurs between the third Sapphic and the Adonic, Dr. Carey conceives that the stanza was intended to consist only of *three* lines, the Adonic being added to the third Sapphic, with the fifth foot of the long verse either a spondee or a trochee. To this union, however, there exists this objection, that final vowels, and even final *m* with its accompanying vowel, will thus be frequently preserved from elision; in Horace's Sapphic Odes, for example, *four* several times.—(Od.—I. 2. 47.—I. 12. 7.—ibid. 31.—I. 22. 15.) Now, there is no instance of neglected elision in any other part of Horace's Sapphics; and but *three* unquestionable examples of such neglect in *all* his other odes, and *no* example where *m* is concerned, the asynartetic verse (No. 32) in Epode XI. not being taken into account."

During our three years in the under-classes we saw Melvin only incidentally and on the weekly gatherings of the whole school in the public schoolroom, when the fact that he wore a gown and kept his hat on, while the other three masters were without gowns and had their hats off, greatly impressed the young ones. His authority over the other masters was

never made in the least apparent, but it was felt to exist; and there was always an awful sense of what might be the consequences of an appeal to him in a case of discipline. No such appeal, in my day, from Watt or Forbes (Mr. Dun required to make none) ever ended in anything more serious than a public verbal rebuke; but that was terrible enough. For the aspect of the man—then in the prime of manhood, lean, but rather tall and well-shouldered, and with a face of the pale-dark kind, naturally austere, and made more stern by the marks of the small-pox—was unusually awe-compelling. The name "Grim," or, more fully, "Grim Pluto," had been bestowed upon him, after a phrase in one of the lessons, by one of his early classes; and this name was known to all the School. When he entered the school-gate, the whisper in the public-school would be, "Here's Grim"; and, as he walked through the School into his own class-room, looking neither right nor left, with his gold watch-chain and seals dangling audibly as he went, all would be hushed. And yet, with all this fear of him, there was affection, and a longing to be in his classes, to partake of that richer and finer instruction of which we heard such reports.

When one did pass into the Rector's immediate charge, one came to know him better. The great awe

of him still remained. Stricter or more perfect order than that which Melvin kept in the two classes which he taught simultaneously it is impossible to conceive. But it was all done by sheer moral impressiveness, and a power of rebuke, either by mere glance or by glance and word together, in which he was masterly. As a born ruler of boys, Arnold himself cannot have surpassed Melvin. And, though there were wanting in Melvin's case many of those incidents that must have contributed to the complete veneration with which the Rugby boys looked at Arnold—the known reputation of the man, for example, in the wide world of thought and letters beyond the walls of the school —yet, so far as personal influence within the school was concerned, there was in Melvin some form of almost all those things that we read of in Arnold as tending to blend love more and more, on closer intimacy, with the first feeling of reverence. Integrity and truthfulness, conjoined with a wonderful considerateness, were characteristic of all he said and did. His influence was so high-toned and strict that, even had he taught nothing expressly, it would have been a moral benefit for a boy to have been within it. It did one good even to look at him day after day as he sat and presided over us. As he sat now, in his own class-room, always with his hat off, one came to

admire more and more, despite his grim and somewhat scarred face, the beauty of his finely-formed head, the short, black hair of which, crisping close round it, defined its shape exactly, and made it more like an ideal Roman head than would have been found on any other shoulders in a whole Campus Martius of the Aberdonians. One un-Roman habit he had—that of snuff-taking. But, though he took snuff in extraordinary quantities, it was, if I may so say, as a Roman gentleman would have taken it—with all the dignity of the toga, and every pinch emphatic.

In that teaching of Latin which Melvin perseveringly kept to as his particular business, a large portion of the work of his classes consisted, of course, of readings in the Latin authors in continuation of what had been read in the junior classes. Here, unless perchance he began with a survey of the Grammar, to see how we were grounded, and to rivet us afresh to the rock, we first came to perceive his essential peculiarities. Accuracy to the last and minutest word read, and to the nicest shade of distinction between two apparent synonyms, was what he studied and insisted on, and this always with a view to the cultivation of a taste for pure and classic, as distinct from Brummagem, Latinity. The authors chosen were few and select—

chiefly Cæsar and Livy among the prose writers, and Virgil, Horace, and Buchanan's Psalms among the poets. The quantity read was not large—seldom more than a page a day. But every sentence was gone over at least five times—first read aloud by the boy that might be called on ; then translated, word for word, with the utmost literality, each Latin word being named as the English equivalent was fitted to it ; then rendered as a whole somewhat more freely and elegantly, but still with no permission of that slovenly and soul-ruining practice of translation which is called "giving the spirit of the original" ; then analysed etymologically, each important verb or noun becoming the text for an exercise up and down, backwards and forwards, in all appertaining to it ; and lastly construed, or analysed in respect of its syntax and idiom, the reasons of its moods, cases, and what not. In the case of a poetical reading there was, of course, the farther process of the scanning, in which Melvin was, above all, exacting. To the common reproach against Scottish scholarship, that Scotsmen have no grounding in quantities, and say *vectĭgal* or *vectīgal*, just as Providence may direct them at the moment — the Aberdeen Grammar School, at least, was not liable. A false quantity was even more shameful in Melvin's code than a

false construction, and it was not his fault if we did not turn out good Prosodians. Of course, in the readings, whether from the prose writers or the poets, occasion was taken by Melvin to convey all sorts of minute pieces of elucidative, historical and biographical information, in addition to what the boys were expected to have procured for themselves in the act of preparation ; and in this way a considerable amount of curious lore—about the Roman calendar, the Roman wines and the ways of drinking them, &c.—was gradually and accurately acquired. Never, either, did Melvin leave a passage of peculiar beauty of thought, expression, or sound, without rousing us to a sense of this peculiarity, and impressing it upon us by reading the passage himself, eloquently and lovingly, so as to give effect to it. Over a line like Virgil's description of the Cyclopes working at the anvil,

"Illi inter sese magnâ vi brachia tollunt,"

he would linger with real ecstasy, repeating it again and again with something of a tremble of excitement in his grave voice.

Perhaps, however, it was in expounding his favourite Horace that he rose oftenest to what may be called the higher criticism. It was really beautiful to hear him dissect a passage in Horace, and then put

it together again thrillingly complete. Once or twice he would delight us by the unexpected familiarity of an illustration of a passage in Horace by a parallel passage from Burns. The unexpected familiarity I have called it ; for, though his private friends knew how passionately fond he was of Burns, how he had his poems by heart, and often on his lips, and was moreover learned in Scottish poetry and the old Scottish language generally, this was hardly known in the School, and it gave us a start to hear our Rector suddenly quoting Scotch. It gave him a pleasure, I believe, which he could not have resisted at the moment though the glee of the class had become uproar, to link his darling Horace with his darling Burns, and to remind us that, if Horace, in his "O Fons Bandusiæ," had said—

> "Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium,
> Me dicente cavis impositam ilicem
> Saxis, unde loquaces
> Lymphæ desiliunt tuæ,"

the Scottish Bard, without consulting Horace, had had the same thought:

> "The Ilissus, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,
> Glide sweet in mony a tunefu' line ;
> But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
> And cock your crest ;
> We'll gar *our* streams and burnies shine
> Up wi' the best."

On the whole, however, Melvin's teaching of Latin was strictly philological. He did not lead us over a great deal of ground in our readings, and he kept carefully to the track of what we did read. He did not belabour us with vast masses of lax information about the Romans, nor branch out into speculative disquisitions on the philosophy of literature and things in general. His aim was, by the intense accuracy of our reading in a well-arranged course of progressive difficulty, both to drill us to accuracy in all intellectual matters whatever, and to put us in perfect possession of the instrument of Latin, should we care afterwards to use it for ourselves.

To test the degree in which we possessed the instrument, there was in the Aberdeen Grammar School an amount of practice in Latin composition such as, I believe, was known at that time in no other school in North Britain. Almost from the first class we were practised in making Latin sentences, and even in constructing sentences to be turned into Latin, with which publicly to puzzle each other. And very soon, in addition to the printed Exercise-Books of this kind which we used, there came into play the agency of what were called " Versions"—*i.e.*, pieces of English expressly prepared by the Master to be dictated to us in the class-room and there turned into

Latin. But it was in Melvin's classes that this practice of Version-making—having reference, no doubt, to the peculiar arrangements of that competition for the Bursaries of the two Universities of which I have spoken—attained its fullest development. He did not tax us much in the way of Latin versification—which was reserved rather for his Marischal College classes; but our practice in Latin prose-composition was incessant. Two entire days in every week were regularly devoted to "the Versions"; and these were the days of keenest emulation. In anticipation of them, it was our habit to jot down in note-books of our own, divided alphabetically, and with index-margins for the leading words, any specialities of phrase or idiom—any niceties about *Ut*, *Quum*, *Quod* and *Quia*, *Ille* and *Iste*, *Uter* and *Quis*, *Suus* and *Ejus*, *Plerique* and *Plurimi*, and the like—upon which Melvin dwelt in the course of our readings. With these manuscript "phrase-books" or "idiom-books" (containing, doubtless, much that might have been found in print, but precious as compiled by ourselves), and with Ainsworth's Dictionary for our authorised guide under certain rather numerous cautions and restrictions, we assembled on the morning of every Version-Day; and, sure enough, in the piece of English which

Melvin then dictated to us—which was always a model of correct style and punctuation, and generally not uninteresting in matter—there were some of the traps laid for us against which he had been recently warning us. We sat and wrote the versions—those who were done first (generally the first-faction boys) going up to Melvin's desk to have them examined; after which, they became his assistants in examining the other versions, so as to clear them all off within the day.

In these versions into Latin, as in the translations from the Latin, closeness to the original was imperative—no fraudulent "giving of the spirit of the original," so as to elude the difficulty presented by the letter, was tolerated for a moment. The system of marking was peculiar. You were classed, not by your positive merits of ingenuity, elegance, or such like, but, as in the world itself, by your freedom from faults or illegalities. There were three grades of error: the *minimus*, or, as we called it, the *minie*, which counted as 1, and which included misspellings, wrong choices of words, &c.; the *medius* or *medie*, which counted as 2, and included false tenses and other such slips; and the *maximus* or *maxie*, which counted as 4, and included wrong genders, a glaring indicative for a subjunctive, &c. There might, in a

single word, be even (horrible event!) a double *maxie*, or a combination of *maxie* and *medie*, or *maxie* and *minie*. On a *maxie* in the version of a good scholar Melvin was always cuttingly severe. "*Ut* . . . . *dixit*," he would say, underscoring the two words, in a sentence where the latter should have been *diceret*—"*Ut* . . . . *dixit*," he would repeat, refreshing his frown with a pinch of snuff—"*Ut* . . . . *dixit*," he would say a third time, with a look in the culprit's face as if he had murdered his father, "Oh, William, William, you have been very giddy of late"; and William would descend crest-fallen, and be miserable for half a day. So thoroughly was this gradation of *maxie*, *medie*, and *minie* worked into us that I believe it became identified permanently with our notions of the nature of things, and I question whether there is a Melvinian abroad in the world now that does not classify sins and social crimes as *minies*, *medies*, and *maxies*. On our versions, at all events, the sum-total of the errors, so graduated, was marked at the top; and we took our places accordingly. Only between two versions coequal in respect of freedom from fault was any positive merit of elegance allowed to decide the superiority; and if, among two or three versions of the first-faction boys that were passed as *sine errore*, one was declared *sine errore*

elegantissime, you may fancy whether the top-boy that owned it did not feel like a peacock. But, when Melvin dictated his own Latin next day, to be written in our version-books after the English, then the difference between *our* best and *his* ordinary would be at once apparent.

In preparing the "Versions" for his classes Melvin was most conscientious. Nothing vexed him more than, through some rare press of engagements, to be obliged to dictate an old version a second time. They used to see, at home, by his face, when this was the case. Every year he prepared about a hundred versions, so that altogether he must have left in manuscript between two and three thousand. The fame of them had gone abroad through Scotland in his lifetime, and some, taken from stray Version-Books of his old pupils, were unscrupulously appropriated and printed without acknowledgment in his later years.

From what has been said, it will be seen how it was that the sole objection ever made to Melvin's method of teaching by those who were acquainted with it took the form of a question whether it was not too narrow, too pertinaciously old-fashioned, too little according to the newest lights. For myself, though I can conceive another method or other methods

of teaching Latin than Melvin's, which should be also good, I am persuaded that not only was his method admirably perfect for its end, but also that no method that did not aim as resolutely at the same end by a considerable use of the same means would be worth much in the long run. At all events, Melvin's method was deliberately adopted by him, and, though in accordance with his nature, yet not perhaps without some cost of self-repression. The Melvin that we came afterwards to know in his own house and library, for example, had many tastes and interests of an intellectual kind that one could hardly have surmised in the Melvin of the Grammar School. I have already mentioned his fondness for old Scottish poetry, and his expertness in the Scottish dialect; and I find that, as early as 1825, when he was still only under-master in the School, he had rendered such services to Jamieson, in connection with the two-volume Supplement to his Dictionary of the Scottish Language published in that year, as to obtain rather distinguished notice among the acknowledgments of help in the Preface to that work. But as he kept to himself to the last, as one of his private recreations, this knowledge of Scottish philology, so even of his Latin philology it was but a sifting of the purest wheat that he gave to his pupils. Though, in instructing them, he drew Latin only from

what he considered the wells of Latin undefiled, his own erudition was vast in the Latin literature of all styles and epochs. He had in his library, as I have said, an extraordinary collection of the Mediæval Latinists; and though, in the class-room, we had come to regard Plautus, poor fellow, as little better than an abomination, on account of his perpetually misleading us in the matter of deponent verbs, I have no doubt that, by himself, Melvin enjoyed Plautus as much as any one. Then, his excursions among the Grammarians, and in the History of modern Latinity, were, on the whole, unknown to us. We had the results, but of the masses of material we heard but little. Of his admiration for Buchanan we were made fully aware, because Buchanan's Psalms chanced to be amongst the books read, and the beauty of his Latinity became a subject of comment; but of Arthur Johnston, the Aberdonian, whom he also admired, we heard only incidentally; and I do not think we could have guessed in the class-room, what was nevertheless the fact, that the modern scholar of whom his admiration was most profound was the English Bentley. In all this there must have been self-repression, and a resolute recollection of the maxim that it is biscuit, rather than strong meat, that suits a beginner.

That so much of Melvin's scholarship died with him, uncommemorated either by any work from his pen in addition to his Grammar, or by any sufficient tradition among his pupils, is a matter for regret. Towards a Latin Dictionary, on which he was reported to be engaged, and which was certainly thought of by him as a worthy labour of his life, I know not whether he left any materials. The passion for acquisition, I fancy, had conquered in him the desire for production. A living scholar who knew him well has expressed his regret that he did not, at least, give to the world an edition of some classic author which might have preserved some of "those fruits of ripe scholarship and those exquisite morsels of keen and delicate criticism which he had gathered in his long experience"; and the same scholar suggests that Statius, "who is in want of such a service," might have suited the purpose.

There was, however, a third way in which more of Melvin might have been brought out than could be educed by the work of a Grammar School. As he had been Lecturer in Humanity in Marischal College for some ten years before the institution and endowment in that University of a regular Humanity Professorship, and as in that post he *had* given effect to some of the higher developments of Latinity, it was expected in 1839, when the Professorship was

actually established and endowed, that his promotion to that post, relieving him from the drudgery of his School-Rectorship, would begin a new era in his life. But the Whigs, then in office, knew nothing of Melvin; and so there was appointed to the new post, instead of Melvin, one of his old pupils, then an Edinburgh barrister—a man to whom the only objection even then was that he had obtained what had been popularly destined for Melvin, and of whom it has to be said since that he has stirred Scotland in many ways by his eccentricities and his genius. And thus, for another spell of years, Melvin, his connection with Marischal College at an end, went between his house in Belmont Street and the School, faithfully doing the duties of his Rectorship. But, again, when he was far on in his fifties, the Professorship became vacant by the transference of its first holder to the University of Edinburgh. This time Melvin's friends made sure that he would be appointed. Many of his pupils were now grown-up and men of local influence, and every exertion was made on his behalf. But again he was set aside. I think it was the Conservatives—Melvin's own party, so far as he belonged to one—that were then in power. He said little and went on as before; but it was a cruel blow, and they say he never recovered it. Testimonials from old pupils and other public demonstra-

tions attested the sympathy felt for him, and the desire to compensate, as far as possible, for his disappointment. The last testimonial, being a sum of £300 in a silver snuff-box, was presented to him on the 18th of June, 1853, by a deputation, headed by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen, who waited on him in his own house. He thanked them feelingly, but was in too feeble health to say much. He had persevered in teaching his classes as usual, but was hardly able to move to and from the school; and his friends were looking forward to the approaching holiday-month of July, during which, as in previous years, he might go into the country to recruit. The boys, respecting his weakness, were less noisy than usual as the holiday time drew near, and, if they were preparing for the usual decoration of the "factions" and school-walls with green branches of trees and crowns and festoons of flowers, made their preparations in quiet. He spoke of this careful kindliness of the boys with much pleasure and gratitude. On Monday, the 27th June, he was in his place in the school; but on that day he fainted from exhaustion, and had to be carried home. The next day, Tuesday, the 28th, he died in his house in Belmont Street, aged fifty-nine years.

There is a poem of Browning's which I read often because it reminds me of Melvin. It is entitled "A

Grammarian's Funeral," and is supposed to be the song sung by the disciples of a great scholar, shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe, as they are carrying the dead body of their master up from the plain to the high mountain-pinnacle where they mean to bury him. First they tell why they select this lofty eminence for his burying-place — why his honoured body should not repose in the valley; then, marching slowly on to the mountain-side, they chaunt—

> "Step to a tune, square chests, erect the head,
> 'Ware the beholders!
> This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,
> Borne on our shoulders.
> Sleep, crop and herd! sleep darkling thorpe and croft,
> Safe from the weather!
> He whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
> Singing together,
> He was a man born with thy face and throat,
> Lyric Apollo!
> Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note
> Winter would follow?"

And so, toiling on and up, carrying their burden, they wend at last to the peak which is their destination, still chaunting their master's praises, and telling how to the last, in illness and paralysis, he had never ceased learning and labouring:—

> "So, with the throttling hands of Death at strife
> Ground he at grammar;

Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife :
    While he could stammer,
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be !—
    Properly based *Oun*,
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
    Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place.
    Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
    Swallows and curlews !
Here's the top-peak ! the multitude below
    Live, for they can, there.
This man decided not to Live but Know—
    Bury this man there ?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
    Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go ! let joy break with the storm,
    Peace let the dew send.
Lofty designs must close with like effects :
    Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
    Living and dying."

APPENDIX A.

REPORT OF CENTENARY DINNER.

ON Friday, 15th June, 1894, a number of the pupils and admirers of the late Dr. Melvin dined in the Grand Hotel, Aberdeen, in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the great Latinist. The most interesting features of the tables were a number of souvenirs of Dr. Melvin, consisting of a silver tea and coffee service, lent by Mr. Edmond of Kingswells, which had belonged to the distinguished teacher; and a massive silver salver, which had been presented, through the sister of Dr. Melvin, to the University of Aberdeen. There was also on the table a copy of Dr. Melvin's Latin Grammar, second edition, dated 1824, and printed by D. Chalmers & Co., Adelphi, Aberdeen. It is inscribed in Dr. Melvin's handwriting "To the Rev.

Dr. Glennie, Marischal College, with the author's respectful compliments." The honoured teacher's purse, plainly made of leather, with steel clasp, was likewise on view.

Principal Sir William D. Geddes, by special request of the committee, occupied the chair, and the duties of croupier were discharged by Mr. Alexander Forbes, Aberdeen. The following gentlemen were also present :—Sheriff J. B. L. Birnie, Hamilton ; the Rev. Alexander Gray, D.D., Auchterless ; Mr. J. Forbes White, LL.D., Dundee ; Mr. Joseph Ogilvie, LL.D., Aberdeen ; Mr. William Dey, LL.D., Aberdeen ; Mr. H. F. Morland Simpson, Rector of the Grammar School ; Mr. James Moir, LL.D., co-Rector; Mr. Alexander Martin, late Rector; the Rev. James W. Legge, late classical master ; the Rev. Nicholas K. Macleod, Ellon ; the Rev. Charles Dunn, Birse ; the Rev. James Johnstone, Belhelvie ; the Rev. William R. Bruce, Newmachar ; the Rev. James Sutherland, late of Turriff ; the Rev. James Simpson, Aberdeen ; Mr George Allan, advocate, Aberdeen ; Mr. Gray C. Fraser, advocate ; Mr. Donald G. Cattanach, advocate ; Mr. John Watt, advocate ; Mr. John Parker, advocate ; Mr. Alexander Simpson, advocate ; Mr James Duguid, advocate ; Mr. P. Duguid M'Combie of Easter Skene ; Mr Robert

Falconer, solicitor, Stonehaven; Fleet-Surgeon George Mair, Aberdeen; Brigade-Surgeon David Mackie; Brigade-Surgeon Center; Dr. Gray, Aberdeen; Mr. Mackenzie, North of Scotland Bank; Mr. W. L. Henderson, architect, Aberdeen; Mr. James Forbes, merchant, Aberdeen; Mr. P. J. Anderson, LL.B., librarian to the University.

After dinner, the Chairman gave the toast of "The Queen." The auspicious morning, he said, when Her Majesty first landed at Aberdeen he had especial pleasure in recollecting, inasmuch as there was then a procession of citizens to greet Her Majesty on her arrival, and, among others, a procession of students of the Grammar School headed by the distinguished rector, whose memory they were met to celebrate that evening, and whose followers on that occasion carried a flag with this inscription, no doubt due to the Rector's suggestion—*Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?* (Applause.)

The Chairman then gave "The Health of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the other members of the Royal Family," remarking that Aberdeen had been singularly favoured by visits from Princes, and ere long they hoped to be honoured by a visit from a Prince who looked forward to be the heir of the British crown. (Applause.)

Mr Alexander Forbes afterwards submitted the toast of "The Navy, Army, and Auxiliary Forces," which was responded to by Fleet-Surgeon Mair, Brigade-Surgeon Mackie, and Major James Duguid.

Mr. Gray C. Fraser, advocate, who had acted as secretary, then read the following list of apologies for absence:—Lord Provost Stewart; Professor David Masson, LL.D., Edinburgh; Principal James Donaldson, LL.D., St Andrews; Principal David Brown, D.D., Aberdeen; Emeritus Professor Bain, LL.D.; the Rev. Professor W. G. Blaikie, D.D., New College, Edinburgh; the Rev. Professor S. D. F. Salmond, D.D., Free Church College, Aberdeen; the Rev. Professor James Robertson, D.D.; the Rev. Walter C. Smith, D.D., LL.D., Edinburgh; the Rev. J. Murray Mitchell, LL.D., Edinburgh; the Rev. James Cooper, D.D., Aberdeen; the Rev. George Philip, D.D., Edinburgh; the Rev. Robert Hunter, LL.D., Loughton; the Rev. George Reith, D.D., Glasgow; Mr. Middleton Rettie, LL.D., advocate, Edinburgh; Mr. Alexander Cruickshank, LL.D., Aberdeen; Mr. George Ogilvie, LL.D., Rector of George Watson's College, Edinburgh; Mr. James Macdonald, LL.D., Rector of Kelvinside Academy, Glasgow; the Rev. John Philip, Fordoun; the Rev. W. Lyon Riach, Edinburgh; the Rev. Robert Stephen, Renfrew; the

Rev. A. F. Moir, Woodside; the Rev. James Maclachlan, Inveravon; the Rev. William Simmers, Portsoy; the Rev. Alexander Gordon, Lethendy; the Rev. Alexander Anderson, Edinkillie; Mr. John Forbes Robertson, London; Mr, William Dunn of Murtle; Mr John Whyte of Dalhibity; Mr. James Auldjo Jamieson, W.S., Edinburgh; Mr. George Chree, Schoolhouse, Keig; Mr. Alexander Brownie, Schoolhouse, Bellie; Mr. John Clarke, Grammar School; Mr. Maxwell H. Mackie, Grammar School; Mr. Charles Sleigh, Aberdeen; Dr. Lawrence; Dr. Alexander Profeit, Balmoral; Mr. James Catto, merchant, Pitfodels; Mr. Alexander Simpson, jun.; Mr. Charles Robertson, late of I.C.S., Edinburgh.

Professor MASSON wrote :—"It would have been a great pleasure to me to be present at the proposed centenary dinner, and to meet such Aberdonian and other friends as may then be gathered together in loyal recollection of our noble and dear old master, to whom we, his pupils, owe so much, and who lives, and will live, in the records of all the North of Scotland as the supreme Latinist, and one of the worthiest men, of his generation in those parts."

Rev. Principal BROWN wrote :—" I was not one of Dr. Melvin's pupils, but when Mr. Cromar, who was Rector of the Grammar School in my day, was unable to teach from ill-health in the year 1816, Dr. Melvin took his place, and I had the benefit of his rare mastery of the relative idioms of the two languages—English and Latin."

Rev. Dr. MURRAY MITCHELL wrote :—"I must be one of the oldest surviving pupils of Dr. Melvin, and, as such, I should have greatly enjoyed attendance at the commemoration ; and, besides, no one can hold the character of that admirable man in higher esteem than I do. I attended the Grammar School of Aberdeen in 1828-9, being a pupil in the highest class taught by Dr. Melvin ; and thereafter in Marischal College, in which he was Lecturer on Humanity, I studied under him in sessions 1829-30 and 1830-31. In the autumn of 1836 Mr. Forbes, one of the teachers in the Grammar School, suddenly resigned, and Dr. Melvin, as Rector, begged me to take charge of the class vacated by Mr. Forbes. I told him that I was engaged to go to India, and could be of service only for a year. The arrangement was made accordingly, and, as an *interim* master in the Grammar School, I was brought into very frequent and pleasant

connection with the Rector. It is an interesting circumstance that, in the class I attended in 1828-9, there were four of the pupils who became missionaries. These were:—William Burns, of China; James Ogilvie, of Calcutta; John Hay, of Vizagapatam; and myself, connected with Bombay and Calcutta. All of these four had occasion to study Oriental languages with great care, and to take part in the all important work of providing Christian literature for Oriental races; indeed, the life-work of one of them—Hay, of Vizagapatam—was translating the Sacred Scriptures into Telugu. Well, if I am to judge from my own experience, I may confidently affirm that all of them felt through life, as they grappled with the tongues of the East, that they had derived a very great advantage from the thorough discipline—the admirable *drill*—through which they had passed under the hands of the great scholar, and equally great teacher, Melvin.

> 'Illum aget pennâ metuente solvi
> Fama superstes.'"

Rev. Dr. GEORGE PHILIP wrote:—"I am satisfied that I utter the sentiments of many in different parts of the world when I say that we are growingly conscious of the exceptional benefits we enjoyed in having Dr.

Melvin as our teacher—a man upright in character, eminent for learning, enthusiastic in communicating it, and jealous of the honour and interests of the school over which with so much dignity he presided. In expressing these sentiments we are only with increased emphasis repeating an act in which some sixty years ago we joyfully took part—when, at the 'buskin'' of the school before the summer vacation, we laid a wreath of ivy on the Rector's desk with an inscription which drew a smile of gratification as he read it—

'Doctarum hederæ præmia frontium.'"

Dr. James Macdonald wrote:—"I regard him as having done more than any other man under whose influence I came to give me an interest in those studies that were to shape my course through life. Few of those who sat in the 'factions' of his class-room can ever forget the daily comments on those niceties of the Latin language on which he loved to dwell. It was on Saturday morning, however, that the interest in our week's work culminated. Then, and only then, he donned the gown, and, with due solemnity, invoked Heaven's blessing on the day's proceedings. Coming down from his desk and producing the trial versions, carefully valued and

arranged in order, he proceeded, amid almost breathless silence, to read out the results. During occasional visits to Aberdeen I never fail to go to St Nicholas Churchyard, and to stand for a few moments at one grave there with a feeling akin to that of a devotee before the shrine of his favourite saint. I often wonder what the veteran Latinist would think if he could appear once more on the scene of his former triumphs. In his curriculum there was but *one* subject. That he found sufficient not only to absorb all his own energies, but to afford to his pupils a culture that fitted them to enter with success on the various walks of life they were destined to pursue."

Rev. ALEXANDER ANDERSON wrote :—" Two men awakened in me a life-long love for classics, and did more than all others to mould my character for good, viz., the present head of the University, Principal Sir William Geddes, who I trust may be long spared to hold the position of honour he now occupies, and the late Dr. James Melvin—'*Magnum atque venerabile nomen.*' I have always felt that the gap made by the removal of the famous Latinist can never be filled up. It will exist till the sun is old and the stars are cold, but

his influence is still working in many directions, and will operate for many a day. I had learned to love him as I have loved few since. There was nothing very attractive, so far as the exterior of the man was concerned. He was somewhat stiff and stern. There was not much sunshine about him, but there was a sterling worth which commended itself in a high degree to every pupil who had any manliness of character. And, strange to say, my heart went out to the old buildings for his sake. After my settlement as a minister, I felt on my return to Aberdeen somewhat as one did when he first entered the city of Rome. He got into a carriage and kept his eyes from every object till he reached the Coliseum. That was the first object he saw. The first sight in Aberdeen for me was the old Grammar School, which was as the Coliseum to me. But alas! I lived to see it desecrated, and at length demolished. His was a truly noble life. No marvel if his death made the world to some of us seem less desirable."

Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON wrote:—"The memory of that exact scholar and great teacher will be ever kept green by all who ever had the privilege of sitting at his feet. Were it possible I could resume my seat under him to-morrow; with my present knowledge of how far

above rubies his price was, I would drink in his every word with an unslackening thirst. In our friend, Sir William Geddes, you have most assuredly the right man in the right place. He comes to us clad, as it were, in the mantle of the prophet, and bearing upon him the Melvinian imprimatur. Sir Thomas Sutherland, of the P. and O. Company, could tell you this, for he was present in the fourth class when Dr. Melvin announced to the boys that he had found a competent scholar and sound Latinist in Mr. Geddes, who had that day been appointed to fill the vacancy that had so lately occurred.

"Now, see that you make all these fourth and fifth class boys enjoy themselves; your meeting is not one of mourning, you know, but one of thankfulnesses to the gods that such a man as Dr. Melvin had been born. He liked to indulge in a little hilarity himself, and, when occasion arose for laughter, he gave ample permission for indulgence; but I, like the 'royt nickum' I was, often changed it into licence by laughing louder and longer than any one. I can see Dr. Melvin now, holding his finger and saying with a smile, maybe a little 'grim,' but still a smile, and in measured tones, more of remonstrance than reproof— 'Joannes, that will do.'"

The Chairman, who was received with applause —"I now rise to propose the toast of the evening, and I do so not without a feeling of trepidation lest I should be unequal to the task of doing justice to the memory we are met to honour; but casting myself on your friendly sympathy and support, I shall put aside the fears and apprehensions which even wise men may feel but dare not cherish, and address myself to the high duty you have assigned to me. (Applause.) My first remark is one of regret that in this matter I am only, in Grammar School phrase, an extranean; and while among the admirers, and for nearly five years the colleague, I had not the good fortune or felicity of being a pupil of Dr. Melvin, and so cannot claim to have come, in the impressionable season of youth, under the spell of his strong personality. But although I was not in the formal sense a pupil, I enjoyed advantages that led me to entertain a reverence and esteem for him such as no pupil could have exceeded, and it is because I feel that reverential esteem not less but more as years roll on, that I appear here to-night in compliance with your request that I should take the chair on this occasion. (Applause.)

"The occasion is a notable one, not without a weighty significance. Here are we this evening, a

gathering of busy men, at a most busy time, from all corners of the land, occupying the most varied walks of life, with no conspicuous unanimity in our views, municipally, politically, or socially, met together, after the lapse of forty years, to celebrate a great and influential memory, not yet grown dim—the most potential, educationally, that Aberdeen, in the course of a century at least, has known.

"A hundred years ago, in a house at the head of the Gallowgate, the great teacher, whom we know as James Melvin, was born, just about the time when the greatest thinker and scholar of Aberdeen in the last century was quietly passing away—I mean the great Principal, George Campbell, beside whom, within a few paces in our Town's Churchyard, our great scholar lies interred. I mention this circumstance because the near conjunction in their last resting-place of these two twin spirits—both of them typical of robust Aberdonian sense, and each in his several sphere representative of all that is best in Aberdonian educational method—appears to me not without a certain significance and appropriateness. Those two names together constitute probably the greatest educational memories of their several centuries connected with our city of Aberdeen. (Applause.) It was fortunate for Melvin that he

was born in a city possessing educational ideals such as those represented by George Campbell, a city cherishing traditions of the high character to which Melvin served himself the rightful heir, traditions of high scholarship which he focussed and crystallised. Is it not among the singular and unique titles of distinction of our city that, as in Dr. Johnson's days, the freedom of the city is, or was till lately, conferred by a diploma in the majestic language of old Rome, and that the Rector of the Grammar School used to greet the Magistrates and examiners at the annual visitation with a Latin oration or address, as if redolent and reminiscent of the Forum and the Eternal City? (Applause.) Those days to which I refer were days of state and ceremonial, as well as cultured leisure, and one of Dr. Melvin's earliest productions was a beautiful address, in which he modestly, yet with dignity, greeted the city fathers on his appointment as Rector of the School in 1826—an address which appears in the handsome and elegant volume which has just been issued as a centenary volume, and which does so great credit to its two editors, both of whom we are happy to see here to-night, Dr. Joseph Ogilvie and Mr. Legge. (Applause.) Dr. Melvin, therefore, grew up in an atmosphere where Latin held the palm, and where exactness as well as elegance was the test of scholarship.

"There is a circumstance connected with the history of the Grammar School in this regard that I delight to recall. That brilliant pupil, a little before the period of Dr. Melvin, who afterwards astonished the world under the name of Childe Harold, can be claimed not only as an alumnus but as an inheritor of the pristine spirit distinguishing the Grammar School. In one of his letters, Lord Byron refers to the circumstance of some of his translators having bungled his poetry and made immense blunders in translating his verses, and the words that he used are of such flashing indignation that on such an occasion I may be permitted to quote them. 'Only think,' says he, after enumerating some of the blunders, 'only think of being traduced into a foreign language in such an abominable travesty.' There spoke, as I take it, the son of the Grammar School of Aberdeen, already possessed of a thorough Melvinian feeling as to the supreme value of accuracy in language. It is clear, then, that Aberdeen as a scholastic centre, could boast of high traditions, and to these Melvin was fortunate in serving himself, as I have said, the rightful heir.

"Thus ushered into an atmosphere full of Latin memories and influence, the young Melvin brought to bear on his life-task a combination of gifts and

powers very noble and memorable. How long and faithfully he strove to fulfil his high function, Aberdeen and this gathering fully recognise, and we proudly, yet pathetically, recall the devotion with which day by day, and year by year, year after year, he laboured under depressing conditions in a stifling atmosphere—(applause)—and with slender pecuniary reward—endowed salary not reaching £100—and there was he, for 10/6 a quarter, giving five hours a day of the best teaching then or since available—(applause)—with blows now and again from Fortune, more than once of a severe kind, such as would have staggered a less robust nature and less Spartan spirit ; yet, strong under the inspiration of right and duty, he toiled on, so that we are almost constrained to address to him across the mists of forty years the words of Shakespeare :—

> 'O, good old man, how well in thee appears
> The constant service of the antique world,
> When service sweat for duty, not for meed.'

(Applause.)

"If such was the impression left by the *tout ensemble* of his life, hardly less admirable is the result when we come to estimate the special features of his teaching, and to a few of these I would briefly allude. Prominent among these qualities I would place first

his emphasising of quality rather than quantity ; *non multa sed multum**—his favourite maxim—rather one subject well mastered and matured than many skimmed and learned badly, which, by the way, accounts for and justifies his supposed attitude of comparative indifference to the sister study of Greek, for which at that stage and time he had no proper opportunity ; his appraising of training in Latin verse, as giving a sense of the value of fine form and melodious combination—an exercise which he did his best to foster, but alas ! was never followed up to fruit at college, and received, I fear, no real or adequate encouragement from Humanity professors then or since ; his patriotic appreciation of the scholars of his native country, placing the Psalms of Buchanan as a text-book in line with the Odes of Horace, and awaking sympathetic memories at the very mention of Ruddiman and Arthur Johnston ; his rich fund of pawky humour, when he would deviate into the vernacular and light up the old past with modern instances from Burns and Allan Ramsay ; the delight with which he would repeat a Porsonian puzzle or a conundrum embodying some principle he was enforcing ; the felicity with which in a quip or passing turn he would implant indelibly an important truth, as, for example,

*After Pliny, Ep. vii. 9 (fin.)

in speaking of the retreat of a Roman army, he called attention to the unity of march and the organisation of the Imperial people. 'A Roman army, mark you, had but one foot, hence, gentlemen, referre ped*em* ; it would make a mob of it to allow referre ped*es*'; maxims such as these, proceeding from what was felt to be a dominant personality, made an impression on the dullest such as never could be forgotten. (Applause.)

"By such methods and with such ideals he trained his pupils gradually to feel a pride in the manipulation of the Latin tongue, and thereby to understand that the proper handling of language is a fine art, and that the arrangement of the proper words in their proper places is like the marshalling of an army—a thing of tactical precision. (Applause.) In the sentences of a writer such as Cicero we have learned through such teaching as that of Melvin to feel the echo of the great march of the tramping legions that conquered the world, and there is presented to us magnificent language, having the stately regularity and official splendour of a triumphal procession. All this was gradually instilled into the finer spirits under the methods and the ideals of Melvin, and hence the gratitude of his hundreds of pupils for the care and precision with which, in his translations to or from

the Latin tongue he taught them to weigh the gold dust of the ancients in the finest scales ; to extract the least grain, the smallest atom of the meaning—no more, but not one scruple less—the exact commercial exchange betwixt tongue and tongue. The intellectual accuracy which he thus exacted was found to have more than intellectual results ; it gradually passed into the character, and became an instinct affecting the feelings, and the rigour of his method was felt to be not only akin to, but helpful in, developing moral truthfulness, the best fruit of all training and of all instruction.

" If we ask, in conclusion, what it was that constituted the spell of Melvin, we are constrained to say, by way of reply, it was not learning, though that he had, both wide and deep in all amplitude ; it was not intellectual strength and acuteness, though these he possessed also in large measure ; it was something more valuable, an essence more potential even than these ; it was CHARACTER, strong and stable character, based on moral worth, and formed and fashioned to a great result. There he stood, the impersonation of a great teacher, as if to give the world assurance of a man who would do his work devotedly and nobly, making his motto ' Duty, duty, clear of circumstance,' yea, ' vanquishing circumstance,' like the just and firm Roman of Horace :

> 'Iustum et tenacem propositi virum
> Non civium ardor prava iubentium,
> Non vultus instantis tyranni
> Mente quatit solida.'

Hence it is that Melvin has left us a name still to conjure with ; a memory that Aberdeen will do well to retain in proud remembrance, and after the silent lapse of forty years we have met under this feeling of homage to do fitting honour to his name. I give you with all reverence 'The Memory of Dr. Melvin.'" (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. Gray proposed "The Grammar School." He said :—"Sir William Geddes and gentlemen, I feel quite unable to do justice to the toast which has been put into my hands, as I know little or nothing of the Grammar School of to-day or of its Rectors. Had it been the Grammar School of forty-seven years ago and its then Rector I would have felt at home on the subject. But I see heading this toast-list—'Centenary of Dr. Melvin,' so *he*, I take it, is the great central subject of this meeting, and all else is secondary and subordinate—all else is just to give an opportunity of remembering and speaking of him. This being so, I make no excuse for deviating a little from my text—the Grammar School as it now is to the Grammar School as it then was.

"Mr. Chairman, no one has more reason than I have to revere the memory of Dr. Melvin—none of his pupils owe more to him than I do. I owe it to that prince of teachers that I didn't spoil a good ploughman and bungle my life. At the age of twenty-one I left the plough with nothing more than the ordinary parish-school education that a poor man could give his boys, and went to the parish school of Tarves, then under the mastership of Dr. Melvin's brother. I continued there somewhat more than a year doing my best, but that was not much, as he had not much time or heart to help me. So, glad to get rid of my torturing of him, in season and out of season, for instruction, he recommended me to his brother, whose fourth class I entered for the last quarter of 1846. Being favourably spoken of by his brother, the Doctor came to me the first day I took my seat at the foot of his fourth class and put to me some questions to test my fitness for joining it. Finding I knew little or nothing about it, he shook his head and said: 'O, Sandy, man, I doot yiv made a mistak' in comin' here.' This was very disheartening. Nevertheless, mistak' or no mistak', I held on working night and day, and, at the end of the quarter, gained the second extranean prize, to the great astonishment and delight of Melvin, who, as soon as he got the chance, came to

me and said : 'Ay, Saners, man, we'll maybe mak' something o't yet.' I then joined the fifth class, and remained there till the beginning of the College Session of '47-48, when I gained the first bursary—a pretty good proof, I think, of Melvin's handiwork, considering the material he had to work upon and the time he had to work it, for Melvin's handiwork it was. No doubt I worked as hard as I was able, but it was the perfection of Melvin's teaching that made that hard work result as it did. I have had teachers under whom the like hard work in ten times the time would have been worthless in comparison. (Applause.)

" As I am here not to magnify myself, but to magnify my beloved old teacher, Melvin, I shall say nothing about how I got on at the University save this—that I warsled throw wunerfu' considerin', and that my ongetting there, as well as in my life's work since, such as it has been, I owe in great measure to the admirable mental training and discipline of Melvin, who, in a marvellous manner, made the Latin language the instrument of developing, energising, and bracing the mind to deal with whatever came before it accurately, thoroughly, effectively. I may also be allowed to say—in connection with my College course —that I possess a sample of Melvin's Latinity, of which I was *once* very proud, and which he said that

he had great difficulty in producing owing to the very limited space he had to work on. It is this—written on the first gold medal given to the College by the Town Council of Aberdeen—

> 'Alexandro Gray, A.M.,
> optime merito adolescentum
> qui anno MDCCCLI
> in Academia Marischallana
> Artium Magistri creati sunt
> Præfectus Cæterique Magistratus
> et Commune Concilium
> Civitatis Aberdonensis
> donaverunt.'

"But to go back to my fifth class, there are two incidents that stand out very vividly before my mind —notwithstanding the intervening forty-seven years. Here is one: It was the Doctor's custom on version days to call up into his desk a scholar who had given in his version in time for it, and there go over his version with him. One day, never to be forgotten, I had to go through this terrible ordeal. At the call I crawled into the desk, where, with my version before him, sat Melvin. I saw by his face that there was something very far wrong. The version was fairly good, but for a most egregious 'maxie,' viz., the making *ille* agree with a feminine noun! 'Come awa' in aboot to me, Saners, man. Jist leuk at this. Did

ye ever hear of a rule that says : An adjective agrees with a substantive in *gender* ? Are ye leukin', man ? What would you think of putting a point of exclamation after it?' So he took his pencil, and with the utmost deliberation put the point. Then, looking at it a while, he added, 'I think it would be better o' een or twa abeen't.' So, with like deliberation, he proceeded to give it these. Then sitting up, and with the pencil still upon the hideous maxie, he went on as follows : 'Noo, Sandy, man, fat think ye o' yersel'? O man, man. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice and the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.' I don't remember the feminine noun with which I made *ille* agree, but that *ille* is as vividly before my face to-day as if all this had happened yesterday. Thus it was that Melvin pierced and transfixed accuracy into his pupils. I don't believe that ever again I made an error with *ille*.

"The other incident was this : As the Doctor's gown was getting tattered and torn, our fifth class resolved to present him with a new one before we parted with him. So, joined by the fourth class, we easily raised funds to procure a splendid robe, and I was fixed upon to present it. With fear and trembling I undertook the momentous business, and

set myself with all my might to rise to the great occasion. The day of presentation came. There, at the entrance of his desk, stood Melvin, the janitor with the gown ready to be put on at the proper time, the schoolroom packed with a hundred and fifty scholars, and poor me and my great speech in a condition easier imagined than expressed. Well, said speech went on all serene till the conclusion, in which I endeavoured to express our appreciation and gratitude for all that Melvin had felt and done for our good, and our regret for all the trouble and grief we had given him by our errors, &c., and was ending with the hope that we should all meet again in a better land, where there would be no errors or disheartening things to mar our happiness. While thus concluding, I saw in the Doctor's face what I thought was the expression he put on when he came on a maxie or anything that displeased him, and I painfully felt that my English—which was certainly none of the best—or my sentiment was disgusting him, when, lo, and behold, the big tears came rolling down his cheeks, and he fairly broke down, and so did I, and so did we all, bad and good of us. We were a' greetin' thegether. The place was a perfect Bochim. Then and there a new, unthought-of trait of Melvin's character was revealed to us. We now knew that all his sternness and

grimness was *put on* for disciplinary purposes, and that beneath it all there beat a warm, feeling, loving heart.

"Melvin was very proud of this gown. In his Latin speech, delivered before the Lord Provost and Magistrates at the end of the Grammar School year, he referred to it. In the sentence in which he did so I remember only two of the words, but his meaning was this: Of the esteem and affections of his pupils towards him the proof was *haecce toga*—suiting the action to the words by holding up the flowing skirts of the robe. I may add that I possess this precious gown. On Melvin's death his sister presented it to me. I wore it till my people thought it was not fit to be worn any longer, and presented me with a grand new one; but I don't think I have preached so well since I laid off Melvin's one. I keep it still, and prize it more than all the relics of all the saints on earth or in heaven.

"But to return from this rather long digression to the subject of my toast, viz., the Grammar School of to-day and its Rectors. Well, as I have said, I cannot do justice to it and them for the reason stated; but I can say this, that the Grammar School of Aberdeen has had a very warm corner in my heart ever since I was at it, and that heart's sincere desire is that it may take the foremost place among the educational

institutions of Aberdeen and of everywhere else; and that its present Rectors may take the same place in the hearts and affections of their scholars, and have the same power and influence over them for good, as Dr. Melvin had over his scholars, so that when they are a hundred years old they may get a centenary as hearty and as well deserved as this present one. I beg to couple this toast with Mr. Morland Simpson and Dr. Moir." (Applause.)

Mr. Morland Simpson, in reply, said it was with pride and pleasure he remembered that the Grammar School had a very venerable history, and he was deeply sensible of the very high ideals of the past up to which they had to lead. He had been so short a time among them that he would not venture to prophecy as to the future of the Grammar School; but he would only hope that the great ideals of the past might continue to inspire their teachers and their youth, so that they might endeavour to lead up to them—surpass them he did not think they possibly could do. (Applause.) The toast of "The Grammar School" was one of the future rather than of the past, but memories of the past were the theme of the evening; and on this theme he should not detain their attention further than to note that he was happy in sharing the honour of reply with one

who in loving interest in their School's history was second to none. Others could speak from personal reminiscence of Melvin at most for a part only of Melvin's career; but few, if any, could be so fully informed on the whole period of Melvin's Rectorship, and certainly none had so wide a knowledge of the whole history of the School as Dr. Moir, to whom, without further preface, he yielded place.

Dr. Moir, who also replied, presumed that the claims the Grammar School had to honour rested on its great antiquity, its interesting history, and the number of eminent men and useful citizens that it had trained. With regard to the antiquity of the School, he thought they must look for the beginnings of its history to the time when the Church of St. Nicholas was provided with buildings. At all events, in 1256 the Chancellor of the Diocese was instructed to provide a Teacher of Grammar and Logic for the School. In 1262 the name of the first-known Rector, Thomas de Bennum, occurred in an ecclesiastical deed. Doubtless at first the School existed mainly for the education of future priests and monks. But as the Town Council paid some part of the Rector's salary, as early as 1509 they claimed successfully to have the appointment of the Rector in their own hands. Thus the School gradually passed from being

merely a training place of future ecclesiastics into the School of the Burgh.

If one were to give scope to one's imagination, one might picture the "loons" cheering Bruce after his victory at Barra. Wallace also, according to Blind Harry, visited Aberdeen, but his authority was not wholly to be trusted. Some thirty years after Bruce's visit the English burned the town for three days. That must have been a terrible experience for young and old. Bannockburn had doubtless been an excuse for a holiday, for boyish nature was much the same then as now. A hundred years after, Harlaw must, in spite of its glories, have brought great sadness into the School, for all who fell there, both gentle and simple, had sons or brothers or friends in the School. So, one might go over all the stirring events of Scottish history and find the scholars interested in these. The pageants, the miracle-plays, the visits of the Rector and the Boy-Bishop at Candlemas to the burghers, would all be interesting to conjure up. So would it be to attempt to describe the daily routine of the School in days when as yet books were not.

Time would not permit him to mention the many illustrious pupils whom the School had produced. Suffice it to say that in this respect it was

second, if second, to Edinburgh High School alone of all Scottish schools. (Applause.)

He would confine his remaining remarks to an attempt to show that, great as Melvin was as a Latinist, he was only one of a succession of men whose scholarship reflected credit on Aberdeen ; and that Aberdeen might claim to have a distinct school of Latinity of its own. Ever since that great and good man, Bishop Elphinston, founded King's College, they had had a succession of Latin grammarians connected with Aberdeen. The first of these was John Vaus, the first Humanist in King's. Vaus published a Latin Grammar at Paris in 1553, but apparently this was a second edition, a previous edition having been published in 1522. George Buchanan published his Latin Grammar, based on that of the Englishman, Linacre, in 1543, so that Vaus had the honour of being the author of the first Latin Grammar composed by a Scotsman. About the year 1600 David Wedderburn and Thomas Reid were co-Rectors of the Grammar School. The latter of these was afterwards appointed Latin Secretary to James VI., a position similar to that occupied by Milton under Cromwell. Wedderburn was a poet, and a man of forceful character. He was the friend of Arthur Johnston, the poet, and of the learned and

saintly Forbeses. He received one hundred pounds from the Town Council to defray his expenses in going to Edinburgh to obtain permission of the Lords of Council to publish his Grammar. His Grammar became popular all over Scotland, and the Convention of Royal Burghs requested each burgh to adopt it in its school. Next century saw another Aberdeen grammarian, Thomas Ruddiman, arise. In 1694, a hundred years before the birth of Melvin, he walked from Boyndie, near Banff, to Aberdeen, and gained the first bursary. He afterwards became a distinguished grammarian and antiquarian. His Latin Grammar was published even in Germany. In the next century they had James Melvin, first bursar in 1809, and Rector afterwards of the Grammar School, producing the fourth Latin Grammar by an Aberdonian. He questioned if any other town could produce a similar record. (Applause.) Melvin, however, was much more than a grammarian. He had a refined literary taste, manifested not only in Latin prose, but in Latin verse, and not only in stately English, but in pithy Scots. He was mentioned in the preface to Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary as having given the editor of that work valuable assistance. He was also on the committee of the Spalding Club. Besides producing these grammarians,

Aberdeen could also claim as elegant Latin writers Boece, Arthur Johnston, Dempster, and Leslie, besides others of minor fame, to be found in the "Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum."

Melvin had had local successors—their learned chairman, Sir William Geddes, who besides his unique services to Greek, had given them "Melviniana"; Dr. Beverley, Mr. Martin, Dr. George Ogilvie, Principal Donaldson, Dr. Joseph Ogilvie, and the Rev. J. W. Legge, and, last of all, himself a humble contributor. He was not a pupil of Dr. Melvin's; but was trained under one of his pupils, the late Mr. James Smith, Keith, a man worthy of being mentioned alongside even of Melvin, for he was a great teacher, an *ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*, as his pupil, the late Professor Black, styled him. (Applause.)

Dr. John F. White gave the toast of "Education," stating that one aspect of the education question challenged attention at the present time—namely, the marked advance that had taken place in raising the art of teaching from an art to a science. They had now in every University either a professor of education or a lecturer on education. It seemed to him exactly as it should be—that the art of teaching should be raised to such a point as to prevent imperfections on the part of young teachers, and he thought

it desirable that old methods should be abandoned, and the best methods taken whenever they could be obtained. (Applause.) But it was his belief that such teachers as Dr. Melvin were not made—they were born. (Applause.) He could not quite say that he had found out on the surface that Dr. Melvin was attractive and loveable, though he often showed a kindly humour, mingled with the sarcasm which boys fear. Yet his favourites felt that behind all there was a concealed warmth of heart and a deep interest in their welfare. And if they felt Dr. Melvin to be stern, they knew him to be eminently fair, and those who left his school without any intention of carrying out a learned profession had always confessed that the lessons he taught them of precision, accuracy, and perseverance, were the means by which they attained success in after life. (Applause.)

Dr. Joseph Ogilvie, in his reply, described his introduction, together with his younger brother, now the Inspector, to Dr. Melvin, by their distinguished relative, Professor Cruickshank, and how much they were overawed on that occasion in the august presence of the great Latinist. They were then two simple boys from the country come up for the proverbial last quarter to the Grammar School before the bursary competition.

Though the time was short, much benefit did they derive from Melvin's teaching, receiving from him direct inspiration and love for the "Version." They all knew that the "Version" was the great thing at the Grammar School. (Applause.) Its educative effect applied to everthing except physical exercise, being, as taught by Melvin, intensely intellectual as well as moral and aesthetic. No doubt Dr. White himself, a distinguished Melvinian scholar, must confess that he laid at the Grammar School the foundation of his aesthetic taste. Dr. Ogilvie added that he only wished he could exercise a tithe of Melvin's power in the stool—for it was not a chair—he had got at the University, and that he could send away teachers duly inspired with enthusiasm for their duties. Such teachers were, like Melvin, independent of training, for he would have been spoiled by "training." (Applause.)

Sheriff Birnie gave "The Pupils of Dr. Melvin." He felt that it made him younger to be present that evening. They were there to speak of their school days, and it was that which made the invitation to the meeting so absolutely irresistible. (Applause.) He remembered Dr. Melvin in his later days. The room in which Dr. Melvin sat for so many years would probably not meet the requirements of the present day,

nor, probably, would Melvin's system entirely meet the requirements of the present day, but that schoolroom drew every lad in this neighbourhood whose father had a hope of sending him to college, and that system sent out to many places in the world the men who had made the town of Aberdeen, and the education of Aberdeen, honoured and admired. They were to drink their own health, and although they had not much to ask for themselves now, they had a great deal to think for those who had to come after them. That evening they had done something for those who were to come after them, for they had shown that there was a great man in their time, and that they had lived to honour him. (Applause.)

Mr. D. G. Cattanach, whose name was coupled with the toast, expressed the gratitude which he was sure they all felt to the man to whom they owed so much. (Applause.) Mr. Cattanach then proceeded to give some interesting reminiscences of Melvin and imitations of his style and methods, which were very much appreciated. He referred to the restoration of the tomb of Dr. Melvin in St. Nicholas Churchyard, and mentioned that the whole work had been done for a sum of about £7 10s. (Applause.)

The Croupier then gave "The City of Aberdeen," sketching its characteristics—mercantile, scholastic,

and ecclesiastical. The high quality of its manufactures he attributed in great measure to a conscientiousness on the part of the citizens which had for centuries been fostered by a sound educational training and religious teaching. (Applause.)

Dr. John F. White replied in a few sentences.

The Rev. N. K. M'Leod proposed "The Chairman," remarking that it was a great satisfaction to them that the Principalship of the University was filled by one who had not only a local and national but a European reputation. (Applause.)

Sir William Geddes acknowledged, and proposed "The Croupier," who returned thanks. Sir William then craved leave to withdraw, suggesting that the Croupier should take his place, since he had been the leading spirit of the Acting Committee, and so left the meeting, amid cheers, after which accordingly his place was taken by Mr. Alexander Forbes.

Interesting reminiscences of Dr. Melvin were given by the Rev. W. R. Bruce, the Rev. Charles Dunn, the Rev. James Sutherland, and others; and the proceedings terminated at midnight with the toast of "Bon-Accord."

APPENDIX B.

DR. HILL BURTON ON DR. MELVIN.

"It was a fine intellectual feast to find the late Dr. Melvin of Aberdeen exercising his first 'faction,' or form, on Buchanan's Psalms, though perhaps a stranger, ignorant of all he had trained his favourite pupils to, might have said the feast was made of meats too strong for the youthful company assembled round it. With subtle ease he could show how it was that each collocative idiomatic term and curious felicity of expression was truly in the spirit of the old Roman literature, though it was no servile mimicry or exact imitation of any precedent. True, the poet sometimes tripped, but did not Homer take a nap, and was it not the specialty of high and secure genius to be careless? There was that flagrant instance where Buchanan, not only forgetting that he was repeating the prayer of so improper a person as the goddess of love, but losing hold of the first

principle of the Christian faith, began the 4th Psalm with a line from the tenth Æneid *—

'O pater !—O hominum divumque æterna potestas !'

But would Buchanan have for a moment contemplated theft in the case, any more than the millionaire who takes a better hat than his own from the lobby table? It was an instance of the negligence of supreme genius—the line was running in his head, and he thought he had composed it. The coincidents of this kind, called parallel passages, are among the accepted curiosities of literature. Some have taken in this way even from themselves, and none oftener than Virgil.

"I believe there is a considerable number of men now in middle life, who, if they were to recall their earliest impulse towards the emulation and intellectual enthusiasm which has brought them to eminence, would carry it back to the teaching of Melvin. I was delighted the other day to see justice done to the great powers of Dr. Melvin, by a distinguished pupil of his, Professor Masson, who says :—'Melvin, it is now the deliberate conviction of many besides myself, was at the head of the Scottish Latinity of his day. How he had attained to his consummate mastery in the Latin tongue and literature—how, indeed, amid

* [Melvin might have defended Buchanan's *divum* out of the English Psalms. 'Worship Him, all ye gods.']

the rough and hasty conditions of Scottish intellectual life, there could be bred a Latin scholar of his supreme type at all—is somewhat of a mystery.'

"But Melvin's scholarship arose neither from ambition to rise by it, nor from a peculiar call to the dry analysis of a dead language. He was a man of bright active intellect and fine taste, and that he should have come to use, as the tool of his intellectual activity, the language of Rome instead of that of his own country, was probably incidental; possibly it may have been from a remnant of the shyness of competing in the language of England with Englishmen, which lingered long in Scotland, especially with those whose opportunities of mingling with the world happened to be limited. However it was, Melvin, like the great master he revered, made for himself an intellectual home in the language of Rome, and became as familiar with everything written by Roman writers, or about them, as the old frequenter of a town is with the houses and the stones he passes daily. His edition of 'Horace for every Day in the Year'* was merely a variety of the conditions under which he kept up constant companionship with an old ever-welcome friend."—*The Scot Abroad.*

* [The library of Dr. Melvin was believed to contain 365 editions of Horace, or one for every day in the year, and this belief is the explanation of the reference in the last sentence of the above.]

APPENDIX C.

SOME REMINISCENCES BY PRINCIPAL SIR W. D. GEDDES.

THE name of a great teacher is a great inheritance, and such undoubtedly to Aberdeen and its Grammar School is the name of James Melvin. I deem it, therefore, a duty incumbent on me, as belonging somewhat to that elder time, to gather a gleam or two out of its tremulous and now fading memory, so as to throw some light on the man and on those methods and aims of his which have made his name a power.

In thinking of the man, we naturally turn first to his image as presented in the Cassie portrait and in the engraving taken therefrom. It is all that we have of him, pictorially, and the Melvin window in the University Library follows the Cassie portrait both in its merits and its defects. Unfortunately the portrait errs in two points : it gives him round, robust shoulders which he had not (those in the portrait

suggest rather his contemporary Dr. Kilgour), and secondly, it misses the high, elongated form of face which he had, and credits him with too round a countenance. Still, it gives his look of intentness (ἀτενίζων), as if just after driving home some grammatical nail to a sure place, and the expression of the finger, in act to demonstrate, is entirely and aptly suggestive of his grave and earnest gestures in communicating knowledge.

Next to the Cassie portrait, as indicating character, we think naturally of his penmanship. Has anyone, of those who have written concerning him, taken just notice of his fine caligraphy, so firm and clear and precise, whether in his pencillings, occasionally in Latin upon favourite volumes, or in the more formal written lucubrations by the pen? In the style of penmanship which he practised one can see the index of his character, staid and sedate, disdaining show and flourishes, but exhibiting the same punctiliousness as to form which has distinguished great scholars like Porson and Hugh Munro, and which we are glad to see continues as an inheritance among Cambridge classics like Dr. James S. Reid—all of whom, like Melvin, are exempt from the paltry vanity that too often counts it "a baseness to write fair." The same clear form of penmanship I find as

early as 1824, when he sends a presentation copy of his Latin Grammar to Dr. Glennie—a work, by the way, composed by him while only an under-master and a simple A.M., but which already shows a wonderful compass of learning and patient research, such as distinguished him pre-eminently in after years.

It was not till the spring of 1848 that I came into the privilege of his acquaintance, and though he was still hale and fairly keen, life with him was visibly verging towards afternoon, and two at least of the severer blows of Fortune had already passed over him, the greatest of course being the loss of the Latin Chair in Marischal College in 1839, to which, as being formerly the acknowledged Lecturer in Latin, he had good reason to aspire. From 1848 onward to June, 1853, when he passed away, I had almost daily opportunity of meeting him ; for it was then the every day routine of the school for the four masters to meet before the clock in what was called the Public School, with the stream of boys sweeping past to their several classrooms ; and punctually at the five minutes past the Doctor lugged out his gold watch to verify, and we at once separated to our respective classrooms. On four full days a week these meetings recurred twice a day at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. ; and we were thus afforded

every opportunity of seeing him under all variety of circumstances, but the pleasant, dignified, yet pensive mood, occasionally relaxing into a jest or smile, hardly ever varied. On these occasions the latest edition of a book, or some new reading in Horace or elsewhere, might be referred to, or he would indulge in a little nut-cracking jest, asking us to interpret, *e.g.*,

Mitto tibi Navem prora puppique carentem.

"Do you give it up?" he would say. "It means simply 'good morning,' Navem becoming Ave when stripped of its front and rear." A wrong form of quotation on these occasions always galled him. I remember him correcting old Mr. John Dun, the senior master, who had let fall, "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis." "It should be, mark you, 'nos et mutamur,' for good metre."

In his class-prelections there was one author who was his special aversion, from a pedagogic point of view, and who therefore came in for special condemnation. This was Plautus, whom otherwise he relished and admired, but whose free and easy verb formations when met and adopted by the youths, were apt to lead them sorely astray, much to his indignation. Grubbing in their dictionaries, the lads would come upon deponent verbs credited with

active forms, and similar abnormal monstrosities, all duly registered, much as pathological museums are rich in deformities ; and these they would produce to the master, in order to mollify some bad mark as they deemed it, but he was severely inexorable. His formula of excommunication in such a case ran generally thus ; " Gentlemen, such a thing as so-and-so (naming the atrocity) in Plautus is to be remarked, but not imitated ; it is to be remarked, only to be avoided." The result was that the very name of Plautus was apt to be thought of as synonymous not with error only, but with sin—such was the dark halo surrounding it in the pedagogic mind.

One of his punctilios in writing was to attend to the proper division into syllables. A poor student who happened at the end of a line to make a wrong distribution of a word was sure to be pounced on, as for example, in a bad division occurring of such a word as *father* or *consulship*, and the laugh was turned against the perpetrator of such as *fat-her* or *consuls-hip*, which he would pronounce with supreme contempt—a contempt that proved effectually deterrent.

In the case of minor peccadillos with penknives operating on the desks or pencils on the walls he would quote the old line—

Nomina stultorum semper parietibus haerent,

laying a particular emphasis on the *stultorum*. He once owned to me that there was one inscription of that kind which he would have pardoned and preserved, but he had searched for it on the desks in vain ; and that was "Dominus Byron," traditionally said to have been once cut out on a desk in the old Grammar School.

It was also a sign of good humour when he indulged in the vernacular and relapsed into the Scottish vein, and any youth whose version was commented on in that mood might be sure he was a favourite even though the criticism was otherwise salted with censure. His acquaintance with Scottish learning was second only to his knowledge of the Latin classics, and the bye-ways of Scottish classical learning interested him much, such as the history of the Foulis press with its so-called "Immaculate" edition of Horace, the questions as to the rival Latin versions of the Psalms by Buchanan and Arthur Johnston ; or the Gavin Douglas version of the Æneid*, of which he considered that Scotland might well feel proud.

*In this connection the queer lines on Sisyphus attributed to Gawin Douglas may be referred to. The attribution will not hold, as the basis is not the Æneid, but a passage in the Odyssey xi. (592-9). The lines are known to have been quoted in humorous moments by Dr. Melvin, but their authorship is unknown. A version of them may be found in Scottish Notes and Queries, II., p. 108.

As regards later and more modern Scotch, it is not known that he had any special *penchant* beyond a perfect familiarity with Robert Burns. While duly appreciating the genius and the glow of the Ayrshire bard, he would sometimes point a moral or enliven a tale by calling attention to some of his weaknesses when deviating into classic lore. The occurrence of the Horatian *Heliconis oris* gave an opening for a sly hit at the Scottish poet, "for converting, do you see, gentlemen, a mountain into a fountain, following, no doubt, some English poets before him who ought to have known better—

> O were I on Parnassus hill,
> And had of Helicon *my fill.*

I am afraid, gentlemen, the poet would not have felt very comfortable with such an occupant in his interior." Few students would, after that, be likely to forget the fact that Helicon was a *mountain*, though associated with the fountain-loving muses.

Although a licentiate of the Church, he very seldom preached, and the regularity with which his tall form could be seen in the West Church between the two pillars where his pew lay was well known to all the West Church people. On one occasion, owing to the breakdown of a preacher through non-appearance, I remember seeing the Doctor taken out

of his pew when the congregation was assembling, and after a short visit to his residence close by, he duly officiated. Dr. Francis Edmond, who was his intimate friend and the executor for Dr. Melvin's sister, and to whom we owe the Melvin window and much else, told me that he had heard the Doctor preach various times, and on every occasion he introduced among the petitions of the Second or Intercessory prayer the pathetic touch as to the sons and daughters of affliction, whom he described as those around us, who in the morning say, "Would God it were even," and at even say, "Would God it were morning."

One of the latest interviews I had with the Doctor was on a memorable Saturday afternoon when the redoubted Dr. Adams of Banchory went over with him the stanzas of his Latin version of Gray's Elegy, afterwards published in his "Arundines Devae." As a friend of both these scholars, I was permitted, though a junior, to be present at the sitting, and the privilege was great. It turned out, however, to be a *sederunt* on which I rather look back with sadness, because it found Dr. Melvin in weak health, and deprived him of an excursion for the day, and the much-needed fresh air of the summer afternoon. However, he finished the examination of the

verses and contributed a number of valuable suggestions, which helped to make Dr. Adams' version what I believe it is—the most finished bit of Latin verse by a Scottish scholar in our century.* The visit to Dr. Melvin, however, was not at all to his sister's mind, who did not regard the robust and formidable Dr. Adams as by any means a welcome presence at such a time. Among the *on dits* of the occasion, I heard for the first time of the pretty stanza in the first edition which the fastidious taste of the poet withdrew from the later texts, and which therefore no longer appears in the accepted texts, and I remember Dr. Melvin quoting the less known Edwards' stanza, which was equally new to me, in which a versifier of that name presumed to mend the Elegy by inserting beside the "village Hampdens," and in not much inferior strain, an acknowledgement of the female side of humanity.

Some lovely fair, whose unaffected charms
  Shone with attraction to herself unknown ;
Whose beauty might have blessed a monarch's arms,
  Whose virtue cast a lustre on a throne.

In referring to the matchless Elegy, we Aberdonians

*Dr. Adams obtained the opinion of Dean Milman on the performance, and it was to the effect, as reported by the Doctor, that he (the Dean) now withdrew a verdict he had formerly given in the *Quarterly Review*, that the Elegy of Gray defied translation into Latin with the same felicity.

may be permitted to feel, as Melvin did, a more than ordinary interest in that poem, when we recollect the personal friendship between its author and Dr. Beattie, our townsman poet. They met, we know, at Glamis Castle, the furthest north point apart from Killiecrankie, to which Gray penetrated in his Scottish tour. The late worthy Dr. Robert Brown, Professor of Greek, once told me that Gray in turn not only admired the poem of the "Minstrel," but pronounced a stanza in it (the well-known one No. 9 of Canto I, "O how canst thou renounce, &c.) to be the finest stanza in the English language. I have searched unsuccessfully for a documentary confirmation of this pronouncement, but it is quite possible that Gray may have found it the finest Spenserian known to him—the mighty Childe Harold, which was in a sense the offspring of the "Minstrel," being as yet beneath the horizon. Another Aberdonian among Melvin's contemporaries who made himself memorable as Johnny Ramsay, although a fervid worshipper of Gray, sharpened the eyes of our young wits once on a time by challenging us to find the one blemish, as he held it, of a faulty rhyme in the poem. We at once pounced upon the collocation of "muse" as rhyming with "strews," which Ramsay pronounced as if spelt "strows," and, of course, we found it to be the *crux* pointed to; but a great

hurly-burly arose among us as to whether the poet was not right and the critic wrong. Johnny, however, we can forgive for pressing the prongs somewhat hard on Gray, because of his lively sketch of the "Visitation Version" of those Melvinian days and its awful annual solemnity at the Grammar School; a sketch which appears in his "Remains," the volume which we owe to the loving care of that most loyal and leal-hearted of Aberdeen burgesses—Mr Alexander Walker. Once at a small dinner party, when Dr. Melvin honoured me with his presence, I had Johnny to meet him. It was, in a humble way, like the meeting at "the Mermaid" of the wit and the scholar, reminding us of the encounter of the high-decked Spanish galleon and the low, but nimble, English or Scottish frigate in the grand Elizabethan time. Over the walnuts and the wine there were "Imitations" going of well-known public characters, in which Johnny, who was a great mimic, indulged, and which the Doctor did not frown down. "Come now," said the Doctor, "and let us have a stave o' me. I hear you're a dab at that." But Ramsay fought off in the presence. "Na, na, Doctor, we maunna dee that; na, na," and so we missed what would have been the double entertainment.

This mention of "Imitations" leads me, however,

to say that the most remarkable phenomenon in this regard, in which Melvin figures as a leading protagonist, is the examination of the competition version at Marischal College Anno Domini 1846, or thereby, as rehearsed by the ingenious Mr. Donald Cattanach, advocate. As then under Mr. John Angus, the Town-Clerk, who kept the lists and marks, Mr. Cattanach had ample opportunity of being officially present and so catching the tones and *nuances* of the different examiners, and these he reproduces to the life. As Nature brings not back the mastodon, and as the "Version" itself is likely in the future to undergo a metamorphosis beyond Ovidian recognition, it may not be amiss to put together the chief *motivos* which he has combined in this memorable, and certainly unique, dramatic scene.

First comes, with admirable scenic effect, the reading in a stately and sonorous voice of the piece from Gibbon in which the youths have been exercised, and we recognise the utterance of the late Dr. Cruickshank, who, as secretary, was supposed to be the custodier of the version and the themes of the competitors thereon. A sentence is then read in sonorous Latin, a production of one of the youths, and in the course of it a *crux* occurs as to whether the Perfect Subjunctive should have been used

by the boy instead of the Imperfect after *Ut*, and then comes the commotion among the Examiners, πολὺς δ'ὀρυμαγδὸς ὄρωρεν.

The sedate and scholarly Melvin, who, under an ancient custom, was present on these occasions, pronounces for so-and-so as the Ciceronian usage ; the brilliant and eccentric Blackie disputes the point, and adduces Tacitus and silver age usage, and the various examiners give their several verdicts, conspicuous among them being the clattering and croaking voice of the worthy Professor of Greek, who gives off a splutter of Greek quotations having no great bearing on the subject. At last the Principal of the day, who was no great Latinist, and was never able to make up his mind very clearly on any matter scholarly or ecclesiastical, has to give his opinion by way of casting vote, and after swithering from side to side and a good deal of humming and hawing, finally gravitates to the side of Cicero, and in his gruff, sepulchral bass grunts out at length a conclusion—" I a—agree with Dr. Melvin." " Aye, aye, Principal," breaks in a sharp, quick tenor voice, which we recognise as Dr. Pirie's, " ye're aye safe enough to do that," and so, after its lively gamut of contending voices, the little drama ends with the verdict being given in favour of Cicero and Dr. Melvin,

and against all modern, rollicking eccentricities. Sad to think that all the interlocutors in this scenic debate have one after another now passed away, the last of the band, the genial, but erratic, Blackie, having been interred in this present month in the Dean Cemetery, mourned by all Edinburgh.

Our last reminiscence of Melvin connects itself with the name of the friend with whom the above interlude begins—Dr. John Cruickshank. Though of very different studies and pursuits, they were moulded after the same type of character—Spartan rather than Athenian, frosty yet kindly. The Professor of Mathematics was probably the last person, not a relation, whom Dr. Melvin on his deathbed saw, and Agnes, the Doctor's sister, told me she could never forget the scene. When Dr. Cruickshank had taken his farewell, and his steps could still be heard on the stair as he descended, Dr. Melvin, whose thoughts turned to his sister and to her future after he was gone, called out to her—"Agnes, Agnes, trust that man." They were the last words Dr. Melvin is known to have uttered, and they are words equally honourable to the friend surviving and to him, the friend departing.

March, 1895.

APPENDIX D.

DR. MELVIN'S LAST VERSION.

Communicated by the Rev. W. R. Bruce, Newmachar.

IT was Monday, the 27th June, 1853. The morning lesson was proceeding, and the Doctor was standing half-way down the passage that separated the two classes, when he became suddenly ill, and sat down in the end of a 'faction.' Rallying, he was assisted to his chair, and on its being suggested to him to dismiss the class, he requested to be lifted up a little in his chair, adding that he thought he would be able to go on. Another attack of sickness, however, immediately overtook him, and a cab was sent for.

Before leaving, he spoke to us a few solemn words about God, the future, and duty, and bade us farewell. The class was deeply moved. He was then carried out in his chair by two of the pupils, and the class separated for the day.

Next morning Mr. Beverley, who took charge of the class, stated that he had been sent by Dr. Melvin

to dictate the version which he intended to give that day had he been able to be present, that he had given it before on the 15th September, 1840, when he (Mr. Beverley) was a pupil under him, that his object in giving it again was to vindicate the authorship, as it had recently come to his knowledge that it had been pirated by another, and published in a volume of Versions. In the afternoon, Mr. Beverley dictated the correct Latin, and as the class was dispersing we learned that the great master had just passed away.

ENGLISH.

Livy, in the ninth book of his history, enquires what would have been the fortune of Alexander the Great if, after conquering the East, he had turned his arms against Italy ; and gives it as his opinion that he, as well as Pyrrhus, would have been obliged to yield to the Romans. Raleigh, the illustrious English general and writer, inveighs against Livy for this decision ; and says that Pyrrhus and Hannibal, who attacked the Romans afterwards, when they were both stronger and better skilled, did all but overthrow their empire ; and that Alexander, who had more experience in military affairs than either Pyrrhus or Hannibal, and whose troops were more numerous and better exercised, would have easily subdued the Romans. Raleigh

adds that the English of his day would have been a match either for the Romans or Alexander, a piece of vanity for which he is censured by Baillie, a Scotch writer, who at the same time, however, with no less partiality, assigns the superiority to his own countrymen.

LATIN.

Livius, in nono historiarum libro, quaerit quae futura fuerit Alexandri Magni fortuna, si, post domitum Orientem, arma adversus Italiam vertisset; censet-que futurum fuisse ut is, aeque ac Pyrrhus, Romanis cedere cogeretur. Raleius, illustris dux et scriptor Anglicus, in Livium ob hoc iudicium invehitur; dicitque Pyrrhum et Hannibalem, qui Romanos postea, quum et firmiores et peritiores essent, aggressi sint, eorum imperium modo non evertisse; atque Alexandrum, qui maiorem rei militaris usum, quam vel Pyrrhus vel Hannibal habuerit, cuius-que copiae plures atque exercitatiores fuerint, Romanos facile superaturum fuisse. Raleius adiicit Anglos sui temporis vel Romanis vel Alexandro pares futuros fuisse: ob quam vanitatem reprehenditur a Baillio, scriptore Scotico, qui simul, tamen, non minore partium studio primas popularibus suis defert.

The Melvin Window
King's College Library

APPENDIX E.

THE MELVIN MEMORIAL WINDOW IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

AMONG the most important commemorative tributes recently added to the University may be named as probably the most notable in recent times the eastern window in stained glass which has now been placed in the Library Buildings in Old Aberdeen. The interest attached to it will be all the greater when it is known that its purpose is to commemorate the name of our recent great Latinist, Dr. Melvin, who is well remembered as one of the most important and potential figures in Aberdonian education during the present century, and the stamp of whose personality still survives in some of the best features in our local educational system.

The memorial window, which has now been placed in the oriel of the library, enjoying the full unbroken light of the morning sun, is one of four lights, flamboyant in their tracery, and presents Melvin in his

robes as Rector of the Grammar School, in association with three notable Latinists of Scotland—George Buchanan, Arthur Johnston, and Thomas Ruddiman—two Latin poets, flanked by two grammarians. The conjunction of these names constitutes a group of which Scotland may well be proud, and, not least, our own City of the Two Rivers, claiming as she does three out of the four as sons of the Northern University. It may be proper to premise that this noble benefaction is mainly due to the public spirit and loyal sentiment of Dr. Francis Edmond of Kingswells, who has shown his regard for Melvin, whom he knew as a friend, by supplementing, out of his own resources, a grant which he obtained from the trustees of Dr. Melvin's sister, out of certain funds associated with the name of Melvin, with a view to this commemorative purpose. The collection of classics, at once rich and rare, which Dr. Melvin's sister presented to the University has its location in the east portion of the library, adjoining this oriel; and a sum of money which that lady left in trust, with a view to perpetuate her gift, has been appropriately applied towards the erection of this memorial window in immediate connection with the Melvin Library, of which it now forms at once the light and ornament. A great amount of thought and attention has been bestowed on the design and its

details, with a view to render them as full of significance as the space to be decorated could justly bear. The plan of the window may, therefore, be said to fall into three divisions—1st, the upper sections containing the armorial bearings in connection with the University; 2nd, the figures, with the scrolls and designations, armorial and otherwise; 3rd, the inscription at the base. A few descriptive notes on each of these three divisions will explain the purpose and purport of the whole.

In regard to the first or upper divison, it was thought proper to include, in equal balance, the armorial bearings of both the colleges in the following form:—A triad, on north side, of armorial bearings connected with King's College—viz., those of Bishop Elphinstone, his contemporary Sovereign, King James IV., and the arms of Old Aberdeen. These are balanced by another triad, representing Marischal College—viz., the arms of George, 5th Earl Marischal, his contemporary Sovereign, King James VI., and those of the City of Aberdeen. The arms of King James VI. are taken in the form contemporary with the founding of Marischal College in 1593, and as these arms did not differ from those appropriate to James IV., and would have repeated the same Lion rampant, variety has been obtained by impaling also

the arms of their respective Queens, Margaret of England and Anne of Denmark. The two Unicorns are introduced as the supporters of the Royal Arms, and form a prominent and most effective feature. Conspicuous also in the general decoration is the Scottish Thistle, of whose plumes, as the national emblem, the artist has largely availed himself for ornamental purposes.

The middle or main area of the window is occupied by the four seated figures, each in the costume of his period, and in the centre are the two more ancient and famous, viz., the two Latin poets, Buchanan and Arthur Johnston. These are the Dioscuri of Scottish polite learning, and it is notable that the *chef d' œuvre* of each should be a version of the Psalms or "Paraphrasis Psalmorum." Buchanan, as the tutor of King James VI., and Johnston, as a physician to his son, Charles I., were separated only by a generation, and are here represented together as brothers in just renown. Buchanan holds a volume of his poems inscribed "Silvae," and Johnston has a scroll with the line in which he has rendered the opening verse of the 23rd Psalm. ("The Lord is my Shepherd, &c.")

Blandus ut upilio, pascit me Conditor orbis.

Each has underneath his name the armorial bearings of his house or family; Buchanan with the

black lion rampant, holding up a red heart; Johnston with the golden cushions and the black St Andrew's Cross, quartering the combined arms of Mar and of Garioch of Caskieben; while both have a laurel wreath in the field beside them to mark them out as twin sons of the Muse. Of the remaining lights, the northern one is appropriated to Thomas Ruddiman, the well-known author of the "Ruddiman's Rudiments," which has been the school book for a century in this part of Scotland, and is still the foundation on which the modern rudiments of the Latin tongue is based. A native of Boyndie, near Banff, he was educated at King's College, where he gained the first bursary, and was a student about two hundred years ago. In his subsequent career he made himself famous in the annals of Scottish learning and typography, first, as a grammarian, the greatest that Scotland has produced, and, secondly, as an editor of Latin authors, including his famous Livy and Buchanan, which are still prized for their typographical beauty and critical value. His greatest work was his Larger Latin Grammar, entitled 'Grammaticae Latinae Institutiones," of which we need only say that it was thought so highly of in Germany that Stallbaum reprinted it in 1823 as nowise antiquated even in the age of such grammarians

as Wolf and Hermann. Ruddiman is known as having been also, for a long period, librarian of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, an office in which he was succeeded by no less a personage than David Hume; and the impression which he made as a Latinist may be gathered from the fact that soon after he had passed away, Dr. Johnson, when administering some animadversions on a Latin epitaph in Scotland which he considered not up to the mark, said, with an affected sigh, "Alas, it is too true, Ruddiman is dead." Instead of armorial bearings in connection with Ruddiman, it has been thought proper to give, what has the same effect and is more personal and characteristic, the device which he used as his book plate, being a "pentagram" or interlaced pair of equilateral triangles bearing learned inscriptions. One of these is a Greek iambic, in praise of accurate industry.

τῆς ἐπιμελείας πάντα δοῦλα γίγνεται.

"To careful industry all things prove vassals."

The fourth light, that on the south side of the window, is appropriated to the figure of Dr. Melvin, in habit and manner as he sat behind his desk, and with firm-pressed lips and demonstrative finger was wont to "scarify" the productions of ingenuous youth,

pointing out the flaws and blemishes in the so-called " versions," which were found in his hand a notable instrument of educative power. Shrewd and sagacious, with frosty but kindly criticism, stately withal, and capable, on fit occasion, of high dudgeon, he commanded by his gravity and weight of character the respect, and eventually, when better known, the affection, of a long line of pupils, scattered over the north of Scotland and beyond. How faithfully and ably he presided over the old Grammar School, going out and in among his pupils from his adjoining residence (41 Belmont Street, the house associated with his memory), and how he laboured devotedly for many a long year until his death in 1853, is well known to all who have any acquaintance with the history of Aberdeen ; and it is satisfactory to think that now there has been at last secured a not unworthy memorial of his name. The well-known portrait by Cassie, which preserves an image of his features, and which the same generous donor, Dr. Edmond, has appropriately gifted to the Grammar School, has been successfully followed in the representation of the memorial window.

The device to be placed under Melvin, as a substitute for armorial bearings, which were not in his case available, was a matter of some difficulty to

determine, but the emblem chosen has been arranged so as to balance and be a companion to the device under Ruddiman. In lieu of a coat of arms there has been taken what is called a *Rebus* upon his name, such as was not uncommon in the middle ages, and fortunately his name adapts itself very happily to this transformation. " Mel—vinum," at once falls into Mel or "honey" and Vinum or " wine," and the beehive and grapes are accordingly pourtrayed to represent the fruits of learning over which he presided. A line with double meaning has therefore been framed :—

Mel—vinum Natura dedit—gaudete Camenae,

Which may mean with a double reference, either " Honey and wine are Nature's gifts : rejoice ye muses ;" or " A Melvin has been among Nature's gifts : rejoice ye (Latian) muses." The line upon the scroll above is an allusion to his hard work, and little remunerated toil, training up successions of scholars without himself reaching the professional prize in the shape of a university chair, to which he aspired, and of which, through political circumstances, he was twice deprived. It was his hard and severe destiny to meet with such experience, and so life ebbed away without his attaining the leisure for which he longed, and, in consequence, with the exception of his Latin

Grammar, the notes to which are full of grave and cautious and recondite learning, he was never able to give to the world any adequate external evidence of his acquirements or his powers. Hence the pathetic allusion to his fate in this respect conveyed by the line of Virgil, on the text of which, with a slight modification, he is supposed to be prelecting, as to "the bees often murdered for their pains."

Sic nos non nobis mellificamus apes.

In free rendering, in the style of Herrick—

So we,
Like the honey bee,
Distil our sweets
Not for ourselves,
Not we.

The whole design of the window is brought into a unity by the inscription, which stretches along the base, and which has been appropriately composed in the Latin tongue. It runs thus—

Indigenae duo Grammatici binique Poetae,
Sermonis Latii lumina nostra nitent :
Quos Latia insignes palma gens protulit, illos
Fama negat patriae deperiisse viros.

The idea thus conveyed may be thus represented :—

Two sage Grammarians and Poets twain
'Mong Scotia's sons as Latinists excel :
The land that nursed them shall their fame maintain,
And shades of darkness from their name repel.

It is proper to mention finally that much and valuable assistance has been derived from the able services of our archæological friends, Mr. Peter Duguid, Mr. John Cruickshank, and Mr. P. J. Anderson, who have given their best attention to the heraldic and other devices, and, along with Mr. Robert Walker, Librarian, to whom is due the original suggestion of such a window, have done much to make the memorial a success. The main work, however, in connection with the general design and the elaboration of the inscriptions has fallen as a labour of love to Professor Geddes, who, out of respect to his old friend Dr. Melvin, has bestowed much time and attention on this commemorative tribute, now so happily completed. The work has been designed and produced by the firm of Messrs Hardman & Co., Birmingham, who, with their artist, Mr. Powell, deserve high credit for the successful execution of a complicated and arduous work.—*Aberdeen Journal*, 7th September, 1885.

FINIS.

Le Roy de magon
Le Roy de hares
Le Roy de camerone
Le Roy de badale
Le Roy de saubrican
Le Roy de chanors
Le Roy de samequin
Le Roy de dangorie
Le Roy dalmasane
Le Roy barbarie
Le Roy de thonise
Le Roy de soes
Le Roy de balmerin
Le Roy de sarahan
Le Roy de senygay
Le Roy de garnat
Le Roy de damelot
Le Roy de cicie
Le Roy de bacon
Le Roy de capadosse
Le Roy de Rursie
Le Roy de gorro
Le Roy dastarie
Le Roy de hammestiona
Le Roy te tymor
Le Roy de corquellj
Le Roy de cynodoa
Le Roy de massedonig
Le Roy de caldonnye
Le Roy de sydomie
Le Roy de blondy
Le Roy de Caspy

Le Roy de surie
Le Roy de cappancie
Le Roy de cauria
Le Roy de malmalyk
Le Roy de hauriant
Le Roy de daristar
Le Roy de hart
Le Roy de nellene
Le Roy de more
Le Roy de galba
Le Roy de mamelone
Le Roy de dalmeque
Le Roy de cholomecke
Le Roy de carie
Le Roy de carpelye
Le Roy de caldet
Le Roy de mommye
Le Roy de sarayne
Le Roy de gyrope
Le Roy de faux
Le Roy destriment
Le Roy de dol
Le Roy de Iopie
Le Roy de deizarell
Le Roy de merie
Le Roy de bazillie

Monss Rot de pufflit chevalier natif de Lauduthie de garles aeste par le space de xxviij ans pour verir les Royaumes

FINIS

Le Roy de chipre
Le Roy de cicille
Le Roy de naples

plesbrite Iohane
Le Roy de sarot
Le Roy de lauron
Le Roy de marchon
Le Roy de menty
Le Roy de Cassy
Le Roy de nyperie
Le Roy de vibreuly
Le Roy de karelle
Le Roy de samielat
Le Roy de nordrebrodem
Le Roy de sure
Le Roy destarsell
Le Roy de suluen
Le Roy de daureneile
Le Roy de suze
Le Roy de bougre
Le Roy de salba
Le Roy de hakameryt
Le Roy de disdrael
Le Roy de lymenen
Le Roy de Tarize
Le Roy de membelim
Le Roy de harzem *
Le Roy de Colmen
Le Roy de henenen
Le Roy de halax
Le Roy de Bacon
Le Roy de mustebell
Le Roy de marmera
Le Roy de dipsuly

Le Roy de barguera
Le Roy de coizemon
Le Roy de Compars
Le Roy de sarty
Le Roy makeloze
Le Roy didorie
Le Roy de halatrie
Le Roy de senicya
Le Roy de barberia
Le Roy de lettoria †

Le grant Cane de Castenne ‡
Le Soubdan de babilon
Le Roy de moustru
Le Roy de vrthebet
Le Roy de Comalanthe
Le Roy de naugringrj
Le Roy de pedollie
Lempereur de tartarie
Lempereur de tarbysonde
Lempereur de sumestot
lempereur darmenie
lempereur de cynople
Le Roy de cygnye
Le Roy de Nargase
Le Roy de mugruerelle
Le Roy de cyngres
Le grant tur de turquee
Le Roy de gennyt
Le Roy de dalmase
Le Roy de daralze
Le Roy percie
de Roy de mede
Le Roy de Ihestae
Le Roy de gene

* In margine "Her ar ye olifantis".

† In margine "Cristyne with fyr ✠".

‡ In margine "hethyne".