PERTHSHIRE

IN BYGONE DAYS:

One Hundred Biographical Essays.

BY

eter
P. R. DRUMMOND, F.S.A.,

Hon. Member of the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth.

> Let us the important *now* employ,
> And live as those that never die.
>
> BURNS.

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO THE
PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PERTHSHIRE SOCIETIES
OF
EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, AND DUNDEE.

GENTLEMEN,—I think it right to explain to you, at some length, the reasons that have led me to dedicate the following Essays to your esteemed associations.

Perthshire men must form the primary link of the chain which attaches you to your native county. Its mountains are picturesque, and its valleys fertile, but in its men dwells the first principle of that inner life which leads all that are of a common stock to associate. Perthshire men are the lights that sparkle on the picture which you so fondly cherish. When Sir Walter Scott returned from his final continental tour, and was driven down the vale of Gala, he was uneasy and listless, but when he saw the countenance and grasped the hand of his friend Laidlaw, he exclaimed, "Now I know that I am at Abbotsford."

"The proper study of mankind is man." His steps are tremulous when he essays to go higher; at that beach his proud waves are stayed. All his visions of angels and gods are mere reflexes of himself in a condition of physical refinement. The spiritual life, so congenial to his nature, and so solacing to his dread of annihilation, he is incapable of realising. The endless existence is beyond his grasp. He finds these more objects of primary belief than of assiduous research, nay of death itself he is utterly ignorant, although it meets him in the street and in his own chamber. The abode in the grave he cannot comprehend. He calls it "the cold grave," because in his devious imaginings he is not able to realise a cold corpse placed in it, but himself with his hot, bounding blood. He knows the grave is only cold when viewed in combination with life, and he shuts his eyes, like a school-boy, to realise the darkness, and compresses his nostrils to brave the terrible mools.

Hence, "The proper study of mankind is man." Himself and his utmost known destiny, all that is characteristic of the age in which he is moving. How the divine has preached; how the soldier has fought; how the politician has gone down to the house; how the poet has sung, gladdened the ear and starved; how the painter has delighted the eye and fattened on *chiaro-oscuro*, are all matters of deep interest, and no less so is the man who is born to affluence, an exalted rank, and a countless following, or the poor man who, in his coat of hodden gray, holds his own in the battle of life, if his doing so has been marked by traits of character, that render him the type of a class. "The working man" is a mere pseudonym. He who does not work, either with head or hammer, is of no account. The distinctive talent is often lost in the rich man by lack of motive, and driven out of the poor man by lack of bread. Lord Byron was an erratic legislator, but his love of letters and facility of pen sent him to his study, and he became the very greatest poet of modern times. The brightest jewels in the coronets of Winchilsea and Derby, are their studyings of Milton and Homer, and the present and the late premier have both been prominent contributors to our literature, although their voices are rarely heard through the tocsin of politics which never ceases sounding.

In these essays there are no strainings after literary skill or superior knowledge of human life, but an earnest attempt to embody the character of a whole people by very restricted personal incidents in the history of a few. The princely hospitality of Lord Breadalbane, the gallant soldiering of Baron Lynedoch, the refined tastes of Sir William Stirling Maxwell the sculpturing of Lawrence

Macdonald, the painting of Thomas Duncan, the poetry of Lady Nairne and Robert Nicoll, the love stories of Bonnie Margaret Drummond, and Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, together with the quaint eccentricities of John Scott and William Glendinning, are interesting themes, however dull I may have been in unfolding them, and amply justify *you* in the partiality you have formed for the land of your birth, and *me* in inscribing to such bodies of men my impressions of their interest and value.

The people of Perthshire take pride in the unions you have formed, not merely as demonstrations of local partiality, but because love of country is a normal condition in man, and the lack of it indicates a turning aside. Lord Byron has written,

England, with all thy faults I love thee still.

Robert Burns in the fulness of his heart says,

Auld Ayr whom ne'er a toun surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses.

And in Sir Walter Scott's famous passage on love of country, he denounces in indignant terms the character of the man in whom it is found wanting,

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!

But in every movement of your societies its presence is manifest, not only as a primary condition, but as a vital, kindred impulse. The bird of passage returns year by year and perches under his native eaves, but the lord of creation goes out for life. He struggles for a name, and a position, and a family carriage, and to the scene of that struggle he becomes partially naturalised, but still retains in its pristine force the love of his birth-place, and of the companions of his youthful days. It is highly gratifying to all who remain as fixed denizens of our interesting county, to hear from day to day that groups of intellectual citizens are being formed in the more important business communities of our immediate country for social and generous purposes connected with it, and that their sentiments have been echoed from every land to which a Perthshire man has found his way, and that embraces a wide area.

The county of Perth has little under-ground value. Neither coal, nor iron, nor lime has been found within its boundaries; no mines of gold or silver, only one of lead; but it is self-supporting beyond any other Scottish county. It contains thriving homesteads and well-tilled lands, parks covered with cattle, and carses waving with corn, hills clad with sheep, moors fruitful of grouse, and rivers swarming with fish. It is studded with palatial residences, and abbeys grey with age and full of historical interest. Its scenery is unrivalled, its rivers and lakes limpid as crystal, and its cities, towns and villages alluring to the welcome stranger. Besides these enviable possessions, Perthshire has a thousand well-educated young men, eager as hounds in the slips, to go out into the world and work for their places at the counter, at the desk, or at the bar, *at* the bench or *on* the bench, in the pulpit or the senate, on the ocean or the tented field. "And many respected houses in Perthshire, and many individuals distinguished in arts and arms, record with pride their descent from the *Gow Chrom* and the Fair Maid of Perth."

With this explanation, Gentlemen, I inscribe these papers to you, confident that when you read them you will feel encouraged in the preference which your societies have hitherto shown for the land of your birth.

I have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,
With the utmost respect,
Your humble servant and countryman,

P. R. DRUMMOND.

ELLENGOWEN, ALMOND-VALLEY,
Perthshire, August 1879.

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PERTHSHIRE IN BYGONE DAYS.

INTRODUCTION.

One of the primary objects of these essays is to aid in the promotion of a better understanding between the various classes of which society is made up; not by subtle arguments or recondite theories, but simply by laying before the reader a few examples of healthy, well-conditioned life, in every section of the community. There are, no doubt, many men in Perthshire who have enjoyed much better opportunities of estimating the character of its more aristocratic population than I can possibly have had; but that is only one of three constituents. A knowledge of the middle and lower orders is every whit as vital to the just gauging of a people as is that of their more lofty neighbours; and half-a-century of active connection with all and each of the three will, I flatter myself, be sufficient for all that is here pretended to.

Ebenezer Elliot asks—"What is the use of the Lords?" and Mr. Brougham says they are "the barriers set up against improvement." These are mere words of exasperation, and little to be regarded. Instead of railing at the good fortune of those whom the accident of birth, or the greater cunning of head or hand, has raised above us in the ever-varying scale of social life, I have chosen the more congenial task of attempting to raise the appreciative feeling of my plebeian fellow-citizens to a juster estimate of the true gentleman's character, in whatever rank of life he is found; to tell him that pride of rank is a rare vice compared to the pride that desires it, and that more of it is to be found in the cranium of a half-pay Lieutenant than in those of ten Peers of Parliament.

In my early days, the aristocracy was banned, not from the knowledge of deeds that could be brought home to it as a class, but as a foregone conclusion. Happily, from causes which it is no part of my adopted vocation to enquire into, things have changed, and that *sovereign* class called coaxingly "The People," which has been trained to think itself ill-used, and necessarily antagonistic to everything that is prosperous, has expanded, until it has reached the footsteps of the throne, and every citizen, short of the good Queen herself,—from the Knight of the Garter to the pauper by the wayside,—claims equally the application of the monosyllable. While denying to any class the title of being exclusively good, they all repudiate the accusation, as applied to themselves, of being necessarily exclusively bad.

No one can accuse me of stabbing in the dark. Indeed, I do not intend to stab at all. There cannot possibly be a more gratuitous task than writing a man down, because, if he deserves it, he is not worth it; and, as an inevitable corollary, if he is worth it, he does not deserve it. I do not pretend to have found mankind all alike. Nay! Many men are driven by necessity to do deeds that their better nature puts far from them; and I have also discovered that no amount of riches or prosperity will bestow heart where all is originally empty as the bubbles that boys blow at school.

Gossiping, prying and speculating are by common consent voted improper, yet the rate at which they are practised is more than a match for that at which they are censured. The abuse of them leads to great inconvenience and many heart-burnings, but the same arise from the over-working of many of our blessings; and abstractly, it is not difficult to show that the three decried tendencies are compatible with the very highest state of our common nature. The climax of the first great drama of human life is narrated in the sixth verse of the third chapter of Genesis. Up to that climax, all was innocence. Yet, before it, we find Eve gossiping with the Serpent, and telling him everything; and prying, for she went to examine one of the interdicted trees, and found that it was "pleasant to the eye, and good for food;" and speculating on the comparative verity of the two statements,—"Ye shall not eat of it, lest ye die," and "Ye shall not surely die." If it is argued that Eve was all the time acting under the influence of the Serpent, the Fall does not date from the eating of the forbidden fruit, and Milton's noble lines—

> She pluck'd, she eat,
> Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
> That all was lost,

—apply to the wrong scene of the terrible drama, The only way of getting over the difficulty is by pronouncing "Gossiping, prying, and speculating" innocent in themselves, and, taking Eve's latitude, to be indulged in with impunity, only with this special observance—beware of the serpent.

Having thus fenced my position, and begun at the beginning, I need not plead the example of James Boswell, or Washington Irving, or N. P. Willis, or Matthias D'Amour, because I have not followed it, but rather kept aloof from matters that are strictly domestic, dealing more with those belonging to public life; unless, indeed, where the former are matters of history, and necessary for the elucidation of points in which the public are less or more interested. At the same time I have felt myself in deep peril in attempting to embody the characteristics of some people whom I have met, for often when a man flatters himself that he is writing with impartiality and judgment, he is incurring the resentment of the very parties he desires to conciliate. I am not aware of any matter that has arisen in the progress of this work fairly calculated to lead me into conflict with the relatives of any of my deceased heroes; but, in spite of all the councils of wisdom and prudence, fortune often malevolently leads us away from the desired path into gloomy and bewildering passages, where, in violation of all our wishes and prayers, we commit errors that we afterwards "sairly rue."

The circumstances which come within the focus of my narrative will best illustrate the weakness or strength of my claim to be the casual memoirist of threescore of men and threescore of years. Photographing men's shadows as they pass may be a pleasant enough occupation; but if the lens is not properly adjusted, the resemblance to the shadow will be as defective as we frequently see it to the substance. The true way of embodying characteristics, is to take every man exactly as you find him. Not as your fancy says he should be, but as your judgment finds he really is.

A quarter of a million of people have been born into Perthshire since I first saw the light in it, and a quarter of a million have been buried under its green surface. All that remains of them is mere dust and ashes,—shadows trembling in the wind,—but their memories are dear to those who are still groping their devious way through this uncertain life. We have all a part and portion in the grave. Every one has some cherished fore-runner ready to introduce him into "the low-browed, misty vault." Some one of the quarter million has prepared his bed for him. He has shaken hands with death through his very near kin. If his heart is not hardened by successful worldly pursuits or self-gratulation, these reminiscences of threescore of his deceased countrymen may awaken in him feelings of tender regret in the interest of the days that are gone, and bring near to his ear a note that has long ago died silently away. Amongst that quarter-million, how many noble, generous hearts! how many wise heads! how many skilful hands, withered aspirations, brilliant successes, deeds of adventurous daring, and abortive schemes! There would be found in their number,

> ——————The just, the generous, and the brave,
> The wise, the good, the worthless, the profane,—
> The downright clown, and perfectly well-bred,—
> The supple statesman, and the patriot stern.

Biographical essays are necessarily very discursive. Were men all of one mind or rank, their history would be easily written; but as the men are diversified, so must their stories be. A few simple words about one in every hundred thousand of the buried quarter-million, need not be judged ambitious, It is an inconceivably small portion, although it may form a fair enough index to the whole. There is no singularity in the fact of mankind being divided into so many ranks. Every branch of creation, animate and inanimate, exists under precisely the same economy. There is a queen in the bee-hive, and an aristocracy in the woods and forests. Let the reader wander through a plantation of Scotch firs at sunrise, and he will find one portion of those moorland denizens basking in undivided rays, another in occasional glimpses and reflected lights, a third waiting for the general diffusion of broad day; but as he proceeds into the centre, shadows deepen, until, from twilight to darkness, the moss-covered trunks are struggling for life amidst perpetual gloom. This cannot be remedied. If the outside row is cut down, it only makes room for another aristocracy, and so on to the last row. So it would be with man, were he as destitute of volition as the trees of the forest. The crude theories of chartism, and equal right, might then—with some prospect of duration—be adopted, and the earth portioned off as school-room is portioned off for children, but with spirits both wayward and aggressive, how long would the landmarks endure? The demesne that would this day measure one hundred square yards might—twelve months hence—be extended to one hundred acres, while another allotment of equal value would have melted away, as a speck of snow melts into the all-absorbing ocean. *Finem respice.*

SECTION FIRST.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
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CHAPTER I.

JOHN CAMPBELL, SECOND MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE.

"What lack you? Follow me."—SHAKESPEARE.

It is somewhat complacently asserted by William Shakespeare, echoed by Alexander Pope that,

> Man wants but little, nor that little long.

and re-echoed in more explicit terms by Oliver Goldsmith,

> Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long.

but the assertion is not very well founded. It is the last term of a syllogism without premisses. Individually, man's wants may appear small, when set against this teeming earth, but cumulatively they are prodigious. It will not do to set the individual want against the cumulative supply, and say, with self-satisfaction, it is little *I* require. Man is "a consuming fire." The cargoes of the thousand argosies that stud every arm of the sea, the millions of beeves that go pouring into King's Cross and Euston, the cattle, deer, and sheep on a thousand hills, he eats all but the bones; not a poor hare crosses his path but he flies at it like a hungry wolf, not a mute fish can swim peaceably in its vast ocean, but is in peril of his greedy circumvallation. He ignores the landmarks of his fore-fathers, sneers at cud-chewing and parted hoofs, and devours horse, frog, and snail.

Hence there can be no more important link in the chain of human life than the man who, by means of his possessions and energies, subsidises this momentous consumpt. The philosopher may speculate, the poet may sing, the artist may paint, and the soldier may fight, but if the commissariat fails, every distinctive effort will be instantly paralysed.

These circumstances—apart altogether from his high rank, personal influence and knowledge of the world—justify me in giving to Lord Breadalbane the first place amongst his gifted, but less fortunate contemporaries.

The Campbells of Breadalbane were originally of the Argyll family, though some of the clansmen cherish the ancient legend that the family motto was originally, "Follow me, Argyll,"—instead of the far loftier one "Follow me,"—thereby insinuating that they were the parent stock, but there is no doubt that Duncan, first Lord Campbell, was their common ancestor, and that Archibald, his elder son, was the father of the first Earl of Argyll, while his younger son, Colin, became Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy, his direct descendant two hundred years afterwards becoming Earl of Breadalbane.

The succession has been interrupted by frequent vicissitudes and the escutcheon occasionally tarnished, but it has been honoured by names that have become historical as examples of piety and benevolence. Duncan, first lord, had for his mother Margaret Drummond, sister to the Queen of Scotland. James I. being his nephew, he resented his murder with all the energy of his nature, rendering the reprisal infinitely more cruel than the deed itself, with all its blackness. John, the first Earl, was a turbulent reckless man. He chaffered himself into the Earldom of Caithness, but was speedily stripped of it. He got £12,000 from William's infatuated government to enable him, together with his personal influence, to pacify the Highlands, which scheme of peace he inaugurated by the massacre of Glencoe, and when he was called upon to account for the £12,000 his memorable answer was, "The Highlands are quiet, the money is spent, and that is the best way of accounting among friends." His grandson, the third Earl, had an only child, John, Lord Glenorchy, who married Wilhelmina Maxwell of Preston, the amiable lady who founded the church in Edinburgh, which bears her name, besides several other chapels and schools. Her husband died, without issue, in his thirty-third year, and the Breadalbane succession bounded back one hundred and forty years, missing in its second descent the obnoxious hero of Glencoe, as well as the amiable Lady Glenorchy.

John Campbell, son of Campbell of Carwhin, succeeded and became eventually, first Marquis. He improved and greatly extended the family possessions. The great block of building which flanks the south-west wing of Taymouth Castle and covers the Baron's Hall, was built by him and named "the Glenorchy Tower." Its projecting foundation and solid masonry, give a look of vast strength to the entire edifice, and are suggestive of power and influence. Other parts of the immense fabric were improved by him, and he showed great taste and judgment in collecting many of the fine pictures by Titian, Rubens, Vandyke, Salvator Rosa, and others, which adorned its walls. The numerous family and other portraits were painted by Jamieson, commonly called "the Scottish Vandyke," for Sir Colin Campbell, about the year 1630. Those of more recent date by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Godfrey Kneller, were painted for subsequent peers.

Fourscore years before the building of the Glenorchy Tower, David Gavin, an honest, industrious weaver rented a small cottage in the parish of Lunan, about a quarter of a mile from the bay of the same name on the east coast of Angus-shire. In those days the beehives of industry that now meet the traveller in every corner of that thickly populated county, were things of the future. Gavin was called a "customer weaver." The Angus-shire farmers grew the lint, and their wives and daughters span it, then it was taken to the weaver who wove it into the fabric necessary for family purposes; and it was a great day at the farmer's house, that on which the weaver came with the web on his shoulder and his *ell-wand* in his hand. When Gavin's son had got a few quarters at the parish school, the family plant was increased to the extent of another loom, and young Davie was set on it, though his feet would scarcely reach the treddles. The young man shuttled away for two or three years, but his heart was never in his work. At that time a great contraband trade was carried on between the Low Countries and the east coast of Scotland, especially the towns of Arbroath and Montrose, and Davie Gavin preferred the company of a bevy of the adventurous Dutchmen, to the monotonous click of the returning "lay." His father did everything in his power to wean him from these idle habits, but the youth took every opportunity of the old man's absence, and bolted off to Red Castle or St. Murdock's Kirk, to see if there were any luggers in the offing, and to signal them that the coast was clear, or otherwise. The old man became tired of this, and Davie was shipped to the land of his adoption to seek his fortune, and he found it. From beginnings that were necessarily small, he raised himself to be a highly important Hamburg merchant, and before the lapse of many years he had, in the most honourable way, amassed a fortune sufficient to procure him such a position in his own country, that no copy of Burke or Lodge is now complete without his name; albeit he does not appear in these great authorities as the lazy Lunan weaver.

When the merchant of untold wealth returned to his native Lunan, the wiseacres who shook their desponding heads at his departure, were divided between two opposing feelings. They thought Lunan might profit by his riches; but on the other hand they were galled by Davie Gavin having outwitted so much prophetic village wisdom. His first step was to purchase the estate of Renmuir, in the neighbouring parish of Kinnell, to which his father and he retired—the young man who would not work and the old man, who did not now require to work. David, the elder, did not take very kindly to his elevated position, and occasionally stole away into the village for an afternoon gossip, enveloped in a red cloak, with a cocked hat slouched on his head, silver buckles to his shoes, and a silver-headed pole-staff five feet long.

The younger Gavin's next important step was to purchase the fine estate of Langton in Berwickshire, which includes nearly the whole parish of the same name, and extends to 6,000 acres, the principal village, Gavinton, having been named after him. The position which wealth and gentlemanly bearing never fail in obtaining, was speedily gained by Mr. Gavin of Langton. The Earls of March and Lauderdale became his intimate associates, and he was held in high esteem by the whole body of Merse proprietors. After he was well advanced in years, he led to the altar the Lady Elizabeth Maitland, second daughter of James, seventh Earl of Lauderdale. They were married in 1770, and in 1771 Lady Elizabeth Gavin bore her husband a daughter, who was named Mary Turner, after her maternal grandmother. She was appointed co-heiress, with her sister Hersey, of their father's great wealth, and when their united ages were only three years he was taken away, leaving the two little ladies to solace their mother's widowhood, a term extending over fifty years. In 1793 Mary Turner Gavin married John, Earl, and latterly first Marquis of Breadalbane, and on the 26th of October, 1796, she bore to him in Dundee, John Campbell, the public-spirited nobleman whose name stands at the head of this paper. Her younger sister married Robert Baird, Esq.; and their youngest daughter married the Honourable William Henry Drummond, present Viscount of Strathallan. This amiable lady, now deceased, was the favourite niece of General Sir David Baird, of Ferntower.

In the year 1811, John Cameron, a retainer of the Breadalbane family, lived in the lodge of Stix, near Kenmore. John had a strict sense of the lordly attitude of the great family of Breadalbane, but he did not approve of the introduction of the bisons into the home-park, and in blind revenge one of them killed him. He was wont to tell with feelings of personal pride, of the following meeting between a German Baron—who afterwards published his travels—Lord Glenorchy, and himself. The German Baron's book I have not seen, but the story I have often heard, and in my memory it assumes the following shape, and is highly illustrative of the men and the times.

Sixty-five years ago, while continental Europe was torn to pieces by a bloodthirsty and apparently interminable war and Great Britain reposed tranquilly in the midst of her ocean bed, offering an asylum to all comers, a traveller who loved peace, left Lausanne, on the north shore of the lake of Geneva, and wended his way to the land whose people could be at war, yet live in peace. In crossing La Belle France, he saw the Château at Dijon deserted by its lord, Chatillon tenantless, Fontainebleau a barrack, and the Tuileries peopled by a horde of war upstarts. When he crossed to merry England, he beheld her serene and stately amidst incessant drainings of her gold and blood, and Windsor and Chatsworth, Belvoir and Alnwick, instinct with busy life and smoking chimneys. But when he crossed the border he concluded there must be distraction here, the palaces being in relative excess of the cottages:—Dalkeith Palace, Linlithgow Palace, Falkland Palace, Hamilton Palace, Scone Palace. Their history must be a third book of

Kings. As he was driven up the valley of the Tay, Ferragon and Benlawers reminded him of Switzerland, and he fell into dreamy recollections of foreign lands. Suddenly Taymouth Castle burst upon him like an impracticable vision, upsetting all his theories of house building—a gentle eminence in the midst of a champaign country, being generally chosen for rearing the abodes of the great—but here the case was reversed—a long hollow valley surrounded with wood-clad hills, a running river, and on its southern bank a great square edifice lofty and imposing, its hundred windows sparkling in the sun, and the family's social banner waving o'er its embattled walls.

On arriving at Stix he found John Cameron in conversation with a young man in the highland dress. The postilion was ordered to stop, and Cameron stepped up to the carriage, "Whose very fine place is this?" said the stranger. Cameron bowed towards the young man in tartan, who now came forward, "I congratulate you Sir on your noble possession, and wish you may enjoy it as long as your youth would indicate; may I take the liberty of asking your name, Sir?" "John Campbell," was the brief reply. The stately civility with which the answer was given, suggested to the querist's mind that he had been rather demonstrative and acting with polite restraint he bowed and was driven on.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN, SECOND MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE—*continued.*

> "O winds! breathe calmly o'er us and our foes!
> Let ship with equal ship contending close:
> And while the sea-gods watch above the fray,
> Let him who merits bear the palm away."
> MRS. T. K. HERVEY.

JOHN CAMERON had two sons, John, a Student in Divinity, a highly intellectual young man, who became the victim of over-study, and James, at that time a young tradesman. In my intimacy with the latter originated my personal intercourse with the Marquis of Breadalbane. A few years after the meeting with the German Baron, Lord Glenorchy was at Glasgow College. He was then a remarkably solid looking, fair complexioned lad, athletic, companionable, and popular. He was an only son, and although quite a youth at that time, every feature of the future man was marked in his demeanour. It may seem a contradiction in terms, but it is true notwithstanding, that he was proud yet condescending, imperious yet affable, liberal yet close-fisted, shrewd yet liable to be deceived, a man indeed yet every inch a lord. He could ride his high horse with a golden bridle, but when it suited his fancy or his purpose he could, like his Fife namesake be "plain John Campbell," and that without apparent acting. In youth the embryo peer was a fair scholar as in after-life he became a fair politician, but this aristocratic reticence remained his leading characteristic.

From the year 1818, up to 1860, the following interesting circumstances in Glasgow life remained undisturbed on my mind, and as I lived in the very midst of them it never occurred to me that I could, by any possibility be in error. At the former date, Mr. Logan, of the firm of Adamson and Logan, had his house on the lower side of West George Street, the ground floor of the premises presently occupied by Messrs. Paterson and Son as a music saloon. Mr. Logan had a handsome daughter, generally spoken of as "pretty Miss Logan," and with her Lord Glenorchy fell in love. My apprentice master had his place of business in King Street and his dwelling house in Sauchiehall Street. On the upper side of West George Street, and corner of Buchanan Street, lived Mr. Dunn of Duntocher, a Glasgow millionaire. On my passings to and from business I contrived to go out generally by the lower side of West George Street and return by the upper, in order that I might, first, get a glimpse of the handsome damsel likely to be Countess of Breadalbane, and, second, to see a full length portrait of Mr. Dunn, painted by John Graham, afterwards John Graham Gilbert, that was hung on the north wall of the corner room, and about level with the Buchanan Street pavement. The picture was a piece of superb colouring, and the lady quite equal to the popular opinion. Often when I thought of her in connection with Perthshire, my home, it induced in my youthful mind an attack of *malade du pays.* It was currently reported that Lord Glenorchy met the charming

Glasgow belle at a ball and that he eventually offered her marriage, but *family interference* prevented it and when he left college the matter died away.

How often do we go on year after year fondly cherishing early recollections, and in the end have them recklessly torn to pieces. Fifty years after the time about which I have been writing, Peter McKenzie of Glasgow, "Loyal Peter," published the story in his "Reminiscences," and took for his hero, Lord John Campbell of the Argyle family. I am most unwilling to go into any strong statement against the great spy demolisher, but I am equally unwilling to abandon my long fostered impressions. In the absence of Peter McKenzie, who is in his grave, we can only reason the matter. There may be men living, however, who knew the whole affair and can put me right, but meantime I am somewhat confident. Lord Glenorchy was a young man, moving in the gayest circle of Glasgow life. Lord John Campbell was a staid widower, upwards of forty years of age living at Roseneath and having little connection with Glasgow. McKenzie says that *family influence* prevented his marriage with Miss Logan, but it cannot be supposed that a nobleman, forty years of age, a widower and having a separate establishment, to which he was legally entitled, would either be troubled with, or would pay much deference to *family influence*, neither can it be supposed that the Logans would object to such a staid middle aged gentleman, as the bridegroom and guide of a pretty girl in her teens, more especially as the connection would lead to a Duchy. Very different was it with Lord Glenorchy. He was in the precise position where family influence would tell. Besides all this Lord John Campbell was understood to be engaged to Miss Glassel of Longniddry, whom he married within a year. This distinguished Campbell had classical connections. His grandmother was the beautiful and resolute Mary Bellenden, and his mother the lovely Miss Gunning, who rescued the Duke of Hamilton from the fangs of Elizabeth Chudleigh, afterwards the notorious Duchess of Kingston, and who within the space of twenty-five years became the mother of four Dukes, two of Hamilton and two of Argyle. Lady Charlotte Bury, the talented authoress of "Flirtation," was his sister, and the Honourable Mrs. Damer, the great sculptor, his cousin.

Before leaving Peter McKenzie I cannot help correcting another reckless error he has made. He states with the utmost *nonchalance* that the famous drop-scene of the Glasgow Queen Street Theatre, "was painted by Sir Henry Raeburn." One would forgive a light random statement, but, this is positively too bad. A landscape thirty feet by twenty, one of the very finest pictures of modern times, blue and airy as Claude, beaming in the cool, setting sun, exquisite in drawing, luxuriant in foreground foliage, fifty miles of grey water and highland hills painted by Sir Henry Raeburn!! No, no, loyal Peter! Raeburn, though at the head of his profession, as a portrait-painter, knew little or nothing about landscape. This noble picture, "the Clyde from Bowling Bay," was painted by old Peter Nasmyth; and was the admiration of all comers. Frequent attempts were made by successive lessees of Drury Lane to carry it to London, and large sums were said to have been offered — seven, ten and fifteen hundred pounds — the Glasgow heroes nobly withstanding the temptation, but the fire came and away it went in the blaze.

In 1821 when he was 24 years of age, Viscount Glenorchy married Elizabeth Baillie Hamilton the accomplished daughter of George Baillie Hamilton, of Jerviswoode and grand-daughter of Thomas, seventh Earl of Haddington. It was freely whispered in match-making circles at the time of this marriage, that a certain inconstant fair lady had jilted the young nobleman, before his engagement to Miss Baillie. Whether Mr. Haynes Bayly's popular ballad "We met" was founded on this story, or the story on it, I am unable to say, but it was widely understood that Lord Glenorchy was the suffering hero. Who the remorseful heroine *loquitur* and the husband of her mistaken preference were does not appear. The ballad itself is equal to the author's other works, and has had a long run. Mr. Severn's music has not only added to its popularity, but has long been a favourite waltz. By inserting it here I do not mean to identify, in any positive way, Lord Glenorchy with the ballad, but the lines are eminently beautiful and have been generally held as belonging to Perthshire.

WE MET.

The poetry by T. H. Bayly, the music by T. H. Severn.

We met 'twas in a crowd,
  And I thought he would shun me;
He came, I could not breathe,
  For his eye was upon me;

He spoke, his words were cold,
  But his smile was unaltered,
I knew how much he *felt*,
  For his deep-toned voice faltered.

I wore my bridal robe,
  And I rivalled its whiteness:
Bright gems were in my hair,
  But I hated their brightness.
He called me by my name,
  As the bride of another;
O, *thou* hast been the cause
  Of this anguish, my mother.

And once again we met,
  And a fair girl was near him:
He smiled and whispered low,
  As I once used to hear him.
She leant upon his arm;
  Once 'twas mine, and mine only.
I wept, for I deserved
  To feel wretched and lonely.

And she will be his bride;
  At the altar he'll give her
The love that was too pure
  For a heartless deceiver.
The world may think me gay,
  For my feelings I smother:
Oh! thou hast been the cause
  Of this anguish, my mother!

The mother who urged, or even counselled, this twice-affianced young lady to jilt such a highly eligible partner, must have been a woman of strong mind. The rejected youth appeared, in a crowd, at her daughter's bridal festival, and the conscience-stricken bride quailed before him, in her heart accusing her mother. But reprisals came, and another bridal festival reduced the "heartless deceiver's" mind to a state of despair. The story is somewhat inexplicable, but if we are to identify Lord Glenorchy and his bride as the actors in the second scene of the drama, the characteristics are amusingly accurate. The "deep-toned voice," the haughty adoption of the lady's new name, represent truthfully, the rejected young peer, and the "fair girl," Miss Elizabeth Baillie, then in her eighteenth year.

The Earl and Countess of Breadalbane survived their son's marriage fourteen years, and in 1831, when the Earl was raised to the Marquisate, the son became Earl of Ormelie. This accession of rank fired the family pride, and on the passing of the Reform Bill they mounted the

Liberal ensign and announced their intention of "rescuing the county of Perth from Tory thraldom to which it had been so long subjected." The newly fledged constituency, principally farmers, were not in very prosperous circumstances, and were not only anxious for a change, but were buoyed up by the belief that a reformed Parliament would speedily put an end to all their troubles. They rallied round Lord Ormelie, and carried him into Parliament by a majority of upwards of five hundred over Sir George Murray, who had long been the choice of the very limited constituency. This first broad canvass of the county was conducted with the most consummate tact by Lord Ormelie and his friend Mr. Fox Maule. No two men of their time possessed in fuller development the necessary powers of spirit, tongue, and face; and backed by the Breadalbane exchequer they accomplished their purpose. I remember well the infinitely sarcastic way in which Lord Ormelie pronounced the two monosyllables, "my friend," referring to a remark made by Mr. Campbell of Monzie, at Crieff, and I also remember the overbearing terms in which Mr. Maule replied to Lord Ardmillan, then Mr. Crawford, when in the course of a speech delivered in the city hall of Perth, he spoke of Mr. Maule as "my honourable friend." Garrick nor Kean was ever equal to it. Mr. Maule said, with a bow and a simper of lofty irony, "I have yet to learn what virtuous deed of mine has earned for me such a distinguished position."

If Lord Ormelie carried the county of Perth for the sake of the honour arising from such an achievement, or to forward the political views of his party, he did well; but if, as he asserted, it was "to rescue it from Tory thraldom," the enviable position was not only dearly bought, but short lived, for within a year and a half he was called to the upper house, and Sir George Murray went in again at a canter. The House of Peers was more congenial to his feelings, for there was a nobility even in his pride, little fitted to the embroilments of a contested election. He had not been chilled by a restricted exchequer, as his friend Maule had been, neither had he gained that knowledge of the world and ever ready resource, which rendered the latter gentleman the type of all that was subtle and refined in electioneering wisdom. Young Breadalbane was shrewd, lofty, and staid; young Panmure, acute, rollicking, plausible, and self-dependent. The pair turned Perthshire into a sort of political shuttlecock. In 1832, it was tossed from the tories to the whigs; in 1834, from the whigs to the tories; in 1835, from the tories to the whigs; and in 1837, from the whigs to the tories, in whose hands it remained for eleven years, and through eight successive parliaments. Then, in 1868 it reverted to the whigs; and, in 1874 there was a final rebound to the tories, in whose hands it remains for the present. In the midst of these movements the young peers were whetting their pinions; three of them shook the dust from their feet and walked to the upper house, no doubt in the midst of grateful recollections of Blairgowrie, Coupar-Angus, Crieff and Auchterarder.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN, SECOND MARQUIS OF BREADALBANE—*continued.*

"Go with me down to Drayton Basset,
No daynties we will spare;
All there shall eate and drink of the best,
And I will pay the fare."
EDWARD IV.

LORD BREADALBANE made no great figure as a politician either in the House of Peers or Commons, but he became a leading man about court, and for ten years held the high office of Chamberlain of Her Majesty's household, his mansion in Park Lane forming the centre of a wide and princely circle, and his influence during the administrations of Lords Russell, Aberdeen, and Palmerston, being weighty and far spread.

The year 1842 was a memorable year in Scotland. The impending disruption in the Established Church engaged and perplexed Lord Breadalbane. The Hon. Mr. Maule and also Mr. Campbell, of Monzie, took a leading part among the dissenters, and adhered to them during their lives; but when the affair was at welding-heat another matter arose which for a time left the Marquis little leisure for anything else. The projected visit of the Queen and Prince

Albert to Scotland, and more especially to his castle of Taymouth, was an event of no small magnitude, an event that was likely to identify him with a monarch who in her government and private life was furnishing an example to all the crowned heads of Europe, and those that might come after them in the same exalted position.

James the Fifth, King of Scotland, set great store by certain masquerading visits which he paid to remote corners of his little realm, but in our day, Queen Victoria, whose sceptre reaches over lands that would form a hundred such empires, unreservedly visits the castle of the exalted noble, and the heather-thatched cottage of the shepherd in the glen. Hence we think little now of what was thirty-five years ago, a source of pride and national exultation. There has been no lack of quiet pageantry however in her movements, but now that she has built her occasional home amongst the Scottish hills, the visit to Taymouth Castle is lost sight of, and custom has weakened our recollections of the past. But no lapse of time, no change of circumstances or altered feeling, can efface from the memory of those who beheld it, the brilliant spectacle that arose before Queen Victoria and her husband on that September afternoon when they entered the gate of Taymouth Castle. The magnitude of the surrounding objects, the lofty mansion nestling among the hills, the large home-park tenanted by the red deer, the roe, and the bison, and broken by clumps of lofty beech and sycamore, groups of picturesque mountaineers, noble equestrians in scarlet and gold, knights in steel and squires in doublet and trunk-hose, brass-studded helmets, sparkling stars, bugles, trumpets and drums, formed a gorgeous *tout ensemble.* Such a scene even in a populous neighbourhood would have been impressive; at Woburn or at Knowesley it would have been gratifying to the royal pair, but away beyond Glennaquoich and Tullyveolan, and within earshot of the cottage of Neil Booshalloch, it was evidence of wide-spread loyalty and a deeply-seated personal attachment.

When night approached, and the last rays of the setting sun threw the shadows of Drummond Hill over the deep intervening valley, the scene that arose was like a vision of fairy land; the great highland Alhambra in a blaze of light, torches everywhere and the hum of the distant orchestra stealing up through the trees, while far away the wail of the pibroch re-echoed through the valley, and the concussive bang of an occasional shot reverberated from the fort into every opening of the surrounding hills.

The visit of the Queen and Prince Albert to Taymouth Castle is now a matter of history, and it is only in so far as it illustrates the munificent character of the Marquis of Breadalbane that it is introduced here. To open up his highland home to his Sovereign, was the bounden duty of a man in his position, but that was only the first step. By unwearied personal attention, by the eager desire to maintain and elevate his country, and by the princely way in which he met every contingency, the lofty, yet simple ceremonial of a royal entertainment, became in his hands a scource of unalloyed pleasure to all engaged in it, and the forerunner of a thousand advantages to the Scottish Highlands.

The surroundings were so novel, and the balance between success and failure was so nicely adjusted, that the noble host himself had to be at the head of every movement. He received his guests at his hall door, and never lost sight of his responsibility, until the last royal handkerchief was waved over Loch Tay. On the evening of their first arrival in the highlands, the royal pair were led by their host and hostess into their allotted apartments in the Glenorchy Tower, one of which was the library. This noble apartment had engaged the steady attention of father and son for a long series of years; it is entered by three curtained passages off the corridor which leads from the Baron's hall to the west front of the Castle. In proportion it is well studied, and in finish highly elaborated; a little more height of ceiling would have added to its grandeur, but would have been productive of that painful feeling which an eager reader always has in seeing a book placed beyond the available reach of either eye or hand. The wall divisions are formed by gothic pilasters carved in every possible form of ornament, the fireplace is surmounted by an oaken screen exquisitely carved and flanked on either side by niches for busts, and having the family crest in high relief on the centre panel. The roof is divided into three gothic compartments running the whole length of the room, with crossings of the same form, the ribs and pendants of solid oak and the panellings elaborately hatched in ultramarine and gold. Altogether, this palatial room has few, if any, equals in the castles or mansions of the Scottish nobility.

One incident of the royal visit to Taymouth although often repeated has such a marked connection with the general structure of these essays, that a notice of it here must meet with approval. Lord Breadalbane had in his pay for years, an instrumental band of a very high character, besides a full complement of pipers. Yet he desired to bring home to Her Majesty the feeling that she was in Scotland, and that in more tender terms than it could be done by the unintelligible pibroch, or the brass band's martial notes, the latter rather tending to carry her south; and in obedience to that feeling he engaged Mr. Wilson to sing before his royal guests. A group of the songs which he was in the habit of singing was laid before the Queen in order that Her Majesty might name those she would wish more especially to hear. The spirits of the Scottish song writers must have hovered round that Royal decision. Within the short space of two minutes, those of Allan Ramsay, Robert Burns, James Hogg, Lady Nairne, and Mrs. Cockburn were conjured up. One is still missing and the Queen enquires for him. Willie Glen! proud you would have been, if you had dreamed that Queen Victoria in the midst of her nobles would ask the minstrel of Store Street, to sing "Wae's me for Prince Charlie," and that he happily could do it.

Position in life does not necessarily destroy what is intuitive, but it is apt to supersede cultivation. The seven Scottish songs chosen by this illustrious lady show that her taste in music is for simple pathos, and in this she pays a spontaneous tribute to Scottish song. The current of generous and tender feeling is so obvious in the selection she made that if there had been a second seven, an acute taste and ear might venture to supplement six out of those succeeding. "*Lochaber no more,*" "*The flowers of the forest,*" "*The Lass o' Gowrie,*" "*Cam ye by Athole,*" "*John Anderson my Jo,*" "*The Laird o' Cockpen,*" and "*Waes me for Prince Charlie,*" clearly indicate their following.

Such an entertainment as was then laid before Her Majesty cannot be now repeated. The bright voice is still, and shut are many of the ardent ears that then listened to it. Thirty-six years is the length of the poet's life, and that term has now covered many of the pleasant accessories to the "Queen's visit."

It is hardly possible to over estimate the benefit which has arisen to the highlands of Scotland, from this well conceived and nobly executed piece of hospitality on the part of the Marquis of Breadalbane. The heather and the kilt have become a fashion. The hardy step over moorland and up glen has superseded to a great extent the dalliances of Brighton and the effeminate loungings on the sunny side of Piccadilly. Men go out into a new atmosphere. The *peat reek* which was so obnoxious to the Englishman of 1820, has become an opiate for sleeping off the fatigues and excitements of fashionable life. Rugged mountain gorges and vast reaches of picturesque country, where a long journey would have brought you to a mountain shieling, and the highest fare you could obtain was a glass of whisky and a morsel of bread and cheese, have heard the footsteps of Aladdin and hotels like eastern palaces have reared their lofty heads, and instead of the mere whisky and condiments, the traveller is astonished by the question, "Would you wish to dine at the ordinary?" Every one must expect to pay handsomely for this far away cheer, but the landlord is equal to the occasion, tacitly alleging that a glass of beer at a fashionable hotel in the highlands being so thoroughly aërated and aristocratised, is *intrinsically* of more value than the same quantity of port wine at the unrefined "Hummums" or "Cider Cellar," and if all the circumstances are taken into account perhaps so it is. Traveller take another glass! Landlord make hay while the sun shines! Sir Walter Scott's vivid conceptions, and Lord Breadalbane's highland hospitalities will never arise again. Your grouse clad hills, your picturesque mountains, your poets' songs, will all remain, but will they remain a fashion? Balmoral is a material guarantee, pray for its perpetuity.

A short time after the Queen left Taymouth castle, a remark was made by a visitor to Lord Breadalbane, which brought from his own lips a succinct and truthful epitome of his character as a business man. He was complimented on the toil he had personally undertaken during the royal visit, "Oh no!" he replied, "I am well accustomed to activity. A life of affluence is not necessarily a life of idleness; my income is large, I save none of it. I can ride as far into Argyleshire on my own estate as if I rode from hence to Edinburgh, and if I were to sleep while all that is being managed and spent it would not be well done. My establishment is large and I have many cares. One of my tenants, the last of a family who have possessed the same farm for time immemorial, died lately, the stock was very large, and at present men of sufficient means to purchase it would prefer a less contingent investment, whereas in arable farms the entry is more gradual and competent tenants easier found. Besides we are expected to take a share in the management of both local and national affairs, and although I have no great leaning to politics, I am bound to use the influence of my position, as a peer of the realm, to forward what I consider the best interests of the country. This I have done, and to more local business, I have bestowed as much attention as I either found myself equal to, or as could in fairness, be expected of me."

But while these expressions of feeling and purpose were being uttered, there was chaos in the house ; the corridors were empty, there was neither son nor daughter, whose slippered feet might gently move the echoes along those interminable passages. The stillness of death reigned in the many rooms, erewhile so gay. The cankerworm of an ended race crawled behind the wainscot, withering up the prospects of the exemplary pair, and illustrating the too obvious fact, that life is seldom full in all its conditions.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL LORD LYNEDOCH.

"A daring old man."—NAPOLEON THE FIRST.

WHETHER by special intention, or accident, or passive permission, or atmospheric influence, "this man was born there," we have not acquired sufficient judgment to ascertain, but in venerating and doing honour to the birthplaces of the great, we follow a natural impulse and a fashion that has obtained from the days of Homer downwards, little regarding the chilling couplet—

Five wealthy towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

The avenues which lead to the homes of the poet, the soldier, the divine, and the philosopher are often dark and sinuous, and unless the enthusiasm is proportionally strong they are little sought after. As man engages in the struggle for gold, a stolid apathy steals over him, and he treats with lofty indifference every movement of life unless it tends to augment the idol of his worship; still the few who remain untouched by this fatal epidemic, and those who can keep it in subjection, are impressed with a regard for all that pertains to the brave soldier, his birth-place, his burial-place, his battle-fields, his sword, and the star of his order.

In my youthful days I paid many visits to the old house of Balgowan, the birth-place of Thomas Graham, some of them before he fought at Barossa or even at Corunna. There was a charm in the desolate look of the place and in the unchecked privilege of peeping in at the half-shuttered windows, and counting the hundred swallows'-nests perched in the eaves, and in the sorrowful tale of the handsome young lady, whose death had blighted the gilded corridors, and in place of whose gentle hand and ever welcoming smile there was nothing but great rusty bars and iron-clenched doors. These raised an awe and regret hardly of this world. Many times have I stood for hours while the beams of the setting sun struggled eerily through the half-opened casements, and in imagination seen the beautiful Mary Cathcart, with her riding-whip and tiny gold spur, come tripping along the lobby, and with slight aid from her groom place herself in the saddle and go curvetting across the lawn. But alas, there was no lawn; the place was engulfed by huge trees, masses of impervious underwood, and grass-covered roads that had not received the imprint of a horse's hoof for seventeen years; and Mary—the beautiful and accomplished Mary Graham—lay silent and solitary in Methven kirkyard, while her husband was hushing recollections of home by fighting alongside of Sir John Moore on the plains of Salamanca.

Thomas Graham was his father's third and youngest son, and was born at Balgowan in the year 1748 (according to Sharpe's peerage, 1750). In his youth he was somewhat wild, and although kept under restraint by his father, he managed to invest the large fortune left him by his mother in securities that yielded him no return except twingings of remorse and resolutions of change. Old Thomas Graham died at Balgowan in the year 1766, two of his sons having predeceased him, and left his son Thomas in full possession of the fine estate. His conduct on his father's death bears a marked resemblance to that of Lord Byron on the death of his mother. The old gentleman with the advice of his gardener, James Dow, had constructed a terrace of some length on the south of the house, which did not meet the approval of the young heir-apparent; and when his father died and was buried, his first step was to take a spade and commence levelling the terrace with his own hands. In this he succeeded according to his exertions, the earth offering no remonstrance. But when he went to discharge the gardener, he found himself disagreeably superseded. "Your father, sir," said the functionary, "suspected that you would treat me in this way, and he provided for me in his settlement to an extent equal to all I now either need or desire." This unnerved the young laird, and the gardener and his terrace remained long undisturbed. The most marked feature of Thomas Graham's early life was his matchless horsemanship, and when in course of time he became one of the Peninsular heroes, that feature—common to them all—was necessarily intensified and confirmed. After making the grand tour, however, he settled down as an improving agriculturalist, in which he showed both skill and perseverance, and, as a matter of course, gained success. He had acquired considerable taste in literature and art too, under the tuition of James McPherson, the translator of Ossian, who was his preceptor for three years, and these tastes were afterwards evinced by his patronage of Gainsborough and by the fine library now the property of Mr. Graham of Redgorton, his heir in succession. I remember a very fine still-life picture by De Heem hanging in the dining room at Balgowan, long after the house was deserted and not a stick of furniture left, except an oak table and a few chairs, where the farmers and others held their carousal after a roup of wood or grass parks.

A most amusing story belongs to the second agricultural era of Lord Lynedoch's life. He was an enthusiastic potato grower, and a sort of rivalry had arisen between him and his neighbours, Mr. Oliphant of Gask, and Lord Methven. One year Mr. Spence of Murie distanced them all, and being a bachelor, his own wants were small; so he magnanimously resolved to send a sackful to each of his three friends, Mr. Graham of Balgowan, Mr. Maxtone of Cultoquhey, and Mr. Græme of Garvock. Accordingly next Friday he sent them by the carrier to Perth, with instructions to forward. Each bag was accompanied by a note announcing the gift and requesting the parties to send the empty bags by return of carrier. Balgowan and Cultoquhey sent thanks and empties at once; but weeks passed, and no word from Garvock. Now Garvock had three unmarried sisters, past their teens, but rosy, and each of them five feet eight inches high in her stocking soles; and when he received Mr. Spence's letter, complaining of his inattention, he despatched the following epistle *by post.*

"My Dear Sir,—I have been much too long in acknowledging your kind present of potatoes. I do so now. By next carrier I shall send the bag, and lest you should think my gratitude as empty as it, I shall enclose one of my sisters. I remain, dear sir, your grateful friend, &c."

Next afternoon a boy *on horseback* rode up to the mansion house of Garvock, and handed in a letter addressed to Mr. Græme, which that gentleman opened, and read as follows:—

"Dear Sir,—Never mind the bag. Yours truly, &c."

For some years after his father's death Thomas Graham lived with his mother at Balgowan, cultivating the good opinion of a wide circle of friends, and taking a lead in all local matters where prompt and spirited action was required, leaping the Pow on his brown hunter where it was fifteen feet wide and twelve feet deep, and anon planting trees with an iron dibble on the summit of Redhill.

In 1774 a change came. Charles, ninth Baron Cathcart, had four beautiful daughters, Jane, Mary, Louisa, and Catherine Charlotte, all amiable, handsome and accomplished. Three Perthshire wooers won the three eldest sisters, and within two years each was installed in her Perthshire home, Jane as Duchess of Athole, Mary as Mrs. Graham of Balgowan, and Louisa as Countess of Mansfield. For sixteen years Mrs. Graham was the *belle* of all Perthshire assemblies. She contested the palm of beauty on the floor and of grace in the saddle with her neighbour Carolina Oliphant, and tradition yet points out the scene of their feats on horseback.

The following quotation from a well-known letter addressed by Robert Burns to Josiah Walker, places the Cathcart family in a very interesting position of light and shadow, and will be read when other memorials of them are forgotten. Dated at Inverness, 5th September, 1787, after leaving Blair Castle. "The little angel band! I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Foyers. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair;—the amiable, the truly noble duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table, the lovely 'olive plants,' as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother; the beautiful Mrs. Graham; the lovely, sweet Miss Cathcart (Catherine Charlotte), &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice!"

The reception which the Cathcarts gave to the great Scottish poet on his visit to Blair Castle furnishes one of the most gratifying chapters in his life. He left them with the most unfeigned reluctance; and so anxious were they to have a few hours longer of him, that they sent one of the servants to persuade his coachman to have a shoe removed from one of the horses' feet, in order to retard his departure: but the man was incorruptible, and the stratagem failed. Mr. Walker, in a letter he shortly afterwards sent to Burns, reminds the poet of a visit he had promised to pay Mr. and Mrs. Graham of Balgowan, but in his reply he takes no notice of it, and I do not think that it ever occurred. Mr. Graham had just got possession of Lynedoch, and his lady, by way of tempting the poet, offered to show him the graves of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray (not "the bower," as mentioned by Currie and Cunningham), which lie in the bosom of that romantic estate. Mr. Chambers seems to think that the poet visited Balgowan during his stay at Auchtertyre, but I know that twenty years afterwards there was no trace of him there either written or traditionary. John Smitton, who lived at the Back-moss of Balgowan seventeen years before the poet was born and fifty years after he was dead, never heard of him being either at Balgowan or Lynedoch. The lovely "olive plants," to which the poet so touchingly refers, were Lady Charlotte Murray, mother of the present Mr. Drummond, of Megginch; Lady Amelia, mother of the present Viscount Strathallan; and Lady Elizabeth, mother of the late Sir John Athole Murray McGregor, and grandmother of the present Viscountess Stormont.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL LORD LYNEDOCH—*continued.*

"The tear is in your e'e—was't the pearly dew that sent it?
It used na sae to be, Bonny Mary Graham."
JAMES PARKER.

MR. AND MRS. GRAHAM, though occasionally abroad and in London, lived much at Balgowan, he avoiding politics, and attending to the interests of his fine estate, and his amiable partner to those of their hospitable establishment. Balgowan flourished apace; the neighbourhood felt the presence of the handsome young pair, and for seventeen years their mansion was the abode of taste, and their finely-wooded park the envy of many whose possessions were tenfold greater. But, in the winter of 1791, the rose upon the lady's cheek began to fade, her eye to lose its lustre, the light, elastic step to move wearily, the pouting lip became flaccid and colourless, and she that was foremost in the dance, and sat lightest in the saddle, began to cower and shrink before the spell of an insidious disease that had struck into her woman's bosom like a poisoned dagger. The poor husband, to keep her up, affected not to know what was coming on him; but his affectionate eye—sharpened by the resemblance she bore to her sister, who died only eighteen short months before—watched the fell disease in its heart-sinking development, without a ray of hope or a well-founded prospect of better days to come. This tried his courage with greater severity than all his subsequent battles. He carried her to a warmer climate, he exhausted every resource and tried every healing art; he hoped against hope; but she faded away from life and from him with as sure a step as the sun fades from the dial; and while sailing down the Mediterranean, accompanied by her husband and sister, and near the coast of Provence, this amiable and much-prized lady took farewell of life, and left the partner of her troubles to a widowerhood of fifty years' duration.

Miss Cathcart, who accompanied the now severed pair, survived Mrs. Graham only two years; yet, singularly enough, the other three members of the family, born alternately with those now dead, lived all to a great age. The Countess of Mansfield died in 1843, in her eighty-sixth year; the Hon. Archibald, in 1841, aged seventy-seven; and I remember William, first Earl Cathcart, riding into Glasgow, when he was approaching eighty years, sitting as upright and firm in his saddle as if he had been sentinel at the Horse Guards. The two veterans died in the same year,—Lynedoch 94, Cathcart 88.

A tale was long current after Mrs. Graham's death, that the three sisters being at dinner together, their healths were drunk as "The Duchess of Athole, the Countess of Mansfield, and the Honourable Mrs. Graham of Balgowan," which the latter lady considered a pointed allusion to her inferior position, and took so much to heart that she fell into bad health and died in her thirty-fifth year. But the story does not deserve credence, for she was obviously as constitutionally delicate as she was personally beautiful.

Mr. Graham was in his forty-second year when his wife died; and when he bent over her remains on that melancholy shipboard, it may have occurred to him that they were divided by a very filmy essence, but the life of daring adventure that yet lay before him extended over so many long years that the short period of domestic happiness spent with her at Balgowan became a mere dreamy episode looming up through the clangour of arms, and touching with soft remembrance the heart of the old soldier as he galloped through the carnage that beset the path he had chosen. He avoided Balgowan, he hid her portrait, he seldom named her; but those about his person knew, that from the day he parted with her at Parquerolle until they again met in Methven churchyard, her memory was ever recurring to him, as a thing of life hid in death, as a rose on the lonely way-side, as a meteor that darts through the sky and is lost for ever.

The fine estate of Lynedoch came into Mr. Graham's hands by purchase about the year 1784; and now, when nearly one hundred years have passed, his hand is to be seen in every corner of it. The American rhododendron is planted in its most congenial soil; the Austrian briar is to be seen in every hedge. He constructed a "ride" six miles in length, full of graceful undulations and romantic windings; he erected bridges of matchless workmanship, and built a mausoleum for his lady and himself that may outlive the Pyramids. The fine Douglasian pine, presently growing a little to the west of the site of Lynedoch Cottage, was planted by him, and through kind nursing it has become the parent of an offspring that cannot now be counted. Rare shrubs, Scotch and Belgian roses, are still to be seen lurking about corners of the old place, and gigantic silver firs give solemnity to the scattered memorials of bygone times.

When altering and enlarging the farm steading at Pittendynie, he had ordered a sunk fence to be formed, leading, by a gentle curve, from the gate on the public road along the front of the dwelling-house, to the line of the west wing of the steading. Riding over one morning, he found the workmen ready to start with the job, but at a loss about the precise curve which the fence was to take. He ordered one of them to hand him the stakes, and without leaving the saddle, he placed them as he rode along the imaginary line, and after running his keen eye back over the graceful row, he returned, galloping as if his horse and himself had been one piece, and ordered the men to proceed. Indeed, the country was full of tales about his feats of horsemanship, such as riding from Balgowan to Edinburgh and back with a sixpence between the sole of his boot and the stirrup-iron, and leaping a gate where there was a surmount of spikes like an inverted portcullis, and leaving his horse impaled while he called for a fresh one; but from what I knew of the character of General Graham, I do not think he was the man to condescend to such undignified and cruel escapades. That he took long journeys on horseback, like James the Fifth, is undoubted, but he never lost sight of his position as a gentleman.

It was the general feeling about Balgowan and Lynedoch that Mrs. Graham's death caused her husband to desert home, and proof of it is not far to seek. He was comparatively a young man, and while his fondness for land and its amenities could not be dissipated, an heir to his fine possessions must have been his ever dear wish; but Mrs. Graham had no children; and although a second marriage might have brought him the desired object, his domestic life was scathed, and he did not find himself equal to the task of surrendering the place in his heart which his deceased wife had so long held; so, in the words of James Duff,—

> He has bidden adieu to Drumharvie glen,
> Where the birch and the oak are growin',
> To the dark fir woods of Williamston,
> And the braes o' bonnie Balgowan.

After taking a few months to arrange affairs at his changed home, Mr. Graham started on his travels, his aim not well decided; but the French revolution met him by the way, and as his life, whatever it was to be, must be active, he threw in his lot with the soldiery of his country, and, impatient for action, went as a volunteer to the defence of Toulon. His first fight had some interesting associations. A few miles out to sea was the scene of his wife's death. A few miles further out, lay a *small* island which had sent a *small* artilleryman to fight against him; while amongst his companions in arms was an unfledged youth, of twenty-one, from Shropshire. The little artilleryman afterwards disorganized the kingdoms of Europe; and the Shropshire youth rose to be Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, and to preside at the Horse Guards while the little Artilleryman waited his first resurrection beneath the turf at St. Helena.

The Government was slow to recognise in any way Graham's services as a volunteer; but having now chosen the army as the business of his after life, he saw the necessity of taking some decisive measures to obtain his advancement. Within a year he raised a body of men which, from doubtful beginnings, became one of the crack regiments of the British service. Every available corner was ransacked, and within a few months fifteen hundred tatterdemalions were mustered on the North Inch of Perth. Jail-birds, preachers, and pickpockets formed a large portion of the raw material out of which Graham fashioned "the gallant 90th." He found it no easy task, however. He flattered them at one time and threatened them at another; fed them with roast oxen and regaled them with beer and whisky until they rolled upon the grass; yet they deserted his ranks in dozens, and as they went scampering over the country, canny folks were afraid of them, and mothers subdued refractory children by threatening to put them among Balgowan's *Grey Breeks*. Energetic generalship and hard drill eventually reduced them to order; and, from the campaign in Egypt to the fall of Sevastopol, the

Perthshire Volunteers made the enemies of their country feel their presence; thus illustrating what is now an acknowledged fact, that the conquering power of the British army depends as much on the way it is officered as it does upon the intrinsic valour of its men. As long as a man of the first generation forming the 90th Regiment survived, they continued to sing the inspiriting lines,—

O! the Grahams, the *gallant Grahams*.
Wad the gallant Grahams but stand by me,
The dogs might douk in the *Frenchman's* blude,
Ere a foot's breadth I wad flinch or flee.

When the 90th was fairly embodied, Mr., now Colonel Graham, appointed Rowland Hill whom he met at Toulon, major. This appointment was noticed by the latter officer, in his field notes, in the following soldier-like way. "In the early part of 1794 Mr. Graham raised a regiment of infantry and offered me the majority of it, on raising a certain quota of men. This I did." From this small beginning Hill raised himself by bravery and prudence to the highest position in the British army. Moncrieff of Culfargie became eventually Lieutenant Colonel of the 90th, and did the regiment good service. The late Lord Ruthven was also major in command of the same gallant regiment while quartered at Athlone in the year 1803.

The duty I have prescribed to myself in this essay does not lead me into the detail of Colonel Graham's bravery as a soldier, nor of his intrepidity as a commander, these being matters of history, but two incidents in his military career are so very characteristic of his devotion to his country and to his friend, that I cannot pass them over. While he was with the Austrian army at the defence of Mantua the besieged were completely cut off from the main body of the army and their commissariat reduced to the last extremity. In this state of matters Marshal Würmser held a council of war at which Colonel Graham volunteered to carry the tidings of distress to the commander-in-chief at Bassano a distance of fifty English miles. Accordingly on Christmas-eve while the wind blew great guns and drove the snow-drift round the French encampments, he wrapped an Italian military cloak round his colonel's uniform, and with marvellous audacity stole from the classic fortress. By leaping walls, chopping French, hood-winking sentinels and out-marching patrols, he reached the outside of the French lines, but the country was studded with bivouacing foes, and for nine days he struggled on, facing every difficulty, ferrying the Po and fording the Secchia, preferring the entanglements of forest and hedgerow to French sabres and a dungeon. At length on the 4th day of January he laid his complaint before General Alvinzi, but the star of Napoleon was in the ascendant and the Austrian defeat at Rivoli laid open Mantua to the conqueror.

Twelve years afterwards Colonel Graham was called upon to take part in a drama, which, though alas ! very common in ordinary life, is the dreaded penalty of the eargerly sought battle field.

The circumstances attending the death and burial of Sir John Moore, were not only mournful in themselves, but they give rise to much adventitious sorrow through Wolfe's ever memorable lines. These lines have raised a halo round that coffinless grave; they have made the ramparts at Corunna more familiar to Scotchmen than the cave of Macphelah or the tomb of Virgil. "No soldier discharged his farewell shot" over that hallowed sepulchre, but the verses of the Irish curate will sustain its memory as long as the language is either written or read.

Colonel Graham was the fallen hero's principal aide-de-camp, and his cousin, General Hope succeeded to the command. General Hill, Colonel Anderson, Captain Hardinge, Sir David Baird, Colonel Graham and Major Colborn, were all near Sir John Moore's person in the fatal hour. Sir David Baird had been shorn of his left arm, but when he heard of Moore's dreadful wound he immediately despatched his medical attendants to the citadel where his distinguished superior had been carried by Graham, and his other aides-de-camp. Hardinge was never absent from Moore's side from the time he fell wounded to his last dying struggle. Graham rode away in search of medical assistance but before he returned his dying General missed him and enquired anxiously. "Are Colonel Graham and all aides-de-camp safe ?" On receiving an affirmative answer his countenance brightened, but the intense pain and feeling of hopelessness bore him down and after a few parting words to his compassionating fellow-soldiers the great General expired.

Colonel Graham, assisted by Major Colborn and the other aides-de-camp, wrapped the body—in uniform as he died—in his military cloak and a camp blanket and at the mid-hour of night carried it to Colonel Graham's quarters, there to await sepulture, but occasional distant shots showed that the enemy—although utterly defeated—were still lurking about, and fearing that the remains of the beloved chief might fall into their hands, a grave was dug, and before daybreak that scene was enacted on the ramparts of Corunna which is familiar to us all as the sound of the church-going bell.

As a politician Graham avowed himself of the Liberal party, and all his life long acted consistently, though not with energy enough to obtain prominence; no mental exertion, unless coupled with physical action had charms for him. If catholic emancipation could have been carried by a tournament of arms he would have been first in the lists. If reform in Parliament could have been obtained by sound judgment in the study and martial strides in the field, his aid would have been valuable beyond estimation; but to feats of eloquent suasion or the subtleties of political debate he was by habit a stranger. In 1772 he made an unsuccessful attempt to get into parliament for Perthshire, but two years afterwards he married and betook himself to the improvement of his estate. When Mrs. Graham died however, he felt the necessity of more active life and two years afterwards was unanimously elected. Holding his seat for four successive parliaments he withdrew in 1807, and plunged a second time into the Napoleonic war. A few days after gaining the battle of Barossa he was again nominated for the county of Perth, but his politics did not meet the approval of the electors, and by a majority of 18 they returned his wife's nephew, Mr. Drummond of Strathallan. Sir Thomas Graham was not easily beaten, however, and a year thereafter, while he was fighting under the Duke of Wellington before Cuidad Rodrigo and had been invested with the Order of the Bath, his friends in Perthshire brought him forward for the seventh time, but Mr. Drummond held his seat by a majority of 7, and Sir Thomas Graham bade adieu to the electors of Perthshire.

After twenty years more of active service, he found his health somewhat impaired, and made up his mind to retire. The thanks of parliament had been twice tendered to him. The Corporation of London had voted him the freedom of the city enclosed in a gold box, and also presented him with a gold-hilted sword. Edinburgh also made him a freeman, and not to be behind her great southern rival, enclosed his diploma in a gold box. He had been created a peer of parliament, and voted a pension of £2,000 a year, which he magnanimously declined. His praises had been said and sung over the length and breadth of the land, as the hero of Barossa and Vittoria. His portrait had been three times painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and three times engraved. Perthshire may well be proud of the portrait in the County Hall. Few such masterpieces are to be found in provincial towns; the only one I know approaching to it, as a work of art, is that of the Earl of Kellie, by Wilkie, in the County Hall at Cupar. The low atmosphere and stirring accessories give character to the figure of the hero himself, who stands calm and meditative amidst the elemental war. The likeness is excellent, and the pose of the figure suggestive of determined courage. In drawing and colour this picture is a model.

Amongst the many songs written on Lord Lynedoch's military career in Spain, the most popular was that by William Glen, a poet and a contemporary. It brought the author great fame, and when followed by "Wae's me for Prince Charlie," he was induced to publish a volume of his poems and songs, which obtained a wide circulation. For several years "Vittoria" was sung in castle and in hall, in the theatres, and eventually on the street, more especially in Glasgow, the 71st, or "Glasgow regiment," having played a distinguished part, and its commander, Colonel Cadogan, being slain in the very heart of the battle. The following are the first and last verses :—

Sing a' ye bards wi' loud acclaim,
High glory gi'e to gallant Graham,
Heap laurels on our Marshal's fame,
  Wha conquered at Vittoria.
Triumphant, freedom smiled on Spain,
An' raised her stately form again,
Whan the British lion shook his mane
  On the mountains o' Vittoria,

Ye Caledonian war-pipes play;
Barossa heard your Highland lay,
An' the gallant Scot show'd there that day
  A prelude to Vittoria.
Shout to the heroes, swell ilk voice,
To them wha made poor Spain rejoice.
Shout Wellington an' Lynedoch, boys,
  Barossa an' Vittoria.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL LORD LYNEDOCH—*continued.*

> "Once more let us meet together,
> Once more see each other's face;
> Then like men that need not tremble,
> Go to our appointed place."
> WM. EDMONSTOUNE AYTOUN.

In those days the Balgowan parks were thickly studded with trees, and for half a mile round the old mansion, oak, elm, beech and plane of gigantic dimensions grew. Many thousands of trees, each many tons weight, fell under the hammer of Laurence Taylor, of Methven, between the years 1820 and 1830. One park on the east side of the estate had a solitary oak standing in the middle of it which had withstood the force of many blasts. The stem of this solitary forest-monarch was four feet in diameter, clear and beaten round the root by the cattle, like a mill-gang. But the longest journey comes to an end. There is a fiat to which even hearts of oak must succumb. The terrible hurricane of 1824 laid this warrior prostrate, and while passing through the hands of the inexorable Lowrie, whisperings of regret passed between John Smitton and Thomas Dickie about the fall of "Peter Sharp's Oak." The followinig circumstance obtained for this fallen hero the flattering ownership.

In the summer of 1809, when General Graham had returned to Perthshire to recruit his shattered health after the march on Corunna and the expedition to Walcheren, the park in which stood this giant oak was in the occupancy of a neighbouring farmer, who had placed in it, amongst other cattle, a furious bull, which became the terror of the district and the evil genius of trespassers. Peter Sharp, a farmer at South Woodend, in the parish of Trinity-Gask, had occasion to be at Methven on business, and wending his way homeward, he took the shortest road by going angularly through the parks of Balgowan. Peter was neither reckless nor foolhardy, but he was courageous and daring, and had been all his life engaged amongst cattle. When he came to the Oak Park he remembered its bellicose inhabitant, but flattered himself that he might pass unobserved. In case of an attack, however, he armed himself with a piece of blackthorn, rather longer and thicker than a constable's baton; not that he thought himself, even so armed, a match for the bull, but that he might not be quite naked and helpless. Thus fortified, he gave a scrutinising look round the park, and seeing nothing very near his route, he leaped the fence and entered the domain of Taurus. When he had nearly gained the middle of the park he saw, with horror, the bovine fiend making directly towards him, bellowing and tearing up the grass with his feet, and as an additional terror, General Graham riding slowly along the outside of the park hedge. He had no great dread of the General, but he did not relish the idea of rushing into his tender mercies, and before he had time to judge of the nearest point of escape, the foe was upon him. His first momentary impulse was to lay himself flat down in a hollow and strike from him with the cudgel. But the dreadful horns tossing him about presented a terrible alternative, and although he was no coward, he rushed at once to the shelter of the tree, and fortunately reached it before his resolute enemy. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war:" General Graham saw the man's peril and pulled up, but he was powerless to help him; the time was past when he could wield single-stick; and what was worse, the judgment matured by so many campaigns did not enable him to advise the poor fellow what to do in the protection of his life; but he raised himself in his stirrups to watch the exciting combat. He had seen bull-baiting at Seville, but here it was in good earnest at his own door. He had led a charge of cavalry and conducted an escalade; but to outmanœuvre this infuriated brute baffled all "the orders of the army." Sharp cleverly kept the side of the tree opposite to the raging foe, and, watching every motion, dodged and evaded him, round the tree and round again, the defender sometimes poking a blow at his assailant, but the thick hide and well-clad ribs always rendering it innocuous. The bull two or three times made a furious run at Sharp, but missing him, went a long way past the tree before he could check his impetus and return to the combat. This weakened him, and Sharp, from dealing so many blows on the unresisting air, began to show symptoms of fatigue and to act more on the simple defensive. When General Graham saw this, he galloped up to an opening in the fence, and shouted, "Bravely done! Cover yourself and exhaust him." This drew off Sharp's attention for an instant, which gave the bull an advantage; but the encouragement strengthened his arm, and grasping the cudgel by the extreme end, when the brute's head came more fully round the tree, he dealt him a tremendous blow across the bridge of the nose, which made a crack like the bursting of a shell. The bull gave a grand recoiling leap into the air, and turning tail, galloped across the park, blowing and snorting like a harpooned whale, and so the battle ended. Sharp paused before leaving his shelter, but eventually he got over the fence in safety, and laying himself down on a green bank fell sound asleep. General Graham rode slowly away without saying a word to the conqueror, but many of his old retainers heard him narrate the exciting story.

When Lord Lynedoch returned from the wars he was in his sixty-sixth year, but thirty lay still before him. His mode of living hitherto had been much too active to permit his readily settling down to a country life. The saddle and the field of battle acting upon a nature prone to active adventure, wore out its domesticity, and no gipsy since the days of Johnnie Faa put less value on the luxury of a painted chamber and a pillow of down than Lord Lynedoch did on the ordinary endearments of home. He liked company, because it was stirring. He liked form, because he was a soldier. In his latter-day journeyings over continental Europe, the amenity of his darling Lynedoch was ever present to him, and if a plant of great beauty or rarity came in his way it was at once despatched to Scotland, but his personal presence would not obey the desire of his heart, and thus, while meditating some important change at home, his horse's head was generally turned south. In 1767 I find him admonishing Mr. Dow his gardener, and spade in hand demolishing a terrace at Balgowan, and, nearly fourscore years afterwards, I find him writing from London to his gardener at Lynedoch in the following business-like way:—

HALLIDAY, London, 25th October, 1843.

I send you Mr. Lee's list of creeping plants for the banks of the river near the bridge. You will mark those which you think best suited for the purpose, and send back the list to me. LYNEDOCH.

and again four weeks before his death:

HALLIDAY, London, 9th November, 1843.

There are some trees coming down, English elms, red flowering horse chestnut, some scarlet thorns; the chestnuts are chiefly intended for the approach, and the thorns for Thorny Hill. They will probably be sent by the steamer which leaves this next Wednesday, so you will be prepared to receive them, and have your mind made up as to the places to plant them in, that they may be as short time as possible out of the ground. I have directed Mr. Lee to send at the same time the creepers and other shrubs that you marked in their list, and half-a-dozen plants of gold, silver, and other kinds of bay, recommended by him, for which you will select suitable situations. The chestnut trees should be put on the *left* hand side of the approach in going from the house, a good many feet back, but of course in sight of the approach.

LYNEDOCH.

Memorandum to be answered by Mr. Halliday: What is the girth of the large silver fir in the pleasure ground west of the house at Lynedoch? State at three feet from the ground, and at six feet.

The girth of this fine tree is at present 10 feet 6 inches at three feet from the ground and its estimated height 105 feet.

The signature to the last of the above letters gives evidence of great debility, and as Lord Lynedoch survived its date only 39 days it is probably the last he ever wrote. His great coadjutor Viscount Hill died exactly a year before, and it is remarkable evidence that rural affairs hold an important place in the most active and lofty minds, that the last of his letters ends thus. "The pond is just finished: It has occupied twelve or thirteen men every day and is considered to be an excellent job."

But the end had come. The gallant veteran who had combated the ills of life for nearly a hundred years, and whose course was broad, embracing the weal or woe of many thousands of his fellow-men, must now gird up his loins and go single-handed into a combat which mortal man never gained. No courage, no stratagem, no appliance of judgment, no prayers, no tears can shield from that last and most terrible of combatants. In the midst of the struggle Lord Lynedoch felt better, rose and was dressed, stepped bravely through his apartment

> Like a languishing lamp that just flashes to die.

But before the shadows of night fell he was laid, without being undressed, across his bed with supports under his limbs, and thus deprecating in death, as he had done in life, the ordinary comforting resources of our poor humanity the "daring old man" expired.

In early life Lord Lynedoch was a handsome man. Tall, square-shouldered and erect, his limbs sinewy and moulded like iron. In complexion dark, with full eyebrows, remarkably firm set lips, and open benevolent air. The late James Moncrieff who was "minister's man" at Redgorton during the advent of Mrs. Graham, always spoke with enthusiasm of the "matchless pair," but the last time I saw Lord Lynedoch he was sitting in the corner of a large open carriage, a mere shadow of the man I had known thirty years before, although even then by no means a young man. The sight to me was painful beyond expression. The sympathising spirit must partake of this awful decay. Is this the gallant Graham? Long life, are these thy terms? Mental death in the grave, or physical death on the earth.

Nihil semper floret.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL SIR DAVID BAIRD.

"Virtue and vice are often found in combination; valour and vice, never."—LAVATER.

FEW men of his time filled a broader space in the public eye than Sir David Baird. On the battle-field his sword was the sharpest. While holding his own as a citizen of the world he was ever forward in promoting schemes for the public good, and at the domestic hearth his heart and hand were open and liberal. His early life does not properly come under the scope of these domestic annals. They must be restricted to his character as a retired army officer, or rather to the impression he made on his contemporaries as a domicilian of the County of Perth; but to those now living, fifty years after his time, a few words on his military career will make these passages in his subsequent life easier understood.

Sir David was the second son of William Baird Esq., heir to his cousin Sir John Baird of Newbyth. He entered the army as an ensign in 1772, and when the war in the Carnatic broke out, he was Captain Baird of the 73rd, fighting under the command of Sir Hector Munro. The annals of hand-to-hand combat at Culloden or Inkerman, do not contain any more marked instances of personal bravery than those shown by Baird, Baillie and Fletcher, when, with their handful of men, they were surrounded by the multitudinous host of Hyder Ali at Conjeveram. They fought for an hour and a half with their swords, after their artillery and entire ammunition had been destroyed by an explosion in the midst of their own force; Colonel Fletcher was eventually slain, and Baird with four sabre wounds, was consigned along with Colonel Baillie and the other officers to a dungeon at Seringapatam, where they were chained together in pairs. Sir David, as commander of grenadiers was especially obnoxious to Hyder Ali, and his punishment was carefully attended to. It was during this confinement that his mother, according to Sir Walter Scott, exclaimed when she heard of it, "Pity the poor man who is chained to our Davie," alluding it is alleged to his wild restlessness when a boy.

Those who knew both Sir David Baird and his mother, emphatically deny the truth of this story, and its predictive sympathy is little in accordance with the following circumstances. Sir David Baird, Colonel Baillie, Lieutenant Lucas and the other prisoners were first chained together in couples, but afterwards they were loaded individually with fetters and every indignity which cruelty could devise. Baird's wounds were unhealed, and those in his limbs were festering to a degree that was fast undermining his constitution and threatening his life. After the unfortunate companions had been some time in confinement, the Myar made his appearance one day, bearing with him fetters weighing nine pounds each, which were destined for the unhappy prisoners; resistance was useless and they submitted to their fate. But when the Myar came to Sir David, one of the officers, Lieutenant Lucas, sprang forward and urged the cruelty of manacling limbs festering with wounds, from one of which the ball had been so recently extracted, that he doubted not death would be the result of such treatment To these representations the Myar replied that the Circar had sent as many fetters as there were prisoners and that they must all be put on; "Then" said the noble officer "put a double pair on me that Captain Baird be spared wearing them." Even the Myar, though used to scenes of human misery, was moved at this act of selfdevotion and consented that the matter be referred to the Kedadar, who would open the book of fate. Fortunately for Captain Baird the book of fate was propitious, the irons were dispensed with, and this brave officer, then a mangled captive in the dungeons of Seringapatam, was spared to become on a future day its conqueror and temporary master. Hyder Ali himself died soon after this, and to Sir David Baird fell the melancholy office of lifting his son, Tippoo Saib's dead body from amidst an ocean of blood at the very door of the dungeon, that had been the scene of such heartless cruelties.

During the first year of the present century news were not quite so rapidly transmitted as they are now in the seventy-ninth; war messages that took months on their journey are now sped in a less number of hours. While the British forces in Egypt were contesting every inch of ground with those of Napoleon Bonaparte, the home authorities ordered a portion of the army of India, and a division of infantry and horse from the Cape of Good Hope to come to their relief, but before their arrival Sir Ralph Abercrombie and General Hutchinson had driven the French out of Egypt. The command of the Indian force was much coveted by Colonel Wellesley, but before he arrived from Ceylon, where he was in command, Sir David Baird was appointed. When they arrived at Jiddah on the Red Sea and met the Cape detachment, they were informed that the British army had left and that there were no transports nearer than Malta.

Thus thrown upon his own resources, Sir David Baird pushed on with his large force to Alexandria, there to await means of transport. The following quotation from *The Autobiography of Andrew Pearson, a Peninsular Veteran*, shows how they were employed by their energetic commander. "When we had no battles to fight, our General (Sir David Baird), thought he should give what to some of us would prove more congenial labour. Large fatigue parties, consisting of 1,000 men, were sent out daily with the view of removing Cleopatra's Needle to the banks of the Nile and thence to England, by a large ship which had been cut open at the stern to admit the Needle. We built wharves opposite little Pharos; but before we had the cargo brought down they were swept away in a night. Not at all daunted by this disappointment, we set to work and built others, but on a more substantial principle than the former. We had our wharves completed before the fatigue parties were able to bring the Needle to the embankment. The manner in which it was moved along was by placing wooden rollers under it, made for the purpose.

Notwithstanding all the money and labour which was expended in constructing the wharves and bringing the wonder to the ship's side, it baffled all our ingenuity and strength to pull it on board. Each engineer had his own opinion as to how the work was to be completed, but one plan after another proved equally unsuccessful. Completely non-plussed and chagrined, we were ordered to take back what would have been such a curiosity in England, and leave it where we found it. This was rather too much for our strength and good nature; and after drawing it about a hundred yards from the wharves we left it, and there it lies at the present day."

A few more years of life, and this "Peninsular Veteran" would have seen the Needle, so baffling to their engineering skill, set on end in the heart of the City of London, and one of greater magnitude, though unfortunately not a monolith, erected to their commanding officer's memory in the midst of the Grampian hills.

Sir David afterwards distinguished himself at Pondicherry, at the Cape of Good Hope, and latterly at Corunna, where his left arm was cut off by a cannon ball, immediately on his taking the command after Sir John Moore fell. But after the appointment of the Marquis Wellesley to the Governor-generalship of India, the Duke of Wellington superseded Baird in the east, and afterwards, by his great talents as a commander, carried it so high in the wars of the French revolution, that Baird yielded reluctantly to the current, and after receiving for the fourth time, the thanks of Parliament, he formed a matrimonial alliance with Miss Anne Campbell Preston, and abandoning the soldier's more active life, retired in 1809 to live in quiet, on her fine estate in Perthshire.

In 1819, I met at Glasgow, Captain Campbell, a retired Indian officer, one of the finest old men I ever knew. His house was on the west side of the Kelvin at Partick, and was named Moorpark.

This truly amiable man had many interesting reminiscences of the war in the Mysore, especially of the escalade at Seringapatam. He was the first man of the storming party who entered the breach, and while they were scrambling across the wall, one of Tippoo's men came boldly towards Baird with his drawn sword. He allowed him to come within arm's length, when with one stroke of his sabre he sent the sword and the hand which held it spinning across the moat like clippings from a hedge. Campbell represented Sir David as a powerful and brave soldier, strict in duty, but much esteemed by those under his immediate command and highly respected by his brother officers.

When Miss Preston was about to be married to Sir David Baird, she sent William Robertson the hedger, who knew the tenants well, to invite them all to the marriage. "You will not only invite them, but you will arrange fully with them how they are to come, and be able to tell me all about it when you return. Any of them that have gigs will come in them, those who have no gigs will come on horseback, and those who cannot come on horseback will come in a cart, and any poor body that has neither horse nor cart, tell them I will send the carriage for them—only see that they do come."

The marriage ambassador had a peculiarity when assenting to anything said to him; he did not do it with the usual "yes"—"just so,"—or "precisely,"—but with "Immediately, O! immediately." I remember him well as he came round on his hymeneal mission; a tall square-built, loquacious man, very precise in his movements, and in the present case, necessarily well bred. He was dressed in a green frock-tailed coat with brass buttons, drab breeches and leggings, a hat somewhat stinted of brim, but of vast altitude, and a stick in his hand, the crook of which bespoke his important embassy; my father was ill and in bed, but received the gracious message, expressing great fears of being able to attend the wedding. The envoy urged the great importance of the business, and when leaving, my father said, "Tell Miss Preston that I will yoke a cart and bring my wife and bairns all in a bundle." "Immediately! immediately!" The invalid gave himself a turn in his bed, and remarked, "Miss Preston has waited a long time but she seems in a terrible hurry at last." The Plenipo did not see the personality of the joke, but replied, "Oh no! no hurry, three weeks is a long time." "I will get better in time if I can," said the invalid; "But if I do not she will require to come and bury me." "Immediately! immediately!" said the sub-grandee, and left.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL SIR DAVID BAIRD—*continued.*

"And when he feasted all the great, he ne'er forgot the small."—POPULAR BALLAD.

MY first meeting with Sir David dwells on my memory as an illustration of the interest which men of real greatness take in the little incidents of life, and a proof that although they are much above ordinary men in conduct they recognise with greater readiness all the little distinctions in the various classes of society as accidental more than real. During a severe storm in the early spring of 1813, while the ground was covered with snow and the roads with ice, I met Sir David and Lady Baird at the crossing of the Perth Road and the Highlandman's Loan. Lady Baird carried a staff six feet long with a steel pike in the end to assist her footing on the ice, and held on to her husband's solitary arm, as if she had been afraid that some frozen pool would open and swallow him alive.

I would no doubt have been allowed to pass, but I lifted my bonnet with profound reverence to the great General, a civility in so small an urchin, which he could not allow to pass, and halting he said loudly but softly, "Well! you have been at Crieff,"—"Yes Sir."—Looking into my little basket, "you have bought some toys,"—"Yes, a jumping Jack for my little brother." "Where do you come from?" —"From the Craig of Madderty." "Who is your father?" "John Drummond."—"Oh indeed! and how is your father?" —"He is not any better." "Well!" said Sir David with a soldier's oath, "he will never be better till he takes what I ordered him,—tell him so." This prescription my father characterised as, "a mixture of gunpowder and calomel, fit to purge a cannon." Lady Baird said, "Come away Sir David," but he held on and enquired, "Are you at school?"—"Yes, sir."—"Are you a good scholar?"—no reply. "Can you spell equipoise?"—"Yes."—"O, Sir David, why do you ask him such a difficult word as that?" enquired Lady Baird. "I once asked an English sergeant belonging to one of my regiments in India to spell equipoise; he made no attempt at spelling, but blurted out, 'I never knew them General. I knew the Sepoys very well, but the equis must be some raw-bones.'" "Come away, Sir David," said the impatient dame, but he took his own time, and observing the corner of a pamphlet sticking out from below a parcel in my store, he said, "You have got a book, too,"—"Yes." "What is it?" "The adventures of George Buchanan," I replied. "Who was he?" enquired Sir David." "He was commonly called the King's fule." "You'll not get much wisdom from him," said the General, and stalked away. This was all very well, but when he came shortly afterwards with his single gamekeeper to what we called "the pootin," he passed without taking the least notice of me, which I thought an awful cut.

The man who has been long disciplined to any office, retains its impress many years after its duties have been laid aside. The discharged soldier walks the street square-built and with measured tread; the sailor, with his hands clutching the hawser, and redolent of salt water and expectoration; the tradesman, with his shoulders still bent to their old office.

In every transaction in which Sir David Baird engaged himself in his new position, the great difficulty with him was, how to square his proceedings to the circumstances. He had no idea of being placed, in the ordinary business of life, as simply one of two parties. He could neither suggest, nor recommend, nor haggle; but order, and have it done. He did not always succeed in having these soldier-like commands obeyed outside of his own roof; neither did they lead to any great difficulty with the tenants on his estate, because they found it was more in the manner than in the matter.

Farmers are generally very reticent in their affairs, especially when overtaken by disaster; and when the calamitous 1826 smote the occupiers of light soils to the earth, the tenants on the estates of Ferntower and Dubheads made a sort of tacit arrangement to retain 20 per cent. of their rents until it was ascertained what the tenants on neighbouring estates did under the same circumstances, whether able to pay in full, or otherwise. My father kept back thirty pounds, pleading the poverty resulting from failure of crop, without in any way signifying that he had made a final payment. Within a very few weeks after the audit, he was standing amongst the other farmers in the Square of Crieff, when Sir David came riding past. When he observed my father, he made no movement towards him, neither did he signal him in any way, but, tightening his rein, he cried out, in a voice loud enough for the siege of Seringapatam, "Drummond! when are you coming to pay your arrears?" My father went forward and said, quietly, "It is hardly fair, Sir David, to expose my poverty before all these men." "Oh! for that matter, Drummond, you can bring them all with you when you come." The soldier does not crave in single file, but in battalions.

The Ferntower tenants *did* get a small abatement upon terms of instant payment of the difference. This they all accomplished. Whereas upon a neighbouring estate no abatement was offered, but large arrears allowed to lie over; the consequence of which was, that while the former were able to hold on to their leases, the latter fell away one by one, overwhelmed by subsequent accumulations, until the entire estate fell into the hands of new tenants.

The management of the estates of Ferntower and Lochlane had been long in Lady Baird's own hands; and much as she esteemed her liege lord, occasional exigencies arose, where the old supremacy would crop up. Sir David knew well how to overcome these scruples without giving offence.

During the winter of 1816, a hurricane from the south-west levelled a great number of fine larches that grew on the face of the Knock hill, immediately behind the house. While the devastation was being surveyed, Lady Baird fretted greatly; but when the inspecting party came to a gigantic tree that had fallen along the ring-fence and smashed two entrance-gates, her temper gave way, and she ordered the wood-forester to have two new gates and fencing made out of the identical tree, "As a warning to all trees," chimed in Sir David.

Shortly afterwards, Charles Ross came to Sir David, and whispered to him, that if it would not offend her ladyship, there were two new gates and as much fencing as would repair the damage, lying at the Dryton. He was answered, "Get them put up at once, and we will reason the matter with her." A few days after, when all was put to rights, and Ross examining the job, Sir David and Lady Baird approached, the lady looking surprised, and the old soldier with one side of his face grave, and the other showing symptoms of suppressed merriment. When the irate lady saw the gates up, and the delinquent tree only turned out of the way, she said, loftily, "Mr. Ross, why have my orders been disobeyed?" The baronet came to the rescue, but instead of pleading the fact of the two gates being ready, he said, in a conciliatory tone, "Lady Baird, why would you punish the tree? It has suffered enough. If you want to be revenged on the real transgressor, you should get two gates made out of the wind." Thus disconcerted, the lady thrust her arm into that of her husband, and carried him off. The two strangers from the Dryton were afterwards named respectively "the Woody Gate" and "Windy Gate."

Lady Baird was an exceedingly clever woman, and conducted her business in a very sharp way; charitable or otherwise, she never lost sight of what she was about; she gave of her means, but she knew how. One cautious instance occurred with James Smith the Madderty poet; James was getting old and frail, and while superintending the sinking of a narrow well at a neighbonring farm, he lost his balance and fell to the bottom, doubled up like a carpenters' rule. Work was out of the question after this scratching, so application was made to Lady Baird for relief. Her answer was, "I am sorry for James, but I must see him before I can do anything for him." "He is not able to come to Ferntower, my lady." "Then I shall go to see him." But she was thought long in coming, and the neighbours bundled the poet into a cart amongst straw and groans and sent him off to Ferntower, for inspection; arriving safely, they carried him into the servants' hall, and announced the arrival to Lady Baird. Down she came, and fixing her eye-glass, she scrutinised him with as confident an air as if she had been Sir Robert Liston. "What do you feel wrong, James? you do not seem to have suffered much injury." "Ah!" said the suppliant in a querulous voice, "it's internal, my lady." "Yes, James, internal,—yes, internal—then I suppose an internal remedy will be best. Give him his dinner, William, and when he is done I shall take another look at him." James deprecated food, but through great persuasion he ate his dinner, and when Lady Baird came down-stairs she found him much revived. "You are better, James; all you want is nourishing food." "That is all, my Lady, if I had got a moderate supply of that, your ladyship would not have seen me here to-day." For once her ladyship was discomfited, and making a virtue of necessity, she put a pound note in the poet's hand, and said she would be glad to hear of his recovery.

While Sir David was commmander of the forces in Ireland, Lady Baird paid a visit to Scotland, and an additional coachman was required; amongst other applicants for the office, Patrick Byrne presented himself at Kilkenny. The butler announced Patrick, and Sir David's first question was "What like is he?" "A tall, broad-shouldered, handsome man," he was answered. "Where has he been latterly?" enquired the General. "He has been twelve months with Colonel O'Donovan at Madison, County Clare," was the reply. "Has he a certificate of character?" "Yes, Sir David, but he is slow to show it." "That looks ill, send him in."

When he appeared, Sir David looked narrowly at him, and said, "Well, Patrick! Colonel O'Donovan must have given you a certificate of character when you left his service." "Yes, sor." "Let me see it." "Oh, sor! I was discharged for a small wakeness, but I am now cured of it entirely," said Patrick, handing over the certificate, which the General read aloud. "These certify that Patrick Byrne has been coachman with me for twelve months. He is kind to his horses, ("all right,") a capital whip, ("very good,") but he has always cheated me when he got an opportunity." "There is nothing in that," said Sir David, "give him no opportunity John, and d—n him if he cheats me."

One morning, while Charles Ross was land-steward at Ferntower, John Pardoe—a faithful domestic—came into the business-room, while Sir David and Ross were together, saying that the coachman was leaving and would be obliged to Sir David for a character. "What is he going to do with a character, is he not going to Monzie?" "Yes, Sir David, but he may need it afterwards." "Send him here at once." Coachie presented himself, and the old General, after looking at him up and down, said, "A character! yes to be sure, give him a good character Ross. He is a good looking fellow, give him an excellent character."

Ross was not always so fortunate himself. It was his prescribed duty to see Sir David at seven o'clock on Thursday evening after returning from the weekly market at Crieff. On one occasion he remained rather too long after dinner, and when he reached Ferntower, he felt himself very unfit to meet the sharp eye that had detected so many false movements. No help for it, in he went, and got through the business wonderfully well, but in turning to leave the room, he stumbled and fell; in an instant he was on his feet and looking about—as all Scotchmen are said to do—to see what made him stumble, Sir David, at once saw the pawkie design, and remarked, "It is not so much your feet as your head that is at fault, Ross."

Sir David had a tenant of the *good old school*, one of those who would abuse his neighbour as if he had been fashioned by the finger of Satan himself; but if you opened your mouth to decry the weather, although it were blowing the roof off your house, it was "interfering with the mercies of Providence," as if man were less the object of providential mercy than the wind or the rain. One very late and very wet harvest, Sir David went shooting over this tenant's farm, and found him busy setting up dripping stooks that had been blown over in a storm the night before. "Very coarse weather," said the soldier. The tenant could not see a chance of giving a captious answer, and with reluctance said, "Yes, very." Sir David added, "I am afraid you will be a loser if this continues." This was a puzzling remark for the tenant. He saw a fair opportunity of suggesting a reduction of rent on the one hand, and on the other a chance of parading his sanctimony; the latter carried it, and he replied, "It 's a' in gude hands—it 's a' in gude hands." Sir David assented, and went on his way. A week after, while going over the same ground, he found his tenant again amongst the same stooks, which by this time were black and green. The straight-forward soldier said, "This is really dreadful; unless a change of weather comes speedily, you will lose your crop altogether." Here was another chance of throwing in a hint; and he did it by saying, "We will that." But the old leaven cropped up, and he added, "But it s a' in gude hands—it s a' in gude hands." Sir David Baird was no scoffer; but this everlasting palaver, together with some misgiving as to the tenant's personal exertions, irritated him, and he said, loudly, "The sooner it changes hands the better."

He had no occasion to complain of this dissimulation when he came to the farm of Dubheads, where my father was tenant. Perhaps he found the candour a little too forcible. The square tower erected over the family mansion by Sir David, furnished him with a more lofty name to it than any by which it had been hitherto known. From family rent receipts I find it spelt, in 1745, by William Roy, *Farmton:* in 1748, by Ch. Campbell, *Fernton;* in 1751, by John Menzies, the proprietor, *Fernten;* in 1775, by Anne Menzies, the proprietrix, *Ferntown;* in 1787, by Dr. Malcolm, Madderty, who collected the rents, *Fernton;* from 1800 to 1815, *Farmtown;* subsequently, *Ferntower.*

The roof of the tower erected by Sir David was originally composition; and from some fault, either in the material or workmanship, it leaked very much. On a shooting excursion, he complained to my father about it, which gave the latter an opportunity of throwing out a hint that could not be mistaken. "Oh, indeed, Sir David! the roof o' my ain house is a great deal waur than that, for it begins to drap an hour before the rain comes on, and continues an hour after it is fair." This was too much for the laird, and he rode away. He had not gone far, when, following his pointers, he went into the middle of a field of ripe barley. His gamekeeper did not follow; and when he was asked the reason, his reply was, "If I go in there, they will shoot me." Sir David made no question whatever about title or no title, but at once came out of the barley, saying, "I am as easily shot as other people."

CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL SIR DAVID BAIRD—*continued.*

> "Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
> Dream of fighting fields no more,
> Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
> Morn of toil, nor night of waking."
> SIR WALTER SCOTT.

FOR a long series of years Sir David Baird held high rank amongst the proprietors of Upper Strathearn, his presence always valued, and his opinions always respected. But in the autumn of 1829, when this hero of so many fights, had long passed the threescore years and ten, he was summoned to fight the battle which has an unvarying termination. He had witnessed death in many shapes, and when his own turn came, he met the inexorable foe with christian equanimity. His robust constitution enabled him to hold out longer in the final struggle than a weaker man could have done, but yield he must, and on the 18th of August, the windows of Ferntower house were darkened, and the haunts of the old man of war saw no more of him.

Sir David did not engage himself much in the public business of the country, but in all local matters his purse and his influence were ever ready. He was an assiduous supporter of the Established Church, and took a very deep interest in the affairs of his own immediate parish. So sensible were the parishioners of Crieff of his generous acts, that they placed a tablet to his memory, with an elaborate inscription over the door of the church; and the devoted widow now that she had lost her hero in substance, set herself to consecrate his shadow. She already possessed his presentment in marble by Macdonald, and on canvas by Raeburn, but a more lasting memorial than either of these must be had, and the granite obelisk on the top of Tom-a-Chastil was projected. This noble column bade fair to carry the memory of the great soldier through many ages of the world, but while I am in the midst of this writing, a stroke of lightning has rent it from top to bottom. This circumstance awakens many regrets. The scene presented in this unrivalled valley by the combination of nature, in her most picturesque form, with art after two thousand years of refinement, is likely to be broken up. Lady Baird took steps to burden her estate with a sum sufficient to keep this column in repair, but the law of entail interfered, and it is now left to the mercy of the destructive elements, with little prospect of restoration. Its origin may be thought an instance of extravagant personal devotion, but its disappearance from the landscape would be a public calamity. The opening to Upper Strathearn with the groups of rugged hills—distant and near—surrounding it, and the obelisks to Baird and Melville shooting up from their picturesque rocks in the green valley may be equalled in some corner of the world, but where? Some men affect such an extreme regard for nature in her primitive form, that any appropriation of her graceful curves to purposes of architectural art is characterised as vandalism. This false philosophy has been applied to the Baird and Melville monuments, and with greater unction to that to Wallace on the Abbey Craig at Stirling. The latter is, to many people, objectionable as an attempt to revive an obsolete landmark. This is the same kind of objection as the Frenchman in England has to being domiciled at the *Waterloo* Hotel. The objection to the site is better founded, albeit only in degree. The people of ancient and mediæval times never placed their monuments in a hollow, but on some "heaven-kissing hill;" and the landscape painter often finds a straight line of essential service. Besides, rugged nature is always most cherished in presence of civilisation. A walk up the Sma' Glen on a summer morning will gratify the most ardent admirer of nature in her moods of asperity, but he will find the inn at Corrymuckloch, with its square walls, a welcome physical adjunct.

In 1832 the obelisk was erected, and the village of St. Davids in the parish of Madderty founded. The life, by Theodore Hook, followed, and for two or three years afterwards it was thought that Lady Baird would allow the memory of her deceased husband to rest in peace; but in the autumn of 1834, Sir David Wilkie paid a visit to Ferntower and Taymouth Castle, and during his stay an arrangement for a picture, on a grand scale, of the taking of Seringapatam, was entered into. Eventually it took the shape of the finding of Tippoo's body, a real incident of the siege; Wilkie was delighted with the subject, and naturally proud of the tendered fifteen hundred guineas. But from what I learned from my friend Captain Campbell ten years before, I think they took a wrong view of the incident. Sir David Baird showed marked symptons of depression when he came to look upon the lifeless body of his foe, which lay very near the door of the dungeon where he—Baird—had suffered a protracted imprisonment. The combination, was, no doubt touching, and calculated rather to depress than elevate a sensitive mind; yet Wilkie, in writing to Lady Baird on the 7th of August 1835, while the picture was in progress, says "I have been giving more animation and command to his figure." To represent a great General in the moment of victory with his enemy at his feet, as animated and exulting is not in the best possible taste, and is little characteristic of Sir David Baird.

The fact seems to have been lost sight of, that he was not only a brave soldier, but a tender-hearted and impressionable man; and however little he might be disposed to yield to the dictates of his better nature in the midst of a hand-to-hand contention for country, character, and life, yet when searching for the mutilated remains of a heroic foe, little likely to assume trampling grandeur of manner, or even momentary animation. A circumstance well known to Lady Baird, and no doubt communicated by her to Sir David Wilkie, presents unequivocal proof that they had sunk the man in the hero, at the moment when the hero would be sunk in the man. The night after the siege and fall, the children of Tippoo were placed for safety in one of the royal mansions, and to protect them from the exasperated soldiery, Sir David ordered a carpet to be spread outside the door, and, without removing his uniform, he threw himself on it and slept till morning.

But it is impossible to avoid believing that Raeburn and Wilkie, especially the latter, were greatly influenced by Lady Baird in the action of their respective pictures. Soldier-like grandeur she claimed for Sir David in whatever situation he was placed, regardless altogether of dramatic consistency and the difficulty an artist must encounter in preventing this personal grandeur violating his simpler accessories. In Raeburn's portrait the right hand is held aloft in stern command, whilst there is nothing to command except a lowering atmosphere and a desolate landscape; besides this, in order to give the figure a jaunty, yet firm air, the artist has bent the right limb to absolute deformity, producing a violent line, disturbing the pose of the figure and compromising the fine broad character of the picture. This fault is aggravated by the heavy shadow thrown on the lower portion of the figure. The head is painted as only Raeburn could paint the human head, exquisite in drawing and colour, and, as a likeness, perfect.

In Wilkie's grand picture, the figure of Sir David Baird is drawn out beyond the license conceded to art; and in aggravation the helmet is stuck on the top of his head as no man could wear it. Sir James McGregor pointed out this to Wilkie, and he mentioned the circumstance to Lady Baird; but it was not altered, because her ladyship preferred the exhibition of the hero's fine forehead to the consistency of a great historical picture. Wilkie himself was so proud of his dashing commission and, naturally, so deferential to Lady Baird, that, to meet her views, he yielded points destructive of this otherwise great work of art. It must be admitted that the subject was rather beyond Wilkie's powers. It is not in human genius to achieve the miracles in domestic art which he has achieved, and yet be equal to a subject demanding lofty powers and a deep sense of the relative actions of men in the midst of conflict. Wilkie felt this, and although he could not obey his own conception in the main figure, he did so in the subordinates. The 71st Highlander, holding the torch, is gazing into the abyss with that subdued, eager look, which any man would naturally assume while engaged in such a solemn search. The wish may appear sacrilegious, but in looking at the picture it has often occurred to me,—This Highlander transferred to a small canvas, and titled, "The soldier in search of his missing comrade," would be an inestimable treasure. The expression, colouring, and more especially the foreshortening of this figure cannot be surpassed.

Lady Baird's devotion to the memory of her deceased husband became the passion of her widowed life. She grudged no amount of money if it was duly consecrated to that all-absorbing object. The great picture by Wilkie, together with the supplementing of the life by Theodore Hook, and the engravings by Hodgetts and Burnet, cost her three thousand pounds; and the granite obelisk on Tom-a-Chastil other fifteen thousand. Ferntower House was strewed with reminiscences of the deceased general. The great "Tippoo" stood on the drawing-room floor, reaching to the ceiling. In the dining-room was the portrait by Raeburn, here golden trophies from Seringapatam, and there a basket-hilted sword from Corunna. The noble bust by Lawrence Macdonald changed places as the light of summer succeeded the darkness of winter. These interesting objects were kept under constant surveillance, and if a fly was discovered perching on any one of them, it had cause to regret its presumption, if it escaped with the power of regretting anything. Whatever freedom was used with the other fine things in Ferntower House, these were to be held sacred, and in her latter days she positively fretted over the disregard her servants paid to the cherished memorials.

In closing these stray reminiscences of Sir David Baird, it may be well to say, that as age grew on him, the old soldier merged into the exemplary civilian; and, if he loved glory in the one, he loved justice in the other. No one entertained a stricter sense of what is due from man to man, especially from the man of rank and wealth to those whom fortune or misfortune has placed under him. In cases of difficulty he was appealed to. In cases of want he was solicited. His opinion was valued, his presence courted, and those who knew him with the same admiring spirit as the writer of these short memorials, would go a long way to invoke a movement that might end in the upbuilding of his monument on Tom-a-Chastil.

INSCRIPTION ON THE OBELISK.

In Honour and to the Memory of
GENERAL SIR DAVID BAIRD,
BART., G.C.B. & K.C.

THIS COLUMN WAS ERECTED
A.D. 1832.

TO INDOMITABLE COURAGE IN THE FIELD,
HE UNITED
WISDOM AND PRUDENCE
IN THE COUNCIL.

A BRAVE BUT GENEROUS ENEMY,
HIS VICTORIES WERE EVER TEMPERED BY MERCY;
AND WITH HIS ARDENT LOVE OF GLORY
WAS BLENDED
THE TENDEREST CARE FOR HIS GALLANT AND DEVOTED FOLLOWERS.
THE DETAILS OF HIS PUBLIC SERVICES ARE RECORDED
IN THE ANNALS OF HIS COUNTRY:
HIS PRIVATE VIRTUES ARE EMBALMED IN THE HEARTS OF HIS FRIENDS.
HONOUR AND DUTY WERE THE GUIDING STARS OF HIS DESTINY:
PIETY AND CHARITY THE LEADING CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS MIND.
HE FELT NO JEALOUSIES. HE HARBOURED NO RESENTMENTS.
HE KNEW NO GUILE.
IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHERS
HE AT LAST FOUND
REPOSE AND HAPPINESS IN DOMESTIC LIFE;
FORGETTING THE CARES AND TURMOILS OF HIS EVENTFUL
AND BRILLIANT CAREER:
AND IN THE EXERCISE OF EVERY SOCIAL AND CHRISTIAN VIRTUE,
HE DIED BELOVED AND LAMENTED,
AS HE HAD LIVED
HONOURED AND RENOWNED.

CHAPTER X.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE MURRAY.

> **"A gallant and successful soldier, and an able minister."**
> SAMUEL MAUNDER.

GEORGE MURRAY was born at Auchtertyre in the year 1772. He was the second son of Sir William Murray and Augusta daughter of the proscribed Earl of Cromarty. His elder brother, Sir Patrick, was the highly popular Exchequer baron, Colonel of the long famous Perthshire Volunteers, and one of the most active men that ever graced the muster-roll of his country.

During the autumn of 1787, this family was placed in a very interesting position by a visit from Robert Burns. Patrick was in his seventeenth year, George a year younger. Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, a young beauty afterwards married to Lord Methven, was on a visit. The three young people accompanied the poet to Loch Turrit, where the scaring of some water-fowl excited his poetical vein, and led to the composition of a long series of moral reflections. The great beauty and fascinating manners of the young lady moved his susceptible feelings and originated one of his most popular lyrics.

During this visit, George Murray was home from Edinburgh College for his holidays. Two years afterwards he joined the army as an ensign in the 71st Foot. In 1794 he changed into the Guards, and fought at the campaign in Flanders. He was in the West Indies and in Egypt with Sir Ralph Abercrombie, and before he was twenty-seven years of age, he had the Order of the Crescent conferred on him by the Turkish Government, and was appointed to a company in the Guards with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He had been wounded at the unfortunate fight on the Helder, and on going a second time to the West Indies his health gave way, and for a short period, he returned to England. His next appointment was a diplomatic mission to the Swedish Government, and on his return he became Deputy-Quartermaster General for Ireland.

Thus the first seventeen years of Sir George Murray's military life were filled with harassing duties, in trying climates and in perilous positions, yet they form a mere prelude to the seven years that yet awaited him. He had fought alongside Sir John Moore in the West Indies, in Egypt, and in Holland. And now that his brave companion in arms was ordered to the Peninsula, he was appointed his Quarter-master General, and followed him to the walls of Corunna. Lord Lynedoch, Sir David Baird, and Sir George Murray were present at the hero's death and burial. The important, but costly victory at Corunna inaugurated the Peninsula war; and for five long years and through incessant carnage, Sir George Murray stood side by side with Wellington, Hill, Lynedoch, and Beresford. His position as Quarter-master General led him into close social union with his brother officers; and although in a war like that in the Peninsula, the duties of the office were both arduons and highly responsible, no officer in the British army showed greater capacity for it, and no one of his time held it so long. The following despatch sent by him to Sir Rowland Hill, at the very close of the war in the Peninsula, will illustrate the position he held so long.

MY DEAR SIR ROWLAND, Toulouse, 18th April, 1814.

The terms of an armistice have been agreed upon, and as soon as Marshal Soult has signified his assent to them the business will be completed. The armistice includes the allied troops in Catalonia and those under Marshal Suchet, as well as the armies in this quarter, and the fortresses and the troops before them. The army will therefore not make any movement to-day, and head-quarters will be at Toulouse. It is probable that the greater part of the troops will be drawn further back to-morrow, to be cantoned, or encamped in more convenient situations.

I beg you will be so good as to let the contents of this letter be communicated to Sir Lowry Cole, and also to the other general officers whose troops are in communication with those under your own immediate command. Believe me, my dear Sir Rowland,

Very faithfully yours,
G. MURRAY, Q.M.G.

The memorable passage of the Douro reflected great honour on the English army in the Peninsula. Sir George Murray had an active share in it: he was ordered by Sir Arthur Wellesley to cross at Avintas, in command of a battalion of the Hanoverian Legion, while the main body of the army moved up the left bank till they came opposite Oporto, where the crossing took place. Soult's army was roused, and the city rang with the cry of "To arms!"

By the time Murray's forces came up the carnage had been fierce; but the fresh arrival inspirited the force, and they fell upon Soult's army, driving it from the city and pursuing it, according to Colonel Napier, to the Spanish frontier, one hundred miles from Oporto, on the Braga road. Outside the walls of Oporto, while the French forces were making a desperate rally, Sir George Murray rode up to Sir Rowland Hill with orders from Sir Arthur Wellesley that the army should push on, taking advantage of the panic that had seized Soult's retreating forces. Here an incident occurred which will illustrate to those who "live at home at ease" what the life of the soldier really is. An officer who led a charge fell from his horse, mortally wounded. General Hill desired another officer to seize the liberated horse and take his place. "General, I cannot ride." "Never mind," said Hill, "jump up." He did so; and many years afterwards, Hill said to the Rev. Edwin Sidney, "I never witnessed a more gallant affair. Meeting him afterwards, I inquired how he got on so well, being such a novice at horsemanship. 'Oh,' said he, 'I shut my eyes and galloped on, shouting, Old England for ever!'"

In the field of battle, pride of country is the soldier's noblest stimulant; his feelings are tenderly excited, and he is equally disposed to weep over his dear native home, or to poniard its foe. Mr. Kinglake tells us that, at the battle of Inkerman, three guns belonging to Townsend's battery were lost; and when, further on in the fight, they were recovered, one of the gunners clasped his nine-pounder in his arms, exulting in the fact that she had not been spiked.

On returning from the Peninsula, Sir George Murray was raised to the rank of Major-General and appointed Governor of Canada; but while he was preparing for that high office, Napoleon escaped from Elba, and, resigning his Canadian appointment, he followed the fortunes of the British army till the tyrant's final subjugation. He was then appointed Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards of the Royal Military College at Woolwich, and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General.

During their long Peninsular service, Lord Hill and Sir George Murray formed a strong mutual attachment; and when the former officer went to the Horse Guards, he did not lose sight of his old companion in arms. Lord Hill lived at Westbourne; and one day, immediately after the accession of William the Fourth, the King said to him, "I do not dine with anybody in London, you know; but you do not live *in* London, and I shall come and dine with you." Sir George Murray was amongst the first who was asked to dine with the King at Westbourne House. The party, besides the King, consisted of the Duke of Wellington, the Duke of Gordon, Lord Rosslyn, Lord Cathcart, Lord Edward Somerset, Lord Fitzroy Somerset (afterwards Lord Raglan), Lord Melville, Lord Combermere, Sir Robert Peel, Sir George Murray, Sir Willoughby Gordon, Sir Herbert Taylor, Sir Henry Hardinge, Colonel Macdonald, Major-General Macdonald, and the Aides-de-camp.

Although these circumstances are far on in my narrative, I mention them here because Sir George Murray's connection with the class of men with whom he had been so long in active co-operation was now merging from that of the soldier into the senator, and to show that if he gained their esteem in the first position, he certainly did not lose it in the second.

At the close of the great Napoleonic war he was in his forty-fourth year. His previous career had been too active and stirring to admit of immediate cessation, and he threw himself with unreserved ardour into the politics of the time, forming his creed on the time-honoured legends of his family, and his own convictions. The Drummonds, the Grahams, and the Murrays had represented Perthshire during twenty-one successive Parliaments; and as Mr. Drummond of Machany, as he was then called, had succeeded Sir Thomas Graham, and was then sitting member, he naturally concluded that a Murray should come in next; and so it turned out. Mr. Drummond—the late Lord Strathallan—retired in 1820, and Sir George Murray was unanimously voted his successor. This enviable position he held till the passing of the great Reform Bill in 1832; and there exist many records that he performed his duties to the entire satisfaction of his constituents.

Exploits in the field, or votes in the Senate do not properly come within the scope of these essays, but the personal recollections I may have of the subjects of them, if not associated with something that had gone before, would lack both form and motive. At this distant day, when few men remember the war in the Peninsula, but when many remember the prominent incidents of the sixty-five subsequent years, especially the general election of

1832, it may be well to attempt some illustration of how the inexorable demon of politics instigating the masses, crushes out of existence all gratitude for toil and services in the field of battle. Sir John Hill had four sons at the battle of Talavera; three of them were wounded, but all survived; and when the news reached him, he said, quietly, "I am proud of them;" and when he was told that three of them were wounded on the field of Waterloo, but all survived, he exclaimed, "God bless the dear lads!" Whether or not Perthshire people feel similarly towards their four Peninsular heroes, I have no little pride in the fact that I knew them all, and that sufficiently well to warrant me in having something to say of each of the four.

The ledger of politics is never honestly balanced; narrow-minded prejudice cooks it, page by page. An old soldier in Parliament who gives an adverse vote will have a whole column of black placed to his debit; but although he had for twenty years fought the battles of his country, not a line of merit is placed against it. Politicians will not tolerate the slightest commendation of any one against whom is lifted the cankered arm of sectarianism. In the present state of society, it is not the glory that a man gives to God that establishes his character, but the glory he gives to his kirk; neither is it his devotion to his country that procures for him the respect of his fellow-men, but his obedience to a certain formula, which, in competition with another formula, has no more vital superiority than hot water would have over cold in driving a mill-wheel.

During a political canvass, after ten thousand new aspirations have been created, men's feelings are naturally excited, and allowance should be made for that excitement. Electors are fairly entitled to the man of their choice; and even non-electors may, with equity, claim to be heard in a fair stand-up fight; but that a man like Sir George Murray should be gagged, hooted, and pelted at the passive instigation of his opponents, is a pitiful instance of recklessly adopting every available means to gain an end, and a scandal to the elective franchise.

I remember very well Sir George coming, unattended, to solicit my father's vote—a tall, rather thin, elderly gentleman, dressed in a blue military overcoat, that looked as if it had seen the firing of red-hot shot at the French boats when navigating the Adour. He had a highly cultivated air, a mild expression, and altogether a very winning countenance, with manners entirely devoid of affectation. My father declined to support him, but he had been so long a volunteer, under Sir Patrick Murray, that the refusal cost him a pang. He denied candidly and civilly, and his denial was courteously regretted. Sir George Murray's great-great-grandfather was Member of Parliament for Perthshire one hundred years before; he had himself held the coveted office for twelve years, and through five successive Parliaments. He was a general in the British army, and a Privy-Councillor. He had a high standing as a literary man, and the prestige of a brave soldier, all of which gave him no positive claim on the electors' votes, but it ought to have obtained for him a deferential hearing, and an exemption from the hootings of an officered rabble. Sir George polled at next election, which happened within eighteen months, out of the same constituency, nearly four hundred more votes, but with little less of offensive demonstration. The liberal electors of Perthshire, can any one of them, easily explain how he lost the next election, which occurred nine months later, "Because" say they "he was opposed to Mr. Fox Maule, *a better man*," thus unwittingly paying a high compliment to Viscount Stormont, who within three years unceremoniously snatched the honour out of Mr. Maule's hands, thereby, on the same terms, showing himself to be *a still better man*.

I am not drifting into politics. They have never yielded me a penny, and long experience has taught me the *rule* by which they are to be valued, namely, the old rule of three. If nothing gives nothing what will nothing give? But in writing this essay on Sir George Murray, I will not refrain from expressing even at this late hour, my strong sense of the ungenerous treatment which that gallant officer received in 1832, -4 and 5, from the newly-fledged electors of Perthshire. The inexpressible meanness of the so-called popular movement—in so far as it vented itself in hootings, peltings, and abuse—is easier forgiven than forgotten.

The side incidents of these elections were numerous, amusing, and in some cases characteristically bitter, I can only insert two, in both of which Mr. Campbell of Monzie, an active supporter of Sir George Murray, was the sufferer. He waited on an old highlander of the name of Macgregor, who had a son an elector, when the following conversation took place.

Mr. Campbell,—" Mr. Macgregor I hope your son is going to vote for us."

Mr. Macgregor,—" How can he do that, Sir?"

Mr. Campbell,—" By giving his support to Sir George Murray."

Mr. Macgregor,—" But ye see, Sir, he has promised to Lord Ormelie."

Mr. Campbell offended,—" Then he is no real Macgregor, there must be some bad blood in him."

Mr. Macgregor,—" That is very likely indeed sir, for ye see his mother was a Campbell."

An old man residing at Gilmerton, had made himself serviceable during an election, and Mr. Campbell thought it right to recognise him in some small way, but he signally failed. This old man had a grandson who lived with him, and was looked upon as a young *ne'er do weel.* He would neither work nor go to school, but would wallow about from morning to night amongst dirt, squalor, and rags. Mr. Campbell proposed to give him a new suit, and put him to a trade; this was cordially agreed to, the clothes were obtained and orders came to the old man to have young hopeful put through a series of pungent ablutions. By the help of two or three stout neighbours this was accomplished, and an appointment made to meet Mr. Campbell at Robertson's Hotel. The old man with great tuggings and ruggings managed to put on the new suit, and giving the face a finishing scrub with a hard cloth, he seized his reluctant pupil by the hand and marshalled him west to Robertson's. The suit was not made by Stultz, but by James Matthew, tailor of Gilmerton, and did not fit at all well, so when he was presented to Mr. Campbell with his newly frictioned face, he looked like a boiled lobster wrapped in moleskin. The pair were ordered to go to Mr. Drummond the baker's, whither the Laird of Monzie followed at a respectful distance, and joined in the following dialogue.

Mr. C.—" This is the young man I spoke to you about."

Mr. D. (looking at the animated bundle),—" Oh! indeed."

Mr. C.—" Hold up your head sir."

Mr. D.—" What is your age?"

Grandpa, (despairing of an answer, said),—" Fourteen."

Mr. D.—" Can you read?"

Young Hopeful.—" Some."

Mr. D.—" Would you like to be a baker?"

Now came the tug of war. He looked round the shop, then at Mr. Drummond with his floury clothes, and wound up sleeves, and moving towards the door, he replied with explicit promptness, " No ! it's an awfu' dirty trade," and instantly disappeared. A search was made but there was no find, and Mr. Campbell turning his face Monzie-ward, suggested that he had gone into a rat's hole,

This story has a singular sequel. The youth so roughly handled appeared no more at Mr. Campbell's gate, but within ten years he carried on a prosperous business as a grocer in the Gallowgate of Glasgow, and maintained his grandfather who had scrubbed him to so little purpose. He had served an apprenticeship of four years with George McNeil, corner of Kent street, and after carrying on a respectable business on his own account, he died in 1851.

During his political career, Sir George Murray held office under the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. He was Lieutenant-general of the Ordnance, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and afterwards twice Master-general of the Ordnance. He had been twenty years Colonel of the gallant 42nd, when, on the death of Lord Lynedoch he was appointed to the 1st Royal regiment of foot, having, two years previously, been raised to the rank of General, and appointed Governor of Fort George. After being twice defeated for Perthshire, he attempted it no farther, but stood for Westminster in opposition to Sir De Lacy Evans, and losing his election retired from parliamentary life.

Sir George married in 1826 Louisa Paget, third daughter of the Earl of Uxbridge, and widow of Sir James Erskine of Torry. They had one daughter Georgina Augusta Anne, who married an officer in the Life-guards, and died in 1849. When this interesting young lady was ten years of age she sat to Sir Thomas Lawrence for her portrait, which portrait was afterwards exquisitely engraved by Mr. C. T. Doo, and published as " The child with flowers."

In 1842 a series of valuable papers was discovered at Woodstock, which were afterwards put into Sir George Murray's hands to arrange and edit, this office he performed in a highly creditable way, and they were afterwards published in five large volumes by Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street, under the title of the " Marlborough Despatches."

The limited body which formed the Perthshire constituency previous to the Reform bill, were proud of Sir George Murray as their member. The fine full-length portrait of him by Mr. Pickersgill, in the County Hall, was painted for them, and a line engraving of it taken for each elector. His long arduous life was spent in the public service. As a statesman he was consistent and influential. His creed did not embrace both sides of politics or it would have been no creed at all, but what he purposed he performed, and those who trusted in him were not deceived. He died in 1846, aged 74.

CHAPTER XI.

SIR WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL, BARONET.

"A little while, and manhood's prime
Hath yielded to the touch of time,
And shadowed Eden's bloom.
A little while, and none survived,
No green leaf left to tell they lived,
Or, trembling, bless their tomb."
SIR WILLIAM JONES.

THE prophetic utterances of illustrious men, although not spoken under the direct authority of divine inspiration, will be found to have proceeded from internal conviction well weighed, and to themselves strong as "proofs from holy writ." Robert Burns said, a century ago, in quiet but emphatic language, "I will be better understood and appreciated a hundred years hence." The truth of these words has become more obvious year by year, and now, when the prescribed period has transpired, we look back and deeply blame the age in which he lived, and think it stolid and indifferent; but our awakened conceptions of the great poet are not attributable to any marked improvement in men's perceptive faculties, but to the sweeping away of the pestilential sectarianism which surrounded him in his life and followed him to his grave. Perhaps he was not kindly treated, but there is not much in that; that is a secondary phase; but his countrymen put their fingers in their ears and refused his lessons, and kindness would have involved inconsistency. Five years ago, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, in answer to an assertion echoing from the crowd.

"You are not a fit and proper person to represent Perthshire in Parliament," said, in language not loud but deep, "Perhaps you will live to change your opinion." There was no misgiving in Sir William's mind as to the change, but the uncertainty of life made him predict conditionally. The individual who originated the cry that received this answer is, "perhaps" dead, but it has been uttered by thousands who are still alive, and it is a singular fact that they, one and all, have "changed their minds." There is little political capital in this, but there is ground for deep regret. Many of Sir William's political opponents state that they had a great respect for him although differing from him in politics, but during his life the statement was destitute of tangible corroboration. His death, under the shadow of the Rialto, became the watchword to a thousand tongues in his homeland, and brought ten thousand platitudes from that portion of the press which vilified him during his life. Men, in times to come, will have difficulty in accounting for the profuse encomiums bestowed by acclamation on a man who, a very few years before, stated himself that in his canvass through Perthshire he had encountered the *spittal* of Glenshee. But Sir William Stirling-Maxwell is now in his coffin, and my business is with the literary man, not with the politician.

Mr. Stirling was born at Kenmure House, near Glasgow, in 1818. His father, the head of the very ancient and powerful family of Stirling of Keir, was a partner in the firm of Stirling and Gordon, West India merchant-proprietors of Glasgow. The Stirlings, connected in a lesser or greater degree with the firm, held numerous possessions round Glasgow. Kenmure, Cawder, Glentyne, and Castlemilk, were their family residences, and when this young scion of the princely merchant house presented himself at Kenmure, John Gordon of Ekenhead, in Renfrewshire, was one of the leading partners. His town residence was in Buchanan Street, on the right hand going up, a little above the Argyle Arcade, a stately mansion surrounded by finely laid-out gardens, and a flight of steps up to the front door. On the opposite side, a little further up, were the business premises of McInroy, Parker and Co., also West India merchants; and at the lower end of the street, on the west side, those of John Campbell, Sen., and Co., proprietors of Granada.

Mr. Stirling's mother was the daughter of Sir John

Maxwell of Polloc, and sister to the talented young Whig who represented Lanarkshire in Parliament before the era of the Reform Bill. Those who remember Sir John Maxwell, with his strongly-marked features, dark complexion, and erect gait, would readily recognise in his grandson the future claimant to the estate and honours of Polloc.

At the time when the great Reform Bill was struggling through Parliament, William Stirling was a stripling, well known about Glasgow as the heir to a large fortune and great prospective influence. He was sent early to Cambridge, where he eventually obtained high honours, and on his occasional visits to Perthshire he was looked upon as a young man of much promise. It may be said of him, at this period as well as in all his after life, that he by no means held himself too cheap ; yet his entry into the world of letters was singularly modest and circumspect. The *graduate* of Cambridge did not startle the world as the "Undergraduate of Oxford" did : but as a contemporary student in the literature of art, he kept the noiseless tenor of his way until he became successively the head of three Colleges.

In their aim and end no two men of our day were more closely allied than Professor Ruskin and Sir William Stirling-Maxwell. The elevation of art, by devoted enquiry into its first principles and consummate greatness, was the avowed object of each, but their ways of proceeding were as opposite as the poles. Ruskin had his hero in Turner, Maxwell had his in Velasquez. So far the resemblance was sustained ; but while the first ran at the Academy walls, and with profound skill, and a pen that was merciless in attack and sure of fence, trampled down the efforts of one portion of England's artists in order to elevate the other, the last sought no foil : he took the student on his own merit, and, after much study and toil and travel, adopted the Spanish school, not in decided preference to the Italian or Flemish, but as sufficient for the thought and gratification of a life. In following up this fixed bent, Velasquez took hold of him, and his love of the great master led him into years of anxious research. Gold would not buy his pictures, but wherever they were to be seen, the eager steps of the devoted student were directed. Every nook and corner of the old Peninsula, from the Alhambra to the chambers of the Inquisition, and from the Escurial to the cavernous lanes of Seville,—where the master is in full strength,—

were eagerly explored. Some idea of the impulses which led the talented young Scotchman into Spain in search of art may be formed from the fact that in four of its public galleries no less than fifty-seven pictures by Titian are to be found, each in as perfect order as on the day it came from the easel, not a rub or scratch on one of them, and very little varnish! What the number may have been before the advent of Marshal Soult, I am not able to say.

After leaving Cambridge, Mr. Stirling made the tour of France and Spain. When he returned to the family seat at Keir he was acknowledged as a finished scholar and gentleman, but his progress as a connoisseur in art was little known. The following was his timid way of inaugurating it. During his sojourn in London he took fifteen drawings from his travelling repositories, and put them into the hands of Mr. W. C. Mason for engraving. These were published in crown octavo, without any letter-press except the index, and titled, "*Cosas de Espana; or, Scraps from the Portfolio of a Traveller*. London; 1847." On the back of the title-page it is stated, "Only twenty copies printed." These he presented to his friends, and the man has little regard to those endowments so charily bestowed as a rule, but so lavished on William Stirling, who would accuse me of vanity, because I am proud of being one of the twenty. The subjects illustrated are five after Murillo; one landscape after Velasquez; "Jacob's Dream," by Ribera; "Palace of the Padro," and "The Royal Palace of Madrid," "A silver shrine, and portable silver custodia;" "The Vane over the Exchange at Seville:" "Portrait of Nicolas Factor;" "The Hand," a fragment of the statue of the Virgin executed by Torrigiano at Seville, for breaking which he is said to have died in the prison of the Inquisiton; and "The holy chalice of Valencia," said to be that used at the Last Supper of our Lord.

Within a year and a half this little book was followed by the author's great work, *Annals of the Artists of Spain*, in three large volumes. The public mind was at once turned to it, and it became the text-book of every man interested in the higher schools of Art. In London, no collector's gallery, no dealer's room, was considered complete in every department unless a copy of Stirling on Spanish Art lay open on its table. To great technical skill the author added a vivid perception of what was beautiful in form and colour, and tender in expression, besides confirming the opinion expressed ten years before by Sir David Wilkie, that the English school of portrait-painting, as illustrated by Reynolds and Raeburn, was, intuitively or otherwise, founded on Velasquez. This feeling became very general, and imparted a great amount of friendly interest to all that Mr. Stirling wrote about the great master.

If Mr. Stirling's taste was severely refined, he made it no stumbling-block in the way of others. Keir House, with all its elaborate adornments, was little noised to the world; but any one approaching even so near as the burying-ground, could not fail to see the discriminating judgment that pervaded all. He cherished the cross, not only as the symbol of the Christian faith, but as the emblem of all Christian virtues, and has adopted it in many of its varied forms for monumental purposes. He had, in common with every man of taste, a great dislike to the everlasting granite obelisks that grow up like fungi in every churchyard. He held that it could only be tolerated in a very elevated form, because being originally an Egyptian gatepost, when diminished in size it suggested nothing else.

In 1855 a lengthened correspondence arose between Sir William and myself respecting the monument erected at Little Tullybeltane to the memory of Robert Nicoll, the poet. He opposed the obelisk, and suggested a cross in the village; but the committee's funds were not sufficient fo any elaborate work, and they judged that the rustic obelisk of 55 feet in height would best meet the feelings of the numerous subscribers. For myself, I thought at the time, and have not yet changed my mind, that a cross, such as those in Lecropt Churchyard, would be somewhat out of place in the village of Bankfoot, and for a large cross we had not means. The correspondence referred to I have embodied in my memoirs of Robert Nicoll, but the first letter is so characteristic of the simple-hearted, bountiful man of taste, that I think it will be appropriately inserted here:—

Keir, Dunblane, Nov. 2nd, 1855.

DEAR SIR,—When last in Perth, I called on you to ask how the Nicoll Monument Fund was getting on. I have been hoping for some ten days past for another opportunity of calling, but am now going from home, in another direction, for some weeks. Will you, therefore, be so good as to put my name down in the list for ten pounds. The admiration I entertain for Nicoll's sweet and gentle vein of verse has lately been enhanced by reading the touching story of his brief career. —Believe me faithfully yours, WILLIAM STIRLING.

Mr. Drummond, Perth.

Sir William's book on Velasquez and his works was at this time passing through the press, and he had gone to London on business connected with it. Three years previously he had published the *Cloister Life of Charles the Fifth*, one of the most popular of his works. The latter book was somewhat sharply criticised at first, but it speedily became as authoritative as his other productions. Two additional circumstances greatly influenced the young scholar in adopting Spain as the theatre of his researches. First, his devoted love of art; and, second, the fact that, from the reign of Charles the Fifth down to the marauding inroads of Napoleon the First, no country of modern Europe so successfully collected and hoarded the refined productions of the human head and hands as Spain. When this mine of rich treasures was laid open by the accident of intestine war, and a few years of "gentle peace returning," men of letters from every corner of the world turned their steps to Spain. William Beckford gratified his constructive feelings, and took the hint, for his famous *Hall of Eblis*, by studying her Moorish interiors, and illustrated her Popish traditions by his "Visit to the monasteries of the Alcobaça and Bathala." John Gibson Lockhart sang her ballads and her bull-fights; Tom Moore revelled in descriptions of her pleasure-loving sons and swarthy, fire-eyed daughters; Lord Byron drew imagery from her furze-covered mountains and cities two thousand feet above the sea, her grand historical associations, and loose morality; Washington Irving luxuriated in descriptions of her palaces, her gorgeous architectural remains, and scientific achievements; David Wilkie was led by the vast superiority of her school of Art to change his practice, and leave the domestic walk in which he had no rival for one that required the efforts of an undivided life,—John Barrow interested the world by his inquiries into her gipsy life, her Bibliolatry, and the endless diversity of her people,—and William Stirling blended together the leading characteristics of the entire classic period. The cloister life of the petulant monarch,—his carrying Titian from Venice to Madrid, and thereby giving an impulse to the practice of art, which for two centuries progressed through Velasquez, Spagnoletto, and Murillo, elevating a nation that was otherwise sunk in idleness and squalor; these are the matters to which this accomplished scholar devoted his literary life.

The parallel which I have already drawn between

Professor Ruskin and Sir William Stirling-Maxwell is further developed in their method of publication. Each had riches at command, and confidence in what they had written, and their books were sent out to the world with lordly dignity,—no flattering announcements, no attractive synopses. *The Stones of Venice* and *The Artists of Spain*, are books that you are not asked to buy, but books that you must try to get; and after you have found them, the original price may form a very remote element of the acquiring transactions. These parallelisms did not give way, but terminated sadly. Ruskin wrote of Venice as the embodied first principle of architecture, and Stirling-Maxwell died within its walls.

CHAPTER XII.

SIR WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL, BARONET—*continued.*

"Full of wise saws and modern instances."—SHAKESPEARE

THERE is a fashion or periodical swerving—to right or left, as may be determined—in religion, in dress, and in amusements. Three of the first have occurred in Scotland during the present century, under the title of Periods of Awakening, or "Revivals." In the second, the momentary caprice of one man has led to the ruin of thousands. George the Fourth appeared at a ball given by the Duchess of Gordon with his shoes tied with silk ribbons, and the shoe-buckle trade collapsed forthwith. Amusements are ever changing, but being a necessity of our nature, they are never abandoned. For ten years following 1818 dancing parties were tabooed by the middle classes of the West of Scotland, and, unfortunately hard drinking came to fill up the hiatus. After supper the toddy-bowl—now broken—was brought forward, and each guest had his or her glass charged with punch, brewed with questionable regard to the balance of power, handed round from the chair. Any full-grown masculine guest who was found disposing of any portion of his drink in an illegitimate way was peremptorily called upon by the chair to drink "Kelty," or another glass. Happily an affair occurred, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, which did not only gratify the laughter-loving portion of the community, but came to the relief of this undesirable state of matters.

In addition to the songs and stories that intervened between the flowings of punch, a round of Scottish proverbs was introduced, which generally passed a very enjoyable half-hour, the fun arising partly from the writhings of the uninitiated and partly from the smart rejoinders of those who had stock in hand, and a ready judgment to turn it to account. However wise these apothegms may be, it cannot reasonably be wondered at, that, coming as they do, from a thousand lips in a thousand different localities, they should frequently meet in conflict. At these games of proverbs, the best player was he or she who could meet his or her immediate predecessor's wisdom by a direct corroborative or negative. Thus A., who is seated next a marriageable widow—"Ne'er marry a widow unless her first husband was hanged." B. (the widow) "Beggars should na' be choosers." C. "The height of folly is supping sowens wi' an elsyn." D. "No! It's kissing an auld wife through a gaupy-riddle." E. (an unmarried lady) "Auld maids' bairns are aye weel bred." F. (a spinster) "We can shape their wylie coat, but canna' shape their weird."

Though from his earliest days remarkably studious and grave, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell had a keen relish for a smart saying, an epigram, or a proverb; and being born and bred in the midst of this western revival, he naturally imbibed a full share of what he himself calls "These small crystallizations of thought and experience." Besides, his frequent visits to Spain—a country famous for its proverbial wisdom—tended to confirm this early taste, and he became an enthusiastic collector. A proverb is generally a fact with a sequence, or trite parallel—a sort of syllogism, with premisses and an inference or conclusion. A genuine proverb, which I have never heard out of Perthshire, expresses man's destiny in very few words—"We are born to bear like the bowed girdle." Sir William, in his lecture on "The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland," addressed to the School of Art at Stirling in 1855, takes for the proverb a wider basis.

For example, he tells us that the negative in three syllables, "No MISTAKE," so common of late years, arose thus.—Mr. Huskisson, who was a member of the Duke of Wellington's Government, in a pet, sent in his resignation, and afterwards inquired if there was not a mistake in his Grace accepting it. The Duke replied by letter, "No mistake."

There were two ways in which Scottish proverbs could be made the subject of an entertainment. They could be so arranged that the simple reading of them, without note or comment, would form an amusing mélange of truth, hatred, and contradiction, of conciliatory grace, and insolent personality. But Sir William adopted the scheme best fitted to a man of letters, and span a rope of sand, with an element of adhesion, sparkling, consecutive, and full of knowledge of the world.

The collection of books on proverbs made by Sir William between his eighteenth and twenty-seventh years, and remaining at Keir, amounts to sixty volumes, and he tells us that his surprise at his own success was changed into dismay when the extent of the field he had entered upon was laid open to him by the publication of M. Duplessis' work, which states that there exist on the subject of proverbs no less than 893 separate works or 2000 volumes.

The affair which I have mentioned as coming to the relief of the punch-drinkers of the West was well known to Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, but in 1856 the valorous hero had relations living in the immediate neighbourhood of Polloc, and the lecturing M.P. had as great a desire to avoid trenching upon his neighbour's feelings as upon his estate. The circumstances were shortly these.

In 1819, an eccentric middle-aged gentleman resided on his paternal estate in the parish of Govan, a few miles from Glasgow. He had been well educated in his youth, and held a respectable position, but latterly two whims had taken hold of him, and ripened into habits. These were a craving for punch and a love of Scotch proverbs. However much he indulged in the former, he never forgot the latter; and, writing them down on whatever came in his way, he had them eventually transferred to his *magnum opus*. In this way every card, letter, or scrap of paper about his person was literally covered with wise saws and proverbial rhymes. On one occasion he was asked to dinner at a friend's house, where he was seated near a stranger in military uniform. Somehow or other, after imbibing a fair portion of wine and rum-punch, the two fell into a dispute, which ended in a furious quarrel. High words and bitter recriminations passed between them. The laird, although he did not wear a red coat, did not relish the idea of being considered "no soldier," and thinking himself the aggrieved party, he pulled forth his card, and tendered it to the son of Mars, which broke up the party, and naturally caused deep consternation and offence. Next morning the belligerents, with unappeased wrath, rose to go in search of friends. He of the army took out the foe's card in order to find his address. He looked first at one side, then at the other; but name or place of residence could be found on neither. Instead thereof, there was written in legible characters, "*Naething should be done in a hurry but catching fleas.*" The effect of this on the gallant respondent was irresistible. Bursting with laughter, he went to a mutual friend, and, after holding deliberate counsel, they thought it would be best to enclose the laird's card and send it to him without remark, presuming that the absurdity of his position would soften his resentment, or at least stay his peremptory purpose, in terms of the proverb itself. But their cautious mode of procedure did not quite answer the desired purpose; for before they separated the laird's answer came, in the shape of another card, enclosed without remark, on which was written in stout characters, "*Naething's to be got by delay but dirt and lang nails.*" Thus, what might otherwise have been a serious matter, in those days of duels, was eventually quashed, and checkmating by proverbs became more popular than slaying by powder.

I come now to what was a striking feature in Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's character, and the contemplation of it greatly deepens my regret at his comparatively early death. His business habits were of the very highest order—staid, prompt, and considerate. Some raw politicians are intolerant to an opposing friend, and in frenzied moments cannot hear his name even mentioned. Not so the late Member for Perthshire. Politics never lost him a friend, feeling as he did that the closest attachment to his own party did not necessitate violence towards an opponent who was otherwise a friend. I cannot better illustrate the sedate, unostentatious spirit of the man than by inserting here a correspondence which I had with him twenty years ago:—

Perth, 24th March, 1858.

Wm. Stirling, Esq., M.P.

DEAR SIR,—The *Constitutional* newspaper is at present in the market, and I am afraid, unless the county people bestir themselves, Perthshire will be left without a Conservative newspaper, which would be a pity, after the trouble and expense it cost to start it twenty-three years ago. Latterly it has been conducted without heart, the proprietors being Whigs and the editor a Radical. In my opinion the amount of abnegation necessary to conduct a paper under these circumstances does not belong to the party, Liberal as they call themselves. The enclosed will show you the present state of the affair.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

P. R. DRUMMOND.

128, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, W.,
27th March, 1858.

DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your letter of the 24th instant, and return the enclosure. I quite agree with you that the extinction of a Conservative organ in the county of Perth, is a thing to be regretted. But I cannot say that the *Constitutional* has lately been conducted with such energy or skill as to give it any chance of succeeding as a mercantile speculation; and if a newspaper fails commercially it can hope for little political success. It is valuable as a political organ only when it has obtained that degree of general support which makes it a good property.

I have already had some correspondence with Sir John Richardson on the subject, and if the gentlemen near Perth see any chance of obtaining the aid of a practical man who will take up the paper, and work it on his own behalf on Conservative principles, I shall give it every reasonable encouragement. But that any company of gentlemen should buy the concern, and engage an editor to conduct it without personal and pecuniary interest of his own in the matter, would in my opinion merely be throwing away money. I cannot but think that there is ample room for a Conservative paper, and as people are gradually recovering, or at least for the moment are less wedded to party, I do not see that the politics of a paper would ever stand in its way, could it show itself in other essentials superior to its rivals.

I do not know what length of time Mr. MacLeish's letter gives us, but sometime next week I hope to be in Scotland and to see some of my friends. Meanwhile I am much obliged to you for writing, and remain, yours very truly,

WM. STIRLING.

Mr. P. R. Drummond, Perth.

A few weeks after the date of this letter, the paper was sold by public roup. The Conservative party entered no appearance, and the *Constitutional* began its self-existence.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIR WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL, BARONET—*continued.*

> "A man so varied that he seemed to be,
> Not one but all mankind's epitome."
> JOHN DRYDEN.

THE position so long held by Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, as Knight of the Shire, tended to divert public attention from the many and varied occupations of his life. His love of letters was no doubt born with him; but the study and cultivation necessary to lead to such high results must have been incessant and wearing. He had gathered around him such an assemblage of *vertu*, such choice specimens of man's achievements in literature and art, so many evidences of an ardent and devoted spirit, in letters, in fellowship, and in true religion, as could not fail in carrying his name forward to unborn generations. Every angle and corner of Keir savours of the man of taste; every old domestic tells the tale of his simple though gifted nature; every tenant speaks of his unostentatious liberality; and every grave bears a motto, remarkable as evidence of a susceptible and humane heart. Amidst my inquiries and conversations respecting the men whose names head these pages, I have heard many blighting remarks, some of them, I thought, little deserved; but from no man, or class of men, Conservative or Liberal, Churchman or Dissenter, have I heard one depreciatory word of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell; and the nearer I go to his own immediate circle, the more am I told of his estimable qualities, as well of heart as of head and hands. Nothing so readily awakens in us a healthful regard for our fellow men as meeting in the outer world such unqualified approval of conduct and character as have been tendered to me of this excellent man. A year of such a living memory is worth a lifetime of labour.

The mansion house of Keir stands on the western ridge of the Ochils, as it descends into the Carse of Lecropt. The large home park has a fine southern exposure, and the entrances from the great northern turnpike have long been the admiration of the passing stranger. The demesne, protected by apparently interminable stone walls, flanks the west side of the road; and on the east the finely wooded park of Mr. Stirling, of Kippendavie, with its dashing Allan Water, carries the picturesque scene over a wide space of country. The home park of Keir is laid out with much taste and lavish expense; and, although the mansion is externally somewhat plain, it has from time to time been internally improved and elaborated to such an extent that the visitor is dazzled on first entering it. Galleries, halls, rooms, lobbies, corridors, and stair-cases, from basement to garret, are filled to excess with pictures, statuettes, book cabinets, and rich marquetry furniture of every possible description. No chair or table, no beam or lintel, but is covered with mottoes and wise sayings carved in high relief, the entire suite of gorgeous apartments being exquisitely furnished in Spanish cedar and satinwood. Twelve months would not afford the *virtuoso* sufficient leisure to examine this extraordinary collection of art treasures. Murillo, Velasquez, Salvator, and Ribera adorn one angle; Reynolds, Lawrence, Raeburn and Etty another; while Graham Gilbert, Macnee and Herdman fill appropriate places.

The collection of old engravings is extensive and interesting. In the lower corridor is hung a group of portraits of Prince Charles Stuart, some of them of great rarity, the well-known one by Jean Georgius Wille being there in the proof state. Immediately under this group is an exquisite portrait of the young Duchess of Albany, the daughter borne to Prince Charles by Clementina Walkinshaw. This collection, together with some apparently trivial circumstances has tended to illustrate more forcibly to my mind the character of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell than a thousand combinations of external life. Engraved art had in itself many charms for him; but, on examining his collection, it will be found that personal feeling joined issue with profound skill in the selection of every item. Wherever there was found a touching story or an ill-starred life in union with high art, a place was ready for it on the walls of Keir. Charles the First, Prince Charlie, Clementina Walkinshaw, the beautiful Elizabeth Gunning, mother of four Scottish dukes, Mary Stuart, Flora Macdonald, Charlotte Corday, Robert Burns, and Robert Nicoll are all enshrined in these consecrated apartments.

In 1745 a young man of the name of Robert Strange was practising his art as an engraver in Edinburgh. He had strong Jacobite proclivities, but kept them under restraint until he fell in love with Miss Lumisden, a young lady from Fife, who would not listen to his addresses unless he went into active rebellion. To this he consented, and joined in the unfortunate campaign. When quieter times ensued, he ventured back to Edinburgh, and engaged himself on a portrait of Prince Charles. When completed this portrait became exceedingly popular. It is a half-length, in an oval frame on a stone pedestal. Originally the following words were printed on the pedestal: "Everso missus succurrere secto;" but the attention of the Government was drawn to them, and orders issued for their suppression. Strange had the inscription removed, yet the likeness was so perfect that it became still more popular; but copies in this state are now little known. Strange lived some time with Dr. Drummond, of the Logiealmond family, and engraved during his stay a book-plate and crest for his host. These, together with the proscribed portrait and one of Hamilton of Bangour—also by Strange and proscribed—were presented to me shortly before his death, by the late George Drummond Steuart of Braco. Sir William Maxwell's collection of Strange's engravings is very nearly complete, but he seems to have failed in procuring those named above.

Amongst the pictures, ancient and modern, which form this collection, a very fine cabinet Spagnoletto, and a highly important Salvator form prominent features. In the library is a bust of "The Hon. Mrs. Norton as Joan of Arc," by William Etty, a marvellous piece of colour. Two pictures in the drawing-room, "The Unbelieving Thomas," and another, look very like Michael Angelo; but they are hung so very high that it is difficult to hazard an opinion. Sir William, in order to fortify his judgment, in writing of Spanish art, obtained copies of some leading pictures by Murillo, Velasquez, Spagnoletto and others, and these are hung at Keir House. To him they illustrated a theory, and taken in conjunction with the books placed under them, form a noble testimony to all comers that superiority will hold its way, and although ages of indifference may elapse, some kindred spirit in some distant region will arise, and with a master's hand dissipate doubts and establish beyond all controversy, and in the face of all misgiving, a nation's claim to the high position of having schooled the world.

Yet these copies are somewhat confounding to visitors, and it is difficult, unless taken in the way I have indicated, to reconcile their presence with Sir William's severe taste.

The old burying-ground of Lecropt lies within the home park of Keir, and as it could not be at once removed, Sir William had, by planting it with yews and other evergreen trees, rendered it ornamental and inviting rather than repulsive. Two walks, running from east to west, and from north to south, cross in the centre, and at the end of each arm an ornamental stone cross, elaborately carved, has been erected. On a brass plate fixed on the base of the north cross, the following elegiac lines, composed by Sir William to the memory of his sister, Hannah Ann Stirling, have been engraved. Her body lies in the family vault below Lecropt Church.

Sister, these woods have seen ten summers fade
Since thy dear dust in yonder church was laid.
A few more winters and this heart, the shrine
Of thy fair memory, shall be cold as thine.
Yet may some stranger, lingering in these ways,
Bestow a tear on grief of other days:
For if he, too, have wept o'er grace and youth,
Goodness and wisdom, faith, and love, and truth,
Untinged with worldly guile or selfish strain,
And ne'er hath looked upon thy like again,
Then, imaged in his sorrow, he may see
All that I loved, and lost, and mourn in thee.

Portraits of this amiable lady and Sir William, by John Graham, hang at Keir; that of Sir William has never been a favourite with the family, but I think this is a great mistake. It is not only a highly characteristic likeness of him when he was a young man, but has that peculiarly soft expression which gave way in his latter years to a more sombre and careworn appearance.

Much as Sir William mixed with society, and much as he travelled amongst nations and tongues, his inner life seems to have undergone no change; go where he would, he was still the Christian and the unbending gentleman. Mourning over the death of a young friend, the following remarkable lines came from his pen:—

A sad, short, common story ours,
Of vanished hopes and blighted flowers,
But faith athwart the clouded sky
Can mark the dayspring from on high,
Can hear the voice that grief assuages
And whispers peace through all the ages,
Can prompt the mother's litany:
"Suffer him, Lord, to come to Thee!"

Nothing weakened in him the simple belief in a retributive world. All his forward steps in life had a tendency upwards. When his amiable partner in life was stretched upon her final couch, he shut the apartment, and with his own hand wrote and placed upon the door an appropriate quotation from Scripture, which the venerating domestics have never ventured to take down. The family burial vault at Lecropt was the object of his constant care and solicitude; memorial busts, and everything that tended to perpetuate the recollection of the esteemed and beloved dead, are placed under that all-absorbing roof.

In his "Songs of the Holy Land" is a paraphrase of a portion of the 22nd chapter of Jeremiah, which foreshadows his own fate with remarkable precision: "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; *but* weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."—

Oh waste not thy woe on the dead, nor bemoan him
Who finds with his fathers the grave of his rest;
Sweet slumber is his, who at nightfall hath thrown him
Near bosoms that waking did love him the best.

Sir William Stirling-Maxwell was married in 1865 to the Lady Anna Maria Leslie Melville, second daughter of John, eleventh Earl of Leven and Melville. This amiable and much-esteemed lady bore him two sons,—Sir John, the present baronet, and Archibald, a younger brother. They enjoyed ten years of happy married life; but a sad accident befel Lady Anna in 1876, which eventually led to her lamented death in her fiftieth year.

Sir William afterwards married Caroline, daughter of Thomas Sheridan and widow of the Hon. George Chapple Norton, of the Grantley family. This beautiful and accomplished lady was sister to Lady Dufferin and Lady Seymour. The former composed the highly popular ballad, "Terence's farewell to Kathleen"; and I remember the latter as "Queen of Beauty" at the famous Eglinton tournament. Mrs. Norton, as a fashionable novelist, contested the palm, in 1835-40, with Mrs. Charles Gore, Lady Scott, Lady Charlotte Bury, and Lady Lytton Bulwer. Her most popular novels were "The Wife and Woman's Reward," and "Stuart of Dunleath." My impression is that she carried the three hundred pound prize for the best acting Drama, against all the talent of England, but I have not been able to satisfy myself of the truth of this impression. Sir William married this accomplished woman in advanced life, and within a very short period her remains were placed in the family vault under Lecropt Church.

The seats of learning in his native country were not slow in recognising the talents of this eminent Scotsman. In 1843 he graduated as M.A. of Cambridge University; in 1861 he was elected LL.D. of Edinburgh; in 1863, LL.D. of St. Andrew's; in 1873, LL.D. of Glasgow. He held the high rank of a Knight of the Thistle, and he was from time to time appointed to many high civil offices, and performed the duties of these offices with acceptance to all the parties interested.

Before leaving Keir for Italy in 1878 Sir William made final corrections on his important volume, "Antwerp Delivered," and left it for publication in the hands of Mr. Douglas, of Edinburgh, by whom it has been issued. This gorgeous book, together with the galaxy of well-known art reproductions by the Messrs. Waterston, form an apposite testimony of that unceasing industry and munificent taste which characterised every day of his life. He had gone to Venice, in search, it was understood, of material for his last work, "Solyman the Magnificent," one part of which had been printed for him at Florence; and being always somewhat indifferent to personal comforts, he caught cold, and before his friends could be summoned to his bedside, his spirit had winged its way to that unseen world about which he had cherished so many happy anticipations.

In drawing up these reminiscences of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, the difficulty has been to modulate them in a sufficiently high key to meet the sympathies of those who knew him, without violating the preconceived fancies of those who were not so fortunate. My desire has been to represent him as a writer whose style was clear, manly, and unaffected; as a scholar whose curriculum ended only with his life; as an art critic and man of taste, singularly refined; as a Conservative politician, unswerving but conciliatory; as a business man, prompt, energetic, and straightforward; and as a citizen of the world, filling a larger space than any Scotchman of his day.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALEXANDER HEPBURN MURRAY BELSHES AND JOHN MURRAY BELSHES,

BOTH OF INVERMAY.

"Press thou not upon him, lest thou be put back,
Stand not far off, lest thou be forgotten."
ECCLESIASTICUS.

On a piece of table land, where the picturesque little river May debouches into the valley of the Earn, stands the mansion of Invermay. From the era of David Mallet down to the earlier years of the present century, the name was spelt Endermay. But it is now, very properly, changed to Invermay. The surroundings, though hemmed in by the rising Ochils, are highly pictorial, and the policy is laid out with great taste. Wood, waterfall, and glade arise in combination at every turning. The "auld laird" had a strong sense of the cosey in nature, and he was not content with the embowerings of wood that his careful hand had raised round his secluded home, but at great cost he built a stone wall, nine feet high, round the home park and a portion of the estate. In the early years of the century, "Endermay's Dyke" was one of the seven wonders of Strathearn, and the fine entrance gate was a landmark for the pedestrians of those days, and a place of assignation between the lads of the west and the lasses of the east. But that gate and dyke entailed a heavy burden on the estate, and if the public thought that they formed together one of the seven wonders of Strathearn, the laird had occasion to think that they, and the law of entail, formed three out of the "seven miseries of human life." But if the debt was greater than the estate could well bear, the family pride eked out the deficiency, and in money matters the Belshes family, old and young, were singularly honourable.

There is a class of men who have made the table the business of their lives—their prime study the manipulation of the knife and fork. To eat, drink, carve, and divide ;—"to snip and nip and cut, and slish and slash ;" to make long flattering speeches and soft genuflexions the Alpha and Omega of their sorry existence. There is another, and much more numerous class, who eschew all such public exhibitions, and who keep the noiseless tenor of their way, eating their own bread and drinking their own beer, at their own table. But if, in a moment of pride, or in obedience to the common exigencies of life, it falls to the lot of any such man to preside at a public table, he is apt to make a very sorry figure, especially if he attempts to do it grandly. A speech studied and committed to memory often evaporates at the first turn of the screw, leaving the unfortunate quondam orator, like Sam Weller's whisky bottle, with nothing in him "but the cork and the smell." The world is full of unspoken speeches. Any man who is desirous of making a figure as an after-dinner speaker, should begin early in life and bronze well; but he should first study, if it is worth the sacrifice.

Mr. A. H. M. Belshes was long an officer in the Perthshire Volunteers, and at the breaking up of the corps they resolved to give him a testimonial of their gratitude for his kind exertions in keeping the body together. A silver cup was accordingly provided, and a dinner on a large scale arranged for. A decent subaltern agreed to take the chair, and present the cup, but it was alleged that he over-studied his subject and came to the table a little too highly trained. The routine toasts were got over very well, but when the toast of the evening came on, the speech of the unfortunate chairman took French leave, and when he stood up his eyes began to swim. The company became enveloped in mist. Everything disappeared except the silver gift, which stood firmly before him, like a lighthouse on a desert island. After three minutes of agonizing parturition, he seized it convulsively and turning to Mr. Belshes, gasped out, "This is the cup !"—and sat down. The company were paralysed with shame, none more so than the worthy guest himself. He rose to reply, but there was nothing to reply to, so taking the gift in his hand, he said despairingly, "Is that the cup ?" and sat down.

The recent act on land tenure which a Liberal writer thinks a step towards "agricultural babyism" is only the beginning of a series of remedial measures, necessary for preventing the recurrence of such a circumstance as the following, which occurred on the estate of Invermay forty years ago. A highly respectable tenant had entered on a new lease of nineteen years. During the first four years he had laid out a great deal of money, draining, liming, and otherwise improving the farm; but during the fifth year he took ill and died. The eldest son being then a youth and incapable of managing the farm, the family, after much deliberation, resolved to abandon the lease, and followed up their resolution by sending the foreman with a letter to the proprietor accompanied by their copy of the lease. Meantime two spirited young neighbours, whose conduct on the occasion did them infinite honour, agreed between themselves to take the management of the farm for behoof of the family, until such time as the eldest son had got his education and some experience, and on the same day that the foreman was despatched with the letter of demission, they were on their way to the farm house to announce their friendly intentions. Their business was soon communicated, and a fresh grief and bitter regret filled the hearts of the bereaved widow and children. But their friends were equal to the emergency, and with instant despatch they were again in the saddle and straining off to Invermay. When they galloped up to the front door, the foreman came out, after having deposited his missives. "Here is a dilemma, but we have gone far, and must go through with it."

They were ushered into the presence of the laird, who sat with the letter and lease before him. They both felt the delicacy of stating that they had ridden hard to catch the messenger, who had just left. But the leading one thought it best to tell the whole tale, which he did thus:—"We had made up our minds to assist the widow and family in running out the lease, which has just been surrendered to you, but when we came to the house, it was away. If we had succeeded in intercepting the messenger, no explanation would have been necessary; as it is, we put ourselves in your hands." Mr. Belshes replied, "You have designed well, and acted with manly spirit. I shall return the lease to the family, as giving it to you would look like a sublet; and I shall do everything in my power to encourage you in your generous undertaking. It is better that the lease has reached me, as you could not have gone on very well without my concurrence."

The money invested here was two thousand pounds; and, as the law stands, that money would have been paid over to Mr. Belshes; but, gentleman as he was, he refused it. But suppose that he had not, would it be "babyism" to demand an enactment, investing that family's interest in the lease, with permanence as inviolable as that with which their money was invested in the land? It is a manifest injustice to encourage the laying out of money by a leaseholder, and, on an emergency such as I have named, to deny his heirs the right of sub-letting. The proprietor ought to have the right of pre-emption, but nothing more. He has no more title, in equity, to the money so laid out, than he has to what is in the tenant's strong box; and if it resolves itself into a rise of rent, every penny of that rise belongs to the tenant's representatives until the currency of the lease is exhausted. If Mr. Belshes had acted up to the terms of the repudiated lease, he would have said, "Your friend had no right to die till his son was of age:" and to make a lease that no honest man can act upon is the poisoned gruel that drives the farmer into the nursery.

During the earlier years of the century people had to exercise great patience in awaiting the arrival of news, however important they might be. The result of the great fight at Waterloo was not known in Strathearn until a whole week had transpired. It was well known that Wellington and Napoleon were getting ominously contiguous, and that something decisive of the fate of Great Britain and France was about to happen. If the news came slowly, they were not allowed to come quietly, for each mail guard and rural letter carrier was armed with a tin trumpet, two feet long, through which he heralded, with terrific snorts, the fact that he was on his way. Mr. A. H. M. Belshes was in the habit, throughout his whole life, of prowling about his grounds, and if any trespasser came in his way, he did not scruple to read him a lecture on the law of *meum* and *tuum*. On the Sunday after Waterloo he was taking a quiet morning turn round the outside of his grounds, when the note of the coming postman came swelling along the breeze. Mr. Belshes venerated the institutions of his country, and took a deep interest in its prosperity: but he considered this a decided *casus belli;* and, intercepting the noisy functionary, he said authoritatively, "What are you blowing about?—disturbing people on Sunday morning with your abominable noise! Go along quietly." The small official, although backed by all the authority of St. Martin's-le-Grand, rather quailed before the lofty *proprietario* of

Invermay, but looking up to him deprecatively, he said, "Wellington has beaten the Frenchmen at Waterloo, and Bonapartey is taken prisoner." Belshes stuck his hand frantically into his pocket, and pulling out half-a-crown, he threw it at the momentous herald, exclaiming at the top of his voice, "Blow away, you young devil."

On another occasion, he was walking about in one of those moods in which it was by no means desirable to meet him, but at this time he encountered a soldier, and did not come off quite so well as his great friend the Duke. The soldier when passing the east gate, observed a young oak that he thought would make a good walking stick; so, without scruple, he laid down his musket against the dyke, and going into the wood, cut down the tree. While he was quietly lopping the branches from his prize, the laird came along the road. He saw at once the daringly impudent and really wicked step that the fellow had taken, and his passion, of course, rose to the occasion. No remedy to the evil deed occurred to him; indeed there was none. But the irate laird seized the gun, and with an oath said, "Take back that tree and lay it down where you got it, or I will blow your brains out." The soldier obeyed doggedly, and after a round of the linguistic guns, he reluctantly gave the soldier his musket. No sooner had the man of war got possession of it, than he presented it at the laird, saying with the same oath, "If you do not put that stick into my hands as a gift, I will blow *your* brains out." The laird made a virtue of necessity, and surrendered it.

Colonel John M. Belshes was the younger brother, and succeeded to the estate. He was a polite and very kind-hearted man, but proud to overbearance. For thirty years, as regularly as Christmas came round, he called for me, cordially tendering the compliments of the season; but, after an altercation, which will be narrated in the sequel, he failed to appear as usual at the conclusion of the Episcopal service, which annoyed me; and, like the blood of Cæsar, I "rushed out of doors to be resolved." At the George Inn door I met the Colonel, apparently indifferent to my passing or stopping; but when I went up and grasped his hand, he opened up with his accustomed flush of good manners and began to make some explanation. I whispered to him, "For God's sake, Colonel, let us have no more about it." We walked together to my place, and the interview ended by his asking me to join Sir David Ross in spending a day at Invermay. It has been a matter of regret to me, as it was to the gentleman I have mentioned, that that visit never took place.

Though my first meeting with Colonel Belshes was calculated to prejudice me against him, a few years of his lofty urbanity enabled me to understand the man. The few characteristic circumstances which I have to narrate may be thought to represent him unfairly, but they are absolutely true. Those who knew him will recognise his manner of proceeding; and those who read this and did not know him, will be shown a gentlemanly, proud, irritable soldier, who cultivated a strict sense of the deference due to rank and influence, and was as thoroughly versed in all its nice intricacies as either Brummel or Nash.

The tenants on the estate were generally comfortable and on good terms with the laird; but if anything crossed the irascible old gentleman at the mansion-house, terror struck home to the conscious offender. On one occasion a member of that amiable and eminently truthful corporation facetiously named "game-keepers," called at Invermay House and lodged information, that he had caught one of the tenants cutting wood near the fence of his farm. Colonel Belshes' temper rose to fever heat, and he rushed to the combat. The delinquent was sent for, and forthwith came into the presence. This tenant was a clever, staid, young man, well-to-do, and by no means to be trodden on. If Colonel Belshes had calmly inquired into the matter and learned from the tenant the precise circumstances, he was the last man in the world to act as he did; but cutting down his wood surreptitiously, even by a tenant, was treason in the camp, and the guns were opened. No man can scold with dignity, a *flytin'* Colonel is an incongruous spectacle; yet this gallant officer condescended to scold his tenant, thereby committing an injustice, if he really intended to inflict the penalty he had arranged for. After the first paroxysm had somewhat abated the Colonel pointed to a letter lying open on the table, and said teethily, "There, sir! I will thank you to sign that letter of demission, otherwise I will be forced to adopt stronger measures against you." The hitherto speechless tenant took up the letter, and having read it, said quietly, "If this is all, I shall sign it without hesitation. Land is no great object to any man just now. For myself, I would rather not hold it under a gentleman who takes the unchallenged word of his gamekeeper against his tenant." After subscribing the missive, he pitched it rather indignantly over the table towards the Colonel, and making his bow, left. As the tenant rose the landlord fell, and the gamekeeper, who had been waiting outside, was ordered into the room.

Q.—"Did you see this man cutting wood in the preserves?"

Ans.—"Yes, sir."

Q.—"At what place?"

Ans.—At the march of his high park?"

Q.—What kind of tree was it?"

Ans.—"Birch, sir."

Q.—"Was it growing inside the fence?"

Ans.—"Yes, sir."

Q.—"Did he go over the fence to cut it?"

Ans.—"No, sir."

Q.—"How did he do it?"

Ans.—"He cut off a branch that was hanging over the fence."

Q.—"What did he do with it?"

Ans.—"He stuck it into a gap of the fence."

The Colonel, simmering—"Then he lopped a branch off a birch tree that was hanging over his land, and with it mended the fence to prevent his cattle getting into my plantation?"

Ans.—"Yes, sir."

Q.—"And you call that, cutting wood in my preserves?"

Ans.—"Yes, sir; I thought it was."

Colonel Belshes, bursting with indignation, "Leave the room, sir; and if you are not off this estate within two hours, I shall send my groom to horsewhip you."

The tenant had scarcely time to reach his own house, when a messenger came to request his return. His first impulse was to give the Colonel a night to cool; but on reconsideration he felt that, as he did not desire reprisal, he had better go at once. The Colonel received him in a way of which he was highly capable, and frankly owned himself the victim of abused confidence. He handed the tenant back his letter, and that gentleman with great good taste took it at once, merely remarking, "I felt that I had no right to interfere with your wood, Colonel; but I did not think I exceeded the latitude which any proprietor would give to his tenant, more especially as the damage from the broken fence was to arise to the proprietor himself."

The next *fracas* with a tenant did not terminate quite so happily. I know of no instance of keener *viva voce* retribution. The annals of Parliament do not contain a severer linguistic *coup de grace* than was on this occasion dealt to the Laird of Invermay, and in quiet moments it must have afforded him many a merry laugh. It would appear that when Colonel Belshes entered on possession, his panacea for all mishaps with the occupiers of his lands, was to despatch the transgressor, forgetting entirely that the leaseholder's right to the land was, *pro tempore*, as inalienable as that of the freeholder, so long as he did not infringe the written terms of his lease. But a fence difficulty, or lopping a branch of a tree, was in moments of irritation, sufficient, he thought, to justify him in meditating resumption. One grey morning, when he drew aside his window curtains, his eye fell on half-a-dozen strange sheep grazing complacently on the lawn before the house. They were ordered to be pounded, and the owner, whoever he was, to appear forthwith in the sweating-room. This transgressor did not show the same deference as the former one, but spoke freely about certain fences in palliation of his offence. This exasperated his superior, and stamping the floor with his foot, he said with emphatic bitterness, "You are a pest to this neighbourhood, sir, with your sheep and fences, *You are too long here.*"

The tenant thought this severe from a gentleman so very recently come into possession himself, but he went away with his sheep, sulking as he went, "nursing his wrath to keep it warm." The incubation was short; for, on emerging from the policies, he observed a number of sheep in the middle of one of his fields of green corn. They were driven into the steading, and when overhauled, found to belong to Colonel Belshes. The indignant tenant marched away with them to Invermay House, up to the front door, where the Colonel appeared in most irascible mood. His first idea was that the man had returned with the sheep to provoke him, which naturally excited the wrath, not quite cooled since the morning's *tirrie vie*. The tenant walked boldly forward, and said, "Are these your sheep, Colonel?" No answer.—The shepherd appeared and said, "Yes, they are our sheep." The tenant was somewhat of a wag, and he had enough to do in maintaining his gravity. The situation itself, and the knowledge of what was coming, nearly upset him; but, putting on a grave and angry face, he walked close past his adversary, saying with savage bitterness, "These sheep of yours are a pest, Colonel. *You are too long here!*" *Moral*, The Colonel is in his grave; the tenant is in the farm.

During the forty years in which I was a citizen of Perth I never—right or wrong—curried favour with the authorities, and as a necessary consequence, after I had at great cost built the Exchange Hotel, the magistrates refused me a license. Bailies Heiton and Fisher were on the bench, and it was nothing to them that I had cleared out a large area of the most wretched back slums that ever disgraced a civilized community. It was nothing to them that I had widened the Skinnergate three feet, and thereby surrendered one hundred and twenty-five square feet of ground to the public, without making the usual charge. It was nothing to them that I had invested two thousand pounds,—that was sheer impudence, and the license was refused, thereby entailing on me a loss of six months' rent. Next term Provost Imrie was on the bench, and the license was obtained. The money was paid to the Excise, and the house let. But "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip." Mr. Turnbull, of Bellwood, at the instigation of a neighbour, petitioned the Quarter Sessions to withdraw the license, thus involving me in further expense and the loss of another six months' rent. I applied to the Excise for the money I had paid six months before, but the officer laughed at me. Next morning I waited on Collector Watson with my receipt, and told him how the officer had treated me. He sent for his subordinate, and when he appeared a cheque was put into his hand, with this curt instruction, "Go down to the Bank and pay Mr. Drummond that money."

I now prepared to meet the Cabal, and was naturally sorry to find my old friend Colonel Belshes dead against me, denouncing the embryo hotel as "Drummond's Pothouse." On the morning of the court he paraded George Street, saluting the members of court as they turned up, and chuckling over my impending fate, as if I were about to be tried for sedition or murder: but it turned out a mere *brutum fulmen*. Twenty-two justices sat on the bench; thirteen voted for granting, six against, and three declined to vote. I shall ever remember with gratitude the way in which the Earl of Mansfield and Mr. Smythe led the vote for confirming the magistrates' decision, as is the usual practice in such cases, against a mere thoughtless faction, leagued to gratify the offended pride of one man, who kept himself in the dark. I think it right to record here that Mr. P. H. Paterson, of Carpow, without solicitation, came expressly from Edinburgh to vote for me; and Mr. Lorimer, of Aberdalgie, after coming into town, felt himself unable from failing health to go upon the bench, but tendered his vote in a weak voice from the body of the court. Two agents were employed against me. The principal one founded his objection on this piece of perfunctory maudlinism, "That country people have no more need of whisky in settling a transaction than others." The junior counsel pressed for a decision against me, because I had built an inn on the site of three notorious bawdy houses, one of them the well-known "Six Bottles." I wonder if that sapient philosopher really thought that the man who did so, deserved to lose two thousand pounds?

A petition was presented to the Quarter Sessions in favour of the license, signed by three hundred gentlemen doing business in Perth market, and representing an aggregate capital of more than one million sterling. I obtained all these signatures myself within a week, and met with only *two* denials.

I had lived long in good neighbourhood with Mr. Turnbull, and this proceeding was not allowed to mar our friendship in the very least; and I have already told how Colonel Belshes and I got over it. It is a remarkable lesson, however, that no man should in the pride of his heart build castles of imaginary influence, because superstructures without solid foundation are apt to tumble about the builders' ears, as this unfriendly proceeding did about Mr. Turnbull's, and the Exchange Hotel eventually did about mine.

CHAPTER XV.

COLONEL HENDRY.

"Employment is Nature's physician, Idleness the mother of misery."
BURTON.

As ages creep on, and events of importance arise, the name of some matter, place, or event takes hold of the public mind and becomes the representative term of things away from its original, and the adjective for many nouns. "Waterloo," the name of an unimportant little piece of ground in Belgium, has become a prefix to a thousand of our national commodities. From 1808 to 1830, "The Peninsula," as, during the earlier part of that period, the seat of a protracted war between Great Britain and France, obtained an importance that it never would have gained as merely an integral portion of Southern Europe.

Regiments in the British service could have no prouder device inscribed on their colours than "The Peninsula," and its heroes take their stand alongside those of Waterloo.

Three of the foremost rank of these heroes came to spend the latter days of their long careers, each on his own estate in the county of Perth, and within a circle of a few miles; namely, General Lord Lynedoch, General Sir David Baird, and Colonel Hendry, of Woodend. General Sir George Murray may also be included, his paternal estate marching with Woodend. These men had each seen long and hard service; and the fact of knowing them all personally, and writing of them, after each had filled his grave for thirty years, is something to be proud of; otherwise it had better been let alone.

Colonel Hendry had not the same opportunity of studying the amenities of life—so very necessary in converting the old soldier into the polite civilian—as his three compeers, consequently he retained all the brusqueness and obedience-demanding spirit so characteristic of the retired officer. Besides, he was naturally of an abrupt and cross temper. It is told of him that, when leading on his men at Corunna, he mounted a knoll, sword in hand. One of his subordinate officers observing it, shouted, "For God's sake come down, Colonel Hendry, the enemy will mark you." "It 's as well to die on a height as in a hollow," answered the daring veteran. After the French war, he had been in Ireland with his regiment for a length of time, and took to himself an Irish lady as his spouse. She came with him to Woodend; and the domestic and physical troubles to which he was subjected were frequently recurring and violent, albeit many of them arose from his own obstinate and sullen disposition.

Men on horseback aim to sit as near the perpendicular as possible. Not so the Colonel: his horse's neck and his own body generally stood in the same relation to each other as the blades of a pair of scissors when near the closing; but however much his horsemanship lacked grace, it was not deficient in an equally important quality—tenacity. Saddle or no saddle, bridle or no bridle, it mattered nothing to him. His brown mare stood in the stable tied to her stall with a rope, easily untied at the stall end; and when the Colonel thought his presence was wanted where his field-work—in wood, farm, or park—was going on, he would go into the stable, undo the convenient knot, and vaulting to his seat, go off at a hand-gallop; he would then frequently go a round with his foreman at the plough, and if a large stone, twenty or thirty pounds weight, turned up, he would bend to the earth, pick it up between his hands and gallop to the nearest fence with it, with as much ease and as much indifference as if his mare and himself had been lashed together.

He had an elderly female domestic who was gifted with an extraordinary memory, and who attended the church of Madderty with more rigid punctuality than his less stringent creed led him to think necessary. One day the Colonel observed that her eyes were shut during most of the sermon. On the road home he chaffed her, saying, in his loud, hollow voice, "You might as well stop at home as go to church and sleep." She replied, "I was not asleep, sir." "Can you repeat any of the sermon?" "Yes, sir; that I can;" and she began at the beginning, rattling on, word for word, until the Colonel shouted, "Stop! I have heard it once already, which is quite enough for me." This domestic was kind to him in his troubles. His limbs were full of disease, and always wrapped up like a roll of flannel in a draper's shop. The following circumstances are understood to have led to the disease in them. Having gone, one dark night, on a reconnoitring excursion, he somehow parted with his men and lost his way. Having wandered about for an hour or two without knowing whether he was going farther away from, or coming nearer to his quarters, he at length reached a group of houses without a single open door, and possibly with as few open hearts. At an outside angle he found a water-wheel, and judging that it must communicate with the interior, he felt about and eventually observed a square opening, sufficient to admit him, immediately over the wheel. Although a good soldier, the Colonel was no mechanic, and, having no choice of means, he resolved to mount by the wheel; so, leaping across a chasm of three feet, he lighted on the hem of one of the buckets. The inside check was light, and the Colonel was heavy, so down he went, amidst a roar of machinery, up to the hips in water. The brave soldier did not despair; he felt the square masonry all round, but no interstices whereby he might ascend. He was far below the centre level of the wheel, and of course could not mount by it; but, mustering all his strength, he leaped up and clutched one of the buckets. Down came the wheel, the inside machinery rattling in contempt. He moved the wheel once round, thinking something might check it; but no. The poor man schemed and studied and struggled, but he uttered no complaint, not he; even when the grey of the morning came in, and he imagined he heard people beginning to move about, he would not condescend to cry out; but, in exercise of all his might, seasoned with a little unacknowledged despair, he made the wheel spin, and the machinery grind until the people ran to the sluice to see who had set on the mill. The sluice was shut! In such a case it is common to blame the devil; but one of the alarmed said, in approaching the hole, "The devil has the power of the air, and the fire is his natural element, but I never heard of him meddling with water. Hillo!" cried he, peeping under the trows, "Who are you?" "Bring a ladder," said the Colonel. The ladder was speedily brought, and the Colonel taken up; but with all his dogged bravery, he very nearly gave way, and never quite recovered from the effects of his protracted immersion. I am by no means certain that our hero had reached the ascribed rank when this escapade came off, but the lady who told me the story called him "the Colonel."

Any infringement of his rights, real or imaginary, met with energetic opposition, and, as a necessary consequence, he was seldom out of court. He did not mislead the people of Madderty, however, when he came to live amongst them. His inauguration freak was a very fair specimen of the soldier-proprietor, and he kept up the character to the end.

The Woodend family had long the privilege of sepulture under their pew in Madderty Church, and when Colonel Hendry's immediate predecessor—Mr. Watt—was to be buried, some quiet remonstrances were offered by the Session and leading men of the congregation. Eventually, a sort of compromise was entered into, the undertaker and gravedigger agreeing that the grave should be eight feet deep. On the day of the funeral the church was crowded with people, some of them in no very conciliatory humour. When the body was brought in, the Colonel stepped upon the hill of earth, and looking down into the grave, shouted in a voice which re-echoed through the mouldy edifice, "Stop! Why is it so deep?" "It was the Session's orders," said the gravedigger. "Fill in the earth till I tell you to stop," said the offended stranger. Two feet of earth were thrown in by two of the Woodend retainers, amidst murmurings, not loud but deep. A sort of pause in the work, and the gravedigger went down to level the bottom. While he was doing so, one man cried, loud enough to be heard by Colonel Hendry, "Make it easy for him!" another shouted, "Are you afraid he will not get up again?" When the gravedigger re-appeared, Colonel Hendry made a sort of movement as if he wanted more earth thrown in. A loud growl went through the assembled multitude, and judging wisely, he went no farther. If he had ordered another spadeful of earth to be thrown into the grave, I have no doubt whatever, judging from the temper into which the people had been raised, but Colonel, coffin, corpse, and mort-cloth would have been bundled to the door, if they escaped the worse fate of filling one grave.

When the coffin was laid over the grave, and the Colonel stood up at his full height on the mound of earth, a more remarkable spectacle never presented itself to the human eye. The wizened old soldier was hung with black and white, fitted as if they had been thrown on him with a pitchfork, his face distorted by the conflict of checked pride and irresolute desire, and his hand clutching the coffin-cord like a man saving himself from drowning—altogether, a caricatured transcript of "Hamlet at the grave of Ophelia," or the disguised type of Ravenswood at that of Alice Gray in "The Bride of Lammermoor."

This ill-judged escapade raised a great dislike to the new laird of Woodend; and although there was a sediment of kindness at the bottom of his heart, it was encrusted over by a temper never placid, and latterly subjected to incessant domestic and personal sourings.

The following simple story will illustrate the character and destiny of this retired Peninsular veteran better than any amount of biographical detail.

A young man, whose father was the district blacksmith, felt a laudable desire to learn his father's trade; and one evening when the old man was at his "gloamin meal," young burnéwind essayed to forge some horse-shoe nails; but before proceeding, he bolted the smithy-door, in order to prevent the neighbour youngsters getting in to quiz him. The rod was scarely hot when a knock came to the bolted door. He paid no attention to it; a second came; and when the end of the rod was ready for action, the door received another tremendous thwack. Young hopeful, irritated at the perseverance of the would-be intruder, seized the rod and stuck the red-hot end through a hole in the smithy door. Presently he heard a horse gallop off, and, peering through the darkness, he was horror-stricken to see Colonel Hendry standing at the dwelling-house door, shouting like an enraged bear, "Smith! Smith! some fellow in the smithy is going to shoot me!" The smith pleaded some misunderstanding, and the officer's wrath was assuaged. But smith, junior, who lived in wholesome dread of Colonel Hendry, shrunk from his nail-forging in fear and trembling.

Next morning he was peremptorily ordered off to Woodend with a parcel that had come from Perth by the carrier. To this he made no objection; but then, the Colonel! On the way he flattered himself that he might escape him; but as he emerged from the wood, there was his friend sitting under a tree between him and the house. He must proceed; but inwardly he gave himself up for lost. "What have you got, sir?" said the Colonel. "A parcel from the carrier," said smith, junior. "Take it in there," pointing to the kitchen-door, "and tell them to give you something to yourself." When smith, junior, came out, the Colonel hailed him and enquired what they gave him. He said nothing, but, going up to the dreaded ogre, he took off his bonnet and exhibited one or two sour apples. The veteran uttered not a word, but giving the bonnet a kick, he sent the apples spinning through the air like rockets, and gave the youth sixpence.

Amongst other law pleas, he had one of protracted dimensions against Lady Baird Preston, claiming a road up the east margin of the farm of Newrow, from "the bog of Gray's Hill" to the Perth and Crieff road. Many a ride to town it cost him; and although he could save half-a-mile of travel by going up past the farm of Welltree, he uniformly rode along the disputed way—crop or no crop. His principal tenant, James Ritchie of the Abbey, had the greatest interest in the road, and he was summoned as a witness. James was a worthy man, a perfect embodiment of the last-century Scotchman. When times changed, he never yielded the broad blue bonnet, plaiden coat and breeches, neither did his manners become in any degree ameliorated by the refinements that supervened during his long lease of life.

Little accustomed to the outer world and its ways, he had his own modes of speaking and moving; and it would have been an idle task to attempt to alter his method of procedure. James had been once examined already, and when called a second time, he appeared in rather bad humour. He was to be cross-examined by Mr. Adie for Lady Baird; and that gentleman, in true lawyer-fashion, wanted to bother him.

Q. "What is your name, Witness?"

Ans. "Gude feth, my name's weel enough kent; ye needna' speer *my* name."

Q. "Oh, but we must have your name."

Ans. "Just James Ritchie."

Q. "Where do you live?"

Ans. "I live at the Abo."

Q. "Where is that?"

Ans. "On the Powside."

Q. "How old are you?"

Ans. "Eh, gude feth, I 'm aulder than ony o' ye."

Adie. "You must answer my questions, or the Court will interfere."

Ans. "Gude feth, if that be the case, what for no'?"

This raised some laughter, and the primitive old gentleman, looking at the Court, said,—

"Ye 're a' wheen grand rascals, bringin' an auld man like me in here to mak' a fule o' me;" and noticing a smile on Mr. Patton's face, he added, "and the Laird o' Mill Rodgie is as bad as the lave."

Q. "Have you ever travelled from the Mains of Madderty to the Perth road, through the farm of Newrow?"

Ans. "No; but mony time past it."

Mr. David Clark. "Along the east margin of Newrow, you mean?"

Ans. "Hoot, aye; up and doon a hunder times."

Colonel Hendry gained his case; but an excambion took place, and the successful officer, confirmed as a litigant, waited for another *casus belli.*

Dr. Johnson said, of one of his pugnacious coevals: "If his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end." Colonel Hendry tried, on one occasion, the same murderous procedure, but signally failed. The farm of Thornhill, on the estate of Woodend, is good sharp land, but gravelly, and when harrowed after seed, looks like Ellisland, which Robert Burns called "the riddlings of creation." During the *drouthy* years the tenant complained bitterly against the weather and the stones. The laird heard him, and treated his complaints with lofty magnanimity. But when 1826 scorched his gravel knowes, he proposed keeping back a portion of his rent. The Colonel waxed wroth. The tenant urged the want of rain, and the stones. "The stones!" said the exasperated officer; "I knew a farmer in Ulster who had a farm similar to Thornhill. He cleared one field of stones, but he did not try a second, for he had no crop at all on the cleared field." The tenant carried the matter farther than was expected, and pawkily enquired, "What did he do with it, then?" The Peninsular hero hesitated for a moment, but his pistol missed fire, and he shouted, "Laid them on again, to be sure."

The Colonel's retired life was a remarkable exemplification of the very common difficulty of reconciling confirmed habits to a change of circumstances, whether for the better or worse.

Brave and fearless as a soldier, he was an utter stranger to those amenities which would have made life agreeable to himself and tolerable to those who came in contact with him as a neighbour and a landowner. Soldier he had been, and soldier he would remain; and when his own day of sepulture came, as come it did, they buried him under the sycamore trees—a fitter home for a "Peninsular veteran" than the inside of a church—and they put an iron fence round his grave, lest any one might, unadvisedly, tread upon a man in death who utterly declined being trodden upon in life.

CHAPTER XVI.

JAMES MORAY, OF ABERCAIRNEY.

> "O sure I am the wits of former days
> To subjects worse have given admiring praise,
> The worth of that is that which it contains,
> And that is this, and this with thee remains."
> SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS.

During the first half of the present century, the Morays of Abercairney—father and two sons—were munificent employers of labour. Urbane, humourous and open-hearted men, their society was courted by those of their own rank, and cherished by their numerous dependents. They erected a mansion and offices on the paternal estate which in point of situation, style and workmanship, have no equals amongst the residences of the nobility and gentry of Perthshire. For many years the turmoil of labour, the distant click of the mason's hammer, and the noisy racket of horses and carts, were the characteristics of Abercairney. First ponds were dug, then roads were formed, and as the elaborate gothic fabric began to rear its buttressed walls in the midst of the well-wooded park, visitors were charmed with its gorgeous details and fine proportions. Strangers that are now hurried along by the distant railway and see it nestling before the sun, can have little idea that such a gem of art is being passed in such speedy review, or of the amount of work that was going forward in that gentle sloping park, threescore years ago. The mansion was begun by the old laird, and finished by his successor, and the offices were built in their present form by his younger son, the late Major Moray Stirling. The two latter named gentlemen were my very early patrons, and it affords me very great pleasure to be able, at this somewhat remote period, to place on record any distinctive recollections I have of them. The two brothers were widely different in character; James was clever, rollicking, indifferent and waggish, his companionable feelings leading him into eccentricities that were more affected than real. William was retiring, simple in manners, and a born gentleman. He was the only commoner in Scotland whose mansion was honoured by a visit from the Queen during her memorable progress through her northern dominions in the year 1842, and it was not merely a wayside call, but an express journey of eight miles undertaken during the royal residence at Drummond Castle. No incident of that royal progress gave more unqualified satisfaction to those who had the good fortune to behold it, than that well-timed visit to Abercairney. There was one drawback, which was a source of much regret to Major Moray; the amiable mistress of the mansion, the Lady Frances Elizabeth Moray was absent on a visit to Fifeshire.

Major Moray was seldom spoken of by the name of his estate, but his elder brother James was to all intents and purposes, "Abercairney." Their father and grandfather were also of the estate; the latter was a gentleman of great taste, and the former was the well known patron of Niel Gow, and to his memory "the famous Niel" composed his pathetic "Lament for auld Abercairney." For many years the house was famous for dance and song, and the young laird, profiting by these circumstances, became a finished athlete. One night at a supper party, while he was quite a youth, a neighbouring gentleman had indulged so far as to be laid under the table, Culbert was in the house with his fiddle, and it was motioned that young "Aber" should dance "Malcolm Rossie"; he consented, but no swords were at hand, the poker and tongs were suggested, but the ready terpsichorean, whilst they were searching in corners, drew the prostrate guest from below the table and spreading out his pliant limbs, he danced round him like a kilted whirlwind.

The Reverend John Murray was minister of Fowlis Wester when Abercairney was a boy, he wore a curly wig of a dingy white, and he was sometimes derisively styled, "Jack o' Fowlis." A neighbouring farmer had a son who was fair-haired, somewhat demure and slow, and the young laird styled him Mr. Murray. This youth presented himself at a football match, with a superb ball made of coloured worsted and sewed to perfection; at first he would not allow it to be played with, but the young laird took a great fancy to it, and tried hard to soft-sawder it from his confiding friend. His fascinations were long withstood, but at length his victim gave way, and said, confidingly, "I will give it to you if you will not call me Mr. Murray any more." "Done!" said his seducer, and moved away to the starting place; when all was ready he held the ball between his hands and looking round to his victimised young friend, he gave it a kick which sent it forty yards on its journey, crying out with cruel scarcasm, "Come along Jack o' Fowlis."

The neighbouring proprietor, Mr. Maxtone, of Cultoquhey, whose house was very near the public road, had a great abhorrence of cattle being grazed on its sides. One morning while young Abercairney was passing inside of a fence, he heard Mr. Maxtone rating a poor woman soundly for this terrible delinquency. Disguising his voice he cried through the fence, "Puir bodie, Culty, ha'e they made a roadman o' ye?"

James Littlejohn was long cartwright and joiner at Abercairney, and the old laird thought James a trustworthy servant, although somewhat aspiring. For many years the joiner work was very heavy, and when the young laird grew up, Littlejohn had crept into a sort of authority which it was alleged he made the most of; to keep this in check young Abercairney saw the necessity of a vigilant surveillance. A pair of cart wheels were required, and Littlejohn set one of his underlings to the job. By some mistake one of the "felloes" was cut to an improper angle and a lump of putty was stuck into the opening. This did not escape the laird's sharp eye, and giving it a kick, he said, "What is that, Littlejohn?" "It is putty sir, but it will last the longest bit of the wheel." "Will it indeed," said the laird, "then make me a pair of wheels entirely of putty."

It was hardly to be expected that so many men employed at so many kinds of handicraft, should all act conscientiously towards such a wealthy employer, and it was thought expedient to scrutinise thoroughly every account that was presented for payment, as well as to watch with careful eye the work as it progressed. A great deal of home-wood was used for temporary purposes, and that was found in the surrounding plantations. A pair of sawyers were constantly at work, and were paid at so much per hundred feet. One day in passing the sawpit the laird found the two sawyers, with their tape line, measuring off their work with loud precision; seeing him, their manipulation became dexterous, and the cry of figures very emphatic. Who would expect that the laird of Abercairney knew how sawn timber should be measured? He did think it queer however that they should measure up the one side of a board and down the other. He said nothing, but went straight to Littlejohn and told him what was going forward; Littlejohn moved to go to them at once, but Abercairney said, "No, send them in to me." Accordingly they came into his room and tabled their account. He looked at it scrutinisingly, then opening his desk he took out a handful of gold and silver, and taking a sovereign he laid it down before the men, and imitating their loud way of calling out their figures, he placed his thumb on the sovereign and cried "one!" then turning it over smartly, and again placing his thumb, he cried out "two!" and so on with gold and silver until he reached the amount of the account. The men looked amazed, but they were allowed no time for remonstrance. "Go about your business," said Abercairney, "and remember that a sovereign has two sides as well as a fir-board." Dishonesty never met a more prompt rebuke.

One Hansel Monday three lads from Crieff, bent on sport, armed themselves with a gun each and relays of ball and small shot, equal to whatever might arise. They first proceeded to Fowlis Wester, where Galloway, the smith, held a raffle shooting. There they had no luck whatever, but a great deal more drink than was quite good for them. In this state they shouldered their muskets, determined to have their revenge on Abercairney's live stock on their way home. Accordingly they took a detour by the bridge of Achlone, turning west towards Crieff by the north bank of the Pow. Hares and rabbits in abundance came across their path, but the drink had softened their hearts, and they were merciful to the poor denizens of the wood, besides having a maudlin regard for that obsolete old Act of the Parliament of Mount Sinai commonly called the Sixth Commandment. Eventually, however, they met a sore temptation; a poor hare was observed sitting amongst the snow, about twenty yards from the back of a fence, with a tuft of rank grass for her sorry bield. A council of war was held, every voice dropped to a whisper, and each brave sportsman found his way to a hole in the fence, through which he pushed his murderous weapon, squinting, "gleeing," and arranging his position, so that there would be no shaking. The centre hero whispered, stealthily, "Are ye ready, boys?" "Stop a minute," said one. When all was declared ready, "Fire away," whispered he. Bang! bang! bang! Up started the sportsmen: up started the hare, and without even turning her eye backward, or leaving a single drop of her blood to mark the scene of the murderous conspiracy, she sprang across the field at the top of her speed. On examination the snow was found to be ploughed up at three separate places, each of them at that humane distance which characterises the aim of those who are laudably reluctant to shed blood. Each sportsman claimed the closest shot, and thus they differed primarily, but one of the party threw oil upon the waters by good-naturedly remarking, "Are n't we a' very near?"

Matters being thus accommodated, each by mutual consent took a deep pull at the flask, which quickly irritated their courage and led to *grave* altercation. "I am certain my shot was the nearest," said one. "You," said another, "you could na' buck the kirk;" meaning that he could not throw a stone at a kirk and hit it. This called for revenge, and the party so deeply slandered drew himself up, and giving a loud slap across his loins with the palm of his hand, he exclaimed, defiantly, "For a gill I will stand your shot on there, at thirty yards." "Done!" said the outraged gunner. The ground was measured, and young Tell went to the stake. The third party loaded the gun, and, ass as he was, put in the ordinary charge. In raising it to his shoulder the marksman performed certain remarkable genuflections, such as we see a crow performing while perching on a telegraph wire. After a deal of squaring of elbows and steadying he announced that he was ready. "Fire!" cried the umpire. Bang! again. The victim gave a leap and a sharp cry, and the two delinquents rushed to his aid. He was speedily stripped, and while he was undergoing the cruel process of exhuming the lead, and the snow covered with blood, Abercairney presented himself, accompanied by White, his gamekeeper. "Hillo!" cried the astonished laird, "What are you fellows about there?" The offender sprang to his feet, and in deprecation of impending wrath, and with an accusation of wilful murder staring him in the face, spluttered out, "The truth is, Abercairney, this eedit boasted that he would stand my shot at thirty yards for a gill, and we are just picking out the hail." The horrified laird inquired at the wounded hero if he felt faint. "Oh, no!" was the answer. "We shall have him indicted for culpable homicide," said Abercairney. "No, no," replied the brave sufferer; "just put it in the papers as a dreadful *accident*, for that fellow never could hit anything if he intended it."

On the Blackford estate, Abercairney had a tenant whose house he preferred to the shooting lodge; and the tenant, wise in his generation, allowed his intimacy with the laird to take the place of rent payments; and so far did he carry this that, with the exception of a few carts of hay, the credit side of the rental books had not been disturbed for years. Abercairney did not scruple to crave him every time they met, but his tenant never failed to have a ready excuse, and that ready excuse never failed to postpone the evil day. Some portions of the farm were subject to inundation, and on one occasion, when the laird was there with a shooting party, a terrible deluge of rain caught them in the morning. Sport could not be attempted, and to go home was out of the question. But there was plenty to eat and drink; so they made a virtue of necessity, and let the rain have its way. When the evening set in the only two of the party visible were the laird and his tenant. The rest had all disappeared, whether by ascending or descending I am unable to say. On the pair going up stairs the rain kept dashing against the windows with terrible impetuosity, and the cunning subordinate remarked, "There 'll be news o' this yet, Abercairney;—Good night." Next morning there was no abatement, and when the tenant looked out, his vivid imagination saw another year's rent rising from the flood. After collecting his scattered forces, he knocked at his guest's bed-room door and shouted, "Come down, Abercairney, we will be all drowned." He came down, and the carriage was ordered. When he had taken his seat, he thought a parting crave might not be amiss, and on shaking hands he said, in his usual sharp accents, "When are ye going to pay me any rent?" The tenant looked round and said, with characteristic firmness, "Rent, sir: How can any man pay rent for such a place as this? D—n it, sir, I might as well farm in the Mediterranean." "Drive on," said Abercairney. That year's rent was like the plateholder at the murder of the ram of Derby, "carried away with the flood."

A remarkable example of the reluctance he felt at taking active or severe measures against any dilatory tenants occurred while Mr. Wood was factor. One of these on the Abercairney estate had been long falling behind, and the laird, being finally resolved to put an end to it, sequestration was obtained and the day of sale announced. As the process went on the laird's horror increased, and although he went to bed the night before the sale, sleep refused to be of the party. At three o'clock in the morning he found he could stand it no longer, and dressing hurriedly, he rushed away to the factor's house. Wood was alarmed when a thundering knock came to his door at that hour of the morning. But the laird called him by name, and he inquired rather excitedly, "What is the matter, Abercairney? Is there anything wrong?" "Yes; you will go immediately and stop that roup; and see that it is done before the fellows meet." He turned to go away; but Wood said, "Have you any message to the tenant?" This suggested the hopeless position of his claim, and his mind went on another tack. "Yes!" he replied, "tell him that the first time I meet him I shall hang his corpse up on a tree."

Mr. Scott, Mill of Gask, whose brothers were tenants of Kintocher, had long been lessee of one of the parks of Abercairney at a stereotyped rent of £70. That by any chance it should go above that sum, or pass into other hands, never occurred to Mr. Scott. He sang "The Kailbrose o' auld Scotland," in a precise, methodical sort of way; and, although it sometimes took him half-an-hour, he gave his audience to understand that there was no hurry. Abercairney generally gave the party luncheon, and at these adjournments Mr. Scott's song was the event of the meeting. I think it was in 1837 that I happened to be present at one of these sales. Grass was letting high, and there was a large party. Laurence Taylor mounted a sunk fence, with Abercairney beside him, and the sale began. When they came to Mr. Scott's park, he was in no hurry, but after fortifying himself with a pinch of snuff, he said, "Sixty." "Seventy," cried John Faichney, of Powhillock.

This was dreadful. "Seventy-five," cried another. "Eighty pounds," said a third. Then there was a long pause. The excitement thickened, and whisperings went round, "Will you really lose your park, Mr. Scott?" "Will you be beat?" The hammer was raised; "Eighty pounds; going, go-ing; "A shilling more," said Mr. Scott. Abercairney gave a leap, and smiting his hands together, cried in a voice that made the woods echo, "Well done, 'The Kailbrose o' auld Scotland.' Give him the park. Gone!"

Mr. Scott felt that his opponents knew that he must have the park, and that their biddings were more to please Abercairney than from any desire of becoming lessees, and with the help of a friend he obtained revenge. After luncheon and some rounds of toddy, the laird rose and proposed that his very worthy old friend and tenant, Mr. Scott, should sing "The Kailbrose o' auld Scotland." Scott hung fire, and was observed to draw a slip of paper from his vest pocket, but after a good deal of what he wished to be understood as cool thinking, he stood up and sang a verse, pronouncing every word with sharp precision, and singing in capital tune :—

When a little bit laddie, to flatter the laird,
Presumes to a park who can't farm a kailyard,
It is to the drink that he pays his regard.
    Oh! the good punch of auld Scotland,
    Give each little puppy a dose.

The cheering and laughing became vociferous, during which Mr. Scott sat down, remarking slyly, "I have become so popular now in singing this song, that I think one verse sufficient for any company."

About the same period a public dinner was given at Fowlis Wester, to Mr. Anderson Henry, on his taking possession of the estate of Woodend. Abercairney occupied the chair, and as a matter of course it was a lively meeting. The chairman was desirous that "Mill of Gask," who was present, should sing the usual song; but he judged it right to flatter him a little before requesting it; and he rose to propose his health. "Mr. Scott," he said, "is a very worthy old tenant of mine; he makes a keen bargain, but then he has this peculiarity, he always pays what he promises. When I was a boy my father had a tenant who did not act on the same principle. He liked a dram; and he got whisky in this house for twopence a gill. Funds were low on one occasion, and he went into his barn, and taking a sheaf of corn under his arm, he came along here and laying it down outside of the door, came in and told the landlord that he wanted a gill for it. This was supplied to him and discussed. All right; but whether the whisky or a naturally bad disposition rendered him oblivious to the law of *meum* and *tuum*, I am unable to say; but on passing out he carried away the sheaf and restored it to its original position. But when Mr. Scott's eighty pounds and a shilling have found their way into my pocket, he feels that he has done with them, and very shortly I feel the same thing."

CHAPTER XVII.

JAMES MURRAY PATTON.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—Pope.

When the idea of publishing this series of essays first occurred to me, I congratulated myself on the circumstance that I should be able to include Mr. James Murray Patton's name amongst others. In this I am taking a step that the living man would never have sanctioned. But when the grave becomes our home, we are not only divested of everything that belonged to us in life, in favour of our heirs, but our memory becomes common property; it can be dealt with at the caprice of any inconsiderate biographer. We are understood to view with respect the feelings of those who have gone before us; but, notwithstanding Mr. Patton's dislike to be talked of in public during his life, now that he is dead, a few reminiscences of him will be valued by every man who was to any extent his coeval. During the half-century which I have been, off and on, a citizen of Perth, how many esteemed families have disappeared from our streets! And if in my humble way I shall be the means of making the name of any one of them live an hour longer, my labour will not be in vain. The artist who paints fifty portraits of his friends cannot be accused of spending his life idly; and if the likenesses are good, he has done more towards linking two generations together than a thousand sculptors, who have merely carved their names in Roman letters on the churchyard wall. In producing that likeness it is not necessary to paint the whole man. The embodiment of William Pitt's character is in his reply to Walpole; that of Robert Burns, in his lines addressed, "To Mary in Heaven;" and that of Guy Fawkes, in the Gunpowder Plot.

Although eminently peaceable, no man relished a joke better than Mr. Patton, and to see the tables turned on any pretentious fool afforded him intense pleasure. A quiet vein of wit, approaching to sarcasm, and a dry under-current of intelligent thought, enabled him to hold his own where more demonstrative but less informed men would have succumbed.

Mr. Patton's circumstances enabled him to act with generosity, and in a cause that met his approval his purse-strings were readily slackened. Few of the citizens of Perth are at this moment aware how much its sanitary condition owes to the unostentatious liberality of this deceased gentleman. His devout wish was, so far as it was consistent with his position in life, to follow up, or at least leave intact, the designs of his uncle Provost Marshall. A remarkable instance of this feeling, of which I was entirely cognisant, was elicited in the year 1843. Some men, in the exuberance of their utilitarianism, think that the huge conglomeration of stone, lime, iron, smoke, and hurry-scurry, placed on the grounds of St. Leonard's, should have been placed on the South Inch of Perth. Happily the authorities and community of Perth, at that period, thought otherwise.

The Scottish Central Railway had scheduled a large portion of that unrivalled park for termini, and when the bill for that purpose came before Parliament, the municipal authorities of Perth set their faces against it. A deputation of their number was sent to London to watch the progress of the bill. A second party was appointed to give evidence when the bill was passing through committee. When they were appointed I waited on the late Bailie Keay—who was one of the deputation—and suggested to him, that a little picture in my possession, painted by Macneill McLeay, might make a powerful witness in preserving the Inch. He at once adopted the suggestion, and took the picture to London with him, where it was placed on the table of the committee-room and referred to with enthusiasm during the severe and protracted debate. When the deputation returned it was arranged that, if the opposition was successful, an engraving from the picture should be published. The opposition was successful; and when I went to London to arrange about the publication, I waited on Sir John Cam Hobhouse—afterwards Lord Houghton—who was then at the India Board, to obtain his permission to dedicate the chromo to him, as chairman of the Railway Bill Committee. He received me kindly, and at once consented, remarking, that there was "something more tangible in the sight of the eye than in the dream of the imagination." I confess to having felt reasonably impressed by the fact of being closeted with the valued personal friend of the illustrious poet.

The picture was published, and is now well known throughout the country. The expense of it required no supplementing; but these deputations of magistrates and lawyers involved a bill which, in addition to those of the necessary London officials, was felt somewhat overwhelming. Mr. Patton came forward, and with his purse solved the difficulty.

During the time the chromo was being subscribed, it became intensely popular. One morning Messrs. Robert Macfarlane, David Clark, and Robert Findlay called, ostensibly for the purpose of subscribing; but before leaving, Mr. Macfarlane said, "What do you want for the original picture? "Twenty guineas?" I replied at once. "It is too much," quoth the querist, and the party left. A few days after Mr. Patton made one of his welcome calls, and in the course of conversation the South Inch matter occurred "What is the price of McLeay's picture?" he inquired. "Twenty guineas," he was answered. "Give me a pen and ink, and I will give you a cheque for it; say nothing whatever about the transaction, and you can keep the picture as long as you require it." Within a week the three gentlemen above named, accompanied by Bailie Keay, presented themselves as if they really came on business, when the following conversation took place:—"Come now, Drummond," said Mr. Clark, "What do you really want for McLeay's picture?" *Ans.* "I have sold it." "You have sold it, have you? Well, that is very unfair; we were first in the field, and you ought to have told us before selling the picture." *Ans.* "I gave myself little concern about selling it; but a gentleman asked me in a prompt way, how much I wanted for it; and having stated twenty guineas, he handed me a cheque for the money." The party seemed much chagrined, and dropped some saucy words. I was again waited on, and a proposal made that I should try to buy back the picture for a small profit, as they were really anxious to get it. I told them not to think of such a thing, for the gentleman who had purchased it could not be tempted with money. They left again; but upon deliberation, resolved to worm the purchaser's name out of me, if possible, and to try their united influence upon him. So I was again besought to name my customer; but being denied, the gentlemen took their final departure on no very conciliatory terms. I named this to Mr. Patton, who seemed to enjoy it very much, and said with a chuckle, "You had better tell them that I have bought the picture, and let them try their influence on me." I sent a message to Mr. Macfarlane, that I would like to see the party about the picture. Armed with a cheque for twenty guineas, they presented themselves in the evening, never doubting but that they would have speedy possession of the picture, and an opportunity of giving me a piece of their minds. But when I told them that Mr. Patton was the purchaser, the tableau was unique;—whispering, gesticulating, and laughing; until I showed symptoms of disgust, when Mr. Clark came forward and said, "The truth of the matter is, we intended to purchase the picture and to present it to Mr. Patton, and if you had not sold it so promptly we might have been induced to give you thirty guineas for it." I answered, "Another truth connected with it now occurs to me; Mr. Patton, no doubt, heard of your movements, and to enable him to keep the 'noiseless tenor of his way,' and to take some quiet fun out of you, he stepped in and superseded you." Next day Mr. Patton came in, and after telling him the story, I said, "I suspect you are no stranger to this movement." He rose from his chair and said, "I must go down to the Court, for I expect *Mr. Tyndrum* of Crieff."

In connection with Mr. Patton's patronage of this picture, the following characteristic incidents in its progress are worth narrating. I entered into arrangements with Mr. William Gorrie, carver and gilder, Perth, consigning to him one hundred copies of the "South Inch," with the exclusive right of subscribing it in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee. He sold every copy, framed and glazed, at two guineas each. Glasgow was his first sphere of action, and at first he found it rather uphill work. Eventually, however, he got a start from some members of the "Perthshire Society;" and, amongst others, he waited on Messrs. Todd and Macgregor, both Perthshire gentlemen. The smart mahogany box was opened, and the partners expressed their admiration of the picture, but said they had no great liking for such matters; so the canvasser walked out somewhat discomfited. On he went, however, and within a fortnight he had subscribed fifty copies for one hundred guineas. On preparing to come home, it occurred to him that, after being so successful and getting more accustomed to denials, he would try Todd and Macgregor again. On entering the premises, he was shown up five pairs of stairs, where the partners were sitting in the machine-drawing room. He felt considerable misgiving as to his reception, and visions of being ordered downstairs floated before his imagination; but, tapping gently at the door, he was answered, "Come in. Oh, you are there with your box again." Mr. Gorrie made a speech: "Yes, gentlemen, I have finished my canvass; and before leaving, I thought I would once more solicit the honour of your patronage. Here, gentlemen, is the subscription list, containing fifty highly respectable names." "Yes, I see, very good," said one of the partners. Thus encouraged, Mr. Gorrie gained confidence, and proceeded: "The truth is, gentlemen, with scarcely an exception, these parties, on glancing over the list, before putting down their names, asked me, 'Why have you not got Todd and Macgregor, the great Perthshire people?'" "Oh! and what did you say to them?" was asked, with a sarcastic smile. "I said that if I had got the picture in my hand I could certainly have made a sale; but the gentlemen did not seem to care about putting down their names."

Here was a piece of diplomacy worth a fair return. The great engineers felt how near the truth the æsthetic envoy had come; and one of them said, "I like your perseverance. What did you say was the price of the picture, in frame?" "Two guineas," he was answered. Then taking out his purse, he handed four guineas to the astonished huckster, adding, "You can send each of us a copy as soon as they are ready." Mr. Gorrie thought of making another small speech, declining the advance payment, and saying some civil things about packing-boxes, &c.; but it occurred to him at once, "Why conjure up these abominable adjuncts?

These gentlemen have sought no receipt—made no terms; as they have treated me, I shall treat them." So, handing over his card, he made a profound bow, and left. Three months after, he ran up the old stair, three steps at a time, and handed the gentlemen their pictures amidst mutual congratulations.

In the occasional absence of Sheriff Husband on Court days, Mr. Patton was in the habit of sitting on the bench as a Sheriff Substitute; and if, as a judge, he did not trouble himself to unravel the tangled skein of Small-debt law, he had the merit of giving equitable and popular decisions. On one of these occasions a ploughman appeared to answer the summons of a Perth watchmaker, from whom he had purchased a four-pound watch, and refused or delayed payment. Mr. Patton disliked a multiplicity of pleadings, and proceeded thus to examine the defender:—

Q. "Did you get a watch from the pursuer?"

Ans. (reluctantly,) "Yes."

Q. "What was the price?"

Ans. "About four pound."

Q. "No equivocation, now; was it not four pounds exactly?"

Ans. "Yes, thereabout."

Q. "Have you paid for it?"

Ans. "No."

Q. "Any portion of it."

Ans. (hesitatingly) "No."

Q. "Are you prepared to do it now?"

Ans. "No."

Q. "What do you propose doing?"

Ans. "I 'll pay a shilling every month."

Q. "A shilling a month! it would take seven years to discharge the claim. Do you not think that a man who cannot pay a watch in less than seven years should try to do without one?"

Ans. "He wid na ken whan to yoke or whan to lowse."

Q. "And do you think the pursuer is obliged to supply you with that necessity of your business?"

Ans. "No; but he advertises 'Price of watches taken by instalments.'"

Q. "Possibly; but there is a limit to everything. How long have you had the watch?"

Ans. "About twa year."

Q. "And paid nothing?"

Ans. No; but I am willing to begin now."

Q. "Will you pay five shillings a month?"

Ans. "I am not able to pay mair than a shilling."

Q. "Could you not have done with a watch at a lower price? Is it a good watch?"

Ans. "Yes."

Bench. "Let me see it."

The watch was handed to Mr. Patton, and as he began to examine it, back and front, holding it up to the light, and then trying its weight on his hand, the Court was ready to burst; but the gravity of the judge kept the laughter in suppression, until he coolly handed the watch to its maker, saying to the defender, "Let him keep the watch for six months, and if you pay the money, he will give you the watch; if not, he will sell it to pay himself." Then the smothered feeling got vent, and Hodge himself could not help joining in the merriment, albeit he thought himself robbed, but under the shelter of the excited pleasantry he slunk out of court.

Gentlemen presently practising at the Perth bar will naturally enquire, "Where was his agent all the while?" It may be replied, that the wranglings of lawyers were not so fashionable in the Small-debt Court, in the reign of William the Fourth, as they have become in the days of Queen Victoria. I am glad to be able to say that there is, at least, one solicitor living in Perth at this moment who was present at this characteristic sederunt. [The late Bailie Maury, who was alive when this essay was written, is the solicitor here referred to.] This decision may not square exactly with Mr. Sheriff Barclay's strictly professional law, but its simple equity can hardly be called in question.

The following circumstance will illustrate what I mean by Mr. Patton's quiet vein of humour. The plate-glass window at No. 32, High Street, was the first of the kind in Perth. Passers-by can now see their figures reflected from every window; but it was different then; and sooth to say, the one referred to was taken due advantage of. One morning, while Mr. Patton was paying me his accustomed visit, a Perth lawyer, who signally failed in raising the opinion held of him by his fellow-citizens to his own standard, presented himself for personal survey. Mr. Patton was just leaving; but, turning back, apparently somewhat scandalised at the complacent movements of the self-satisfied barrister, he said, "Drummond, that is, no doubt, a very useful window of yours; but if you would put up one that would 'show ourselves as others see us,' you would have more merit and fewer spiers."

Mr. Patton succeeded his father as Sheriff-Clerk of Perthshire, and held the office for years. He had numerous avocations, and fulfilled them in a gentlemanly, unostentatious way. He loved his friend, respected his dependent, and held in abhorrence all quackery and presumption.

An incidental remark in the course of this Essay, leads to the following:—

Early in 1833, I came from Glasgow to Perth inside the mail coach. At Dunblane a gentleman joined us who seemed, at first, rather lively, and raised in us a hope that the latter half of the journey would not prove quite so dull as the first had been; but we had scarcely rattled off the causeway of Dunblane, when he drew from his receptacles a thick roll of foolscap, covered with writing, and from that roll of paper he seldom lifted his head until we rattled on to the pavement of Perth. That was the advent of Sheriff Barclay.

The amount of reading, writing, and speaking which that learned gentleman has gone through, during the forty-five years that have intervened since that journey, is quite outside of human computation. His original Bar, with the exception of four members, have all made him their final bow; yet his bow abides in strength. His name has been the shibboleth that protected the character of every assemblage where it was brought forward, and his presence a guarantee against all doubtful proceedings in matters civil or sacred. At the outset of this paper, I expressed my thankfulness that I had the name of such a man as Mr. Patton to grace a few of my pages, and now at its conclusion I have again to express my thankfulness—and I do so with the utmost cordiality—that Dr. Barclay has been spared to escape my more specific intermeddling. It has been long *lis sub judice.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAWRENCE MACDONALD.

> " There, stranger, ply thy curious search,
> And oftentimes beside
> The crumbling edifice thou'lt see
> Some rudely sculptured effigy."
> BENTLEY.

GASK! Classic old Gask! Hail, ye giant elms, whose far-spreading boughs have sheltered Prince Charlie, and Carolina Nairne, and Caroline Oliphant, and the "Auld Laird," and Lorenzo De Gasco! Hail, ye arcades of yew; ye cloisters of holly! Hail, thou Cairney Burn, with thy ivy-clad banks and tender associations! All hail, ye birthplaces of intellect, whence things of beauty have emanated that are destined to become joys for ever! Gold is to be gained by labour, and rank is the accident of birth, but the tissues of mental life are understood to be the direct gift of God. He who fabricates all does not work by miracles, but by laws profoundly intertwined, which leads us to ask by what atmospherical caprice this little corner of earth has produced so much that is rare, lofty, and adorning. The usual forms of external nature are, no doubt, here unfolded in their most fascinating guise—mountain, valley, river, and woodland, all in charming combination. Still, we do not go far out into the world, when we come on scenes quite as likely to generate inspiration, where the lyre has never once been strung, where the human face divine kindles no desire to perpetuate its form, and where the higher faculties of our nature find their loftiest development in the ploughman whistling at the plough. It cannot be supposed that the high-born and opulent are less gifted than their poorer neighbours; but the event illustrates this fact, that gifts in embryo are mere raw material, which must be woven, and hammered, and cultivated before it bears fruit. Hence the natural desire to avoid labour shuts the door of the mansion, the castle, and the palace, and leaves the thatched roofs and boulder-built walls to furnish occupants for the sculptor's atelier, the poet's garret, and the literary man's den in Grub Street. It is the very saving of the poor man that, in this world, nothing good or estimable can be produced without commensurate labour. The poet would have a poor trade if any dawdling aristocrat who went with his candle and morocco slippers to his downy bed could, by intuitive process or under the influence of some impelling power, lay on his breakfast-table the web of a night equal to *Othello*, or *The Beggar's Petition*, or *Lord Ullin's Daughter*. But the bard is safe. Intellect, taste, perseverance, and deep study have done much, but presumption nothing.

At the top of the rising ground, half-a-mile west from the house of Gask, stands a group of quiet-looking, comfortable cottages, bearing the appropriate name of "Bonny-View." Here Lawrence Macdonald, called in 1830 "The eminent Scottish sculptor," was born in the year 1798. His father was a poor man,—almost, if not altogether, blind,—who gained his living by violin-playing, the guidwife eking out his precarious and slender income by attending the county families as occasional nurse. Their eldest son, John, was born at the Dragon Den, above Dunning. After his birth, the family removed to Bonny-View, and about 1810 to the farthest east of a row of cottages, now demolished, which flanked a country road leading from Gask House to the bridge of Dalreoch. Here I first met Lawrence Macdonald in the year 1816. He had at that date been some years at his apprenticeship as a mason with Mr. Thomas Gibson, who was then engaged in building Murray's Royal Asylum, at Perth; but he was generally home at Gask during the winter months. Heads modelled in clay, and hard burnt, were now from time to time perched on the more prominent angles of his father's cottage, and Lowry Macdonald was spoken of as a singular young man. He painted valentines for his companions, and groups of flowers sweetly coloured and tastefully grouped, some of which are yet in the possession of his friends. The school of Gask was at hand, too, and what with assisting his younger brothers and taking lessons himself during these winter trade-vacations, he supplemented an education that would otherwise have been little fitted to carry him through the world. Like all self-taught men, however, he made scholarship, apart from his cherished art, part and parcel of his every-day study.

Many a mile of travel these clay figures of Macdonald's cost me; and when the existence of them became known, they were frequently visited by parties who admired their rude eccentricity, but had no conception whatever to what they would ultimately lead.

The Gask family were at this time about to return home after an absence of many years duration, and Mrs. Oliphant, now a widow, took into her councils her friend and neighbour, Mr. Robert Græme of Garvock, who became a frequent visitor, and rendered her great service in restoring the mansion and grounds. Mr. Græme speedily picked up Lawrence Macdonald, and he was taken over to Garvock to sculpture the family arms. This, the first work for which he received a fee, is now fixed in the front wall of Garvock House; and the pride with which he pocketed the five pounds is a legend of the family. Many years afterwards, he produced at Rome a Venus modelled from a Spanish lady of great beauty, for which he received five hundred guineas, and year by year a replica came from his studio, at the same price, until the number amounted to nine! Yet it is questionable, if, on receiving the last instalment of that four thousand five hundred guineas, he felt as much pride in himself as he did on receiving the five cherished pounds from the Laird of Garvock. Back he came across the Earn with his little clay-coloured box, filled with chisels and mell, slung over his shoulder, and the five pounds buttoned in his pocket, all infinitely enhanced by a letter from the Laird, addressed to Mr. Gillespie Græme, then a prosperous and influential architect in Edinburgh. Thus Macdonald fell into a groove from which he never swerved, not even after he became a man of fame and fortune. A few days after returning from Garvock, Macdonald started with his money and credentials for Edinburgh, his brother Robert accompanying him to the Path of Condie, whence he walked to Burntisland, and was ferried over to Leith. Next morning he presented his letter to Mr. Græme, who is well remembered as the liberal patron and encourager of art, and was at once employed and entered as a pupil at the Trustees' Academy. I remember how well satisfied I was that Macdonald had got under way for a fortune, because the great architect's name had just been cut over the groined entrance of the Roman Catholic Chapel in Clyde Street, Glasgow, a perfect gem of Gothic architecture, which was much talked of at the time.

Macdonald remained in Edinburgh till the beginning of winter, 1822, practising his art with unflagging perseverance, and frequently touching up floral and other ornaments, and cutting crests, &c., for his patron. During these years he paid frequent visits to Gask, and amongst the plastic productions of that period are cleverly-modelled busts of his father and mother, which are still in existence. The head of the old man is admirable, and in its thoughtfulness is suggestive of John Milton. The gentle lowering of the head and listening turn of the features, so characteristic of blindness remind us of the great poet's lines,

> Sabrina fair,
> Listen where thou art sitting.

Amongst the many hundreds of busts produced by Macdonald, and his staff of rough-hewers, during fifty years residence at Rome, the head of his father, 1820, and Sir David Baird, 1830, must hold a high position as likenesses. As he went on in life and practice, he embodied more of the poetry of form and the fascinating power of finish, but in drawing, expression, and *vraisemblance* these two busts must ever hold their way. The blind old man, cowering in the midst of an uproarious world, confiding, dependant, and individually helpless; and the brave soldier, bolt upright and fearless, covered with honours, and apparently unconscious of any superior, present two emblematical figures at the very outsides of human life.

These few years in Edinburgh confirmed the character of young Macdonald: he was naturally somewhat impassioned and self-asserting, but the society he then began to mix with cooled the edge of his Perthshire impetuosity, and he became an enthusiastic artist and genial companion. It has been stated that during the years he studied at the Trustees' Academy he wrote verses and worshipped Byron, but this is an error. He was not known as a writer of verses during his first stay in Edinburgh. No doubt he was fascinated by the periodical instalments of *Don Juan* as they came blazing down from Albemarle Street; but in 1823 Lord Byron went to Greece and Macdonald went to Rome, and the poet's death at Missolonghi four months thereafter struck a chord in the heart of the Eternal City, moving every English resident to acknowledge as their illustrious countryman the great poet, who, though groaning under a burden of attributed faults, as Atlas groans under the earth, shewed more capacity than half of his contemporaries bundled together. Like other young men, whose talents had a poetical tendency, Macdonald expressed his sorrow in English verse; but it was four years after his return to Edinburgh that he first appeared in print as a votary of the Nine.

Turner, the Academician, concluded that because he distanced all competitors in landscape-painting, he must of necessity be a poet; indeed, he does not scruple to assert that, if he had turned his attention to poetry or architecture when young, he would certainly have succeeded in either. His great theory was, that the man highly endowed has only to choose between the sister arts, and leave study and practice to do the rest. He has shown, to some extent, the truth of his theory as applied to architecture; but his poetical effusions have made manifest that the "application when young" is an important condition of ultimate success. Lawrence Macdonald restricted his muse to short fugitive pieces, but Turner essayed an epic. The first had some success, but the second diluted his poetic spirit with too much water.

On the 25th of January, 1830, the following verses, with the prefatory note, appeared in an Edinburgh publication entitled *The Edinburgh Literary Journal, or Weekly Register of Criticism and Belles Lettres*:—

ORIGINAL POETRY.

STANZAS TO A LADY.

By Lawrence Macdonald.

We have pleasure in introducing to our readers as a worshipper of the muses one of the most successful and eminent of our Scottish sculptors.—Ed.

She walks in beauty like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
Where all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to the tender light
  That heaven to gaudy day denies.

There is a pensive sweetness in thine eyes,
  A mystery and a depth like that of heaven
When viewed by night without the day's disguise.
  Though 'gainst this world my spirit e'er hath striven,

Yet there be deeds of mine to be forgiven ;
And, fair madonna, I would pray to thee
For solace to a heart all wrung and riven :
To features less divine men bend the knee,
And lovelier in the realms of Fancy none may be.

Though I have gazed on faces where the eye
Shone forth in beauty like the star of morn,—
That ushers in the day so tranquilly,—
And struggleth not as doth the babe new born,
When first it wakes to life 'mid passion's storm,
But steals all gently o'er each earthly bower,
As if it meant to keep the angel form
It thus assumes in that most heavenly hour
When it comes forth to awake the world with gentle power;

Yet there is something like a nameless feeling—
Of which we're conscious, but know not the cause—
That hovers round thee, like the daylight stealing
O'er Nature's face—ere man infringed her laws,
Or earth beheld the curtain sin still draws
Between high heaven and this inglorious spot;
Where, if one blessing falls, it is because
Lost virtue never can be all forgot;
And if it brings eternal bliss, 'twill be thy lot.

'Tis this all nameless thing that dwells in thee,
The essence of thy being, thy mind's light,
Thy soul in more than infant purity,
That makes both eye and star set to the sight,
When thou art near with something still more bright,—
Shining in silence like the pale moonbeam,
When it reveals the glories of the night,—
And makes this earth to me seem like a dream,
And thou the fair pervading spirit of the scene.

Speed on thy journey through the world below,
Thou loveliest of thy kind and most divine!
Though I would kingdoms for thy sake forego,
I would not link thy destinies to mine,
Nor with my fortunes aught of thee enshrine,
Because I could not brook the light that then
Would fall and break that tranquil peace of thine :
That aught like thee should ever wear a stain,
Would make the heaven's blush, and double all my pain.

To confirm my assertion that Macdonald did not appear in public as a writer of verses until after his first return from Italy in 1826, I have gone seven years in advance of my narrative ; but in the next chapter he will be traced through his first journey to Rome in the company of the Oliphants of Gask.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAWRENCE MACDONALD—*continued.*

> I shall look back, when on the main
>   Back to my native isle,
> And fondly think I hear again
>   Thy voice, and see thee smile."

Man takes an active hand in the weaving of his own destiny, and a singular web he frequently makes of it. One buzzes round his birthplace as a fly buzzes round a lighted candle, never going far from home,—vegetating on his little acre,—reading his Bible and his weekly paper,—toiling, moiling,—and when he dies, the parish mortcloth would reach from his cradle to his grave. Another goes out into the world, acquires a fortune, returns at middle life, sets up as the magnate of his native village, or perhaps lord of the manor. A third leaves the home of his birth to realise fond aspirations, covers himself with gold, and never returns. He who has been away twenty years may come back and live happily; but he that has been away thirty, is irrecoverable. He has become naturalised in his far-away home, and, though he were returning, it would be to dwell amongst strangers.

Mr. M'Currach, late of Perth, builder, was the first to put a mell into the hands of young Macdonald, and when he did so, perhaps he had less confidence in his sturdy young protege, with his fancies and quiddities, becoming expert at the plummet and square, than Mr. Gillespie Græme had in counselling and assisting him to enter the lists against Thorvalsden and Gibson. In the latter adventure Macdonald himself had confidence; and if he did succeed in becoming the best portrait-sculptor of his time, the outside world knows little of the embarrassing, despairing moments that assailed him in the pursuit of this most difficult branch of art. In all his early modellings, the human face, with its never-ending peculiarities, was his favourite study; and when he came to adopt the sculptor's art as a profession, he also adopted the theory of Sir Godfrey Kneller, who says:—"Painters of history make the dead alive, and do not begin to live themselves till they are dead. I paint the living, and they make me live."

Early in the winter of 1822, Macdonald left the Edinburgh Academy and joined the Oliphant family, who were about to leave Gask for a short stay in the south of France. The young laird and the sculptor were born in the same place and were intimate friends. Mr. J. B. Oliphant, the laird's younger brother, and two sisters, formed, together with their retinue, Mrs. Oliphant's travelling party. Mr. Macdonald left them at Hyeres, and went on to Rome, the young laird accompanying him so far on his way into Italy. They never met again; Mr. Oliphant died in 1824, and was succeeded by his brother, the late James Blair Oliphant.

On reaching Rome, the venturous young Scotchman set up his *atelier* on the Corso, and with indomitable spirit began at once to study and model the antique. When it is considered that his purse did not overflow, the boldness of the attempt is obvious. A young painter could have imitated Moreland's practice, by making a picture, and at once sending it into the market, getting his pounds or his shillings, as the case might be; but, alas! a piece of misshapen marble would prove a very unmarketable commodity. Mr. Gillespie Græme, with his usual care for the young man's welfare, came to the rescue, and in a way that did not compromise the artist's proud spirit, inaugurated a scheme to which Macdonald took so kindly,—not only as an aspiring artist, but as a man of the world,—that it formed the basis of his whole fortune.

Mr. Græme lived on terms of intimacy with the nobility and gentry of the county of Perth, and any indication of a visit to Rome reaching him, a letter of introduction to Macdonald was speedily furnished; and when it reached Rome, no man knew better how to turn it to account. The Duke of Athole, Lord Strathallan, Sir Evan Macgregor, and many others, were thus led to have their busts taken; and so successful was the ardent young sculptor, that a bust by him became, in after years, an indispensable corollary to a short stay in the city of the Cæsars.

After a residence of three years, Macdonald returned to Edinburgh, bringing with him several busts and studies. These attracted considerable attention, but two sculptors of considerable pretensions were in possession of the ground, and he had to begin his new career as a perfect stranger. Some friends of the artists in possession indulged in adverse criticism, and it was not till after Macdonald had a leisurely opportunity of showing what progress he had made during his residence in Rome that a connection in Scotland began to open up before him. He was invited to Hamilton Palace, Blair Castle, Ferntower, Orchill, and many other residences of the nobility and gentry, and left behind him numerous busts of friends, well remembered, but long, long off the stage of time, claiming nothing from this remote generation but room for the cold marble, and a grass-covered grave.

A circumstance, not only characteristic of Macdonald himself, but highly illustrative of the troubles that frequently beset the practitioner in portrait or sculptural art, occurred at this period. Lady Baird was long in the management of her own estates, and was amusingly demonstrative in every matter passing through her hands. She regarded her husband with fond devotion, and when Macdonald came to model his bust, she laid down a series of injunctions, reminding the artist of Sir David's soldierly looks, and of his more striking features; while the gallant General remained passive, but very much amused. The bust was cut, and an admirable piece of work it is. But the marble was too sombre for Lady Baird, and once descanting to me on her three fine portraits of Sir David, she said emphatically, "Raeburn altered his picture a little to please me, Wilkie kept up his helmet to show his fine forehead, but Macdonald would not hearken to a word I said."

The busts of Mr. Gillespie Græme—now at Gask—Professor Wilson and his two daughters, and Dr. Combe, besides many others, belong to this period. He did not neglect the muses during this influx of patronage. This was the era of Scott, Wilson, Hogg, Lockhart, Outram, Moir, and Glassford Bell, and in his intercourse with these men whatever poetic fire he possessed was naturally excited. The following apostrophe to the "Spirit of Beauty" appeared in an Edinburgh weekly periodical. It possesses indications of a highly poetic turn of mind, and the devotion to woman's form which absorbed so much of his after life is gracefully introduced as the burden of the song. But the images are too profusely spread, and the spiritual foliage rather too luxuriant, faults which study and practice and nothing else would eventually remedy:—

ORIGINAL POETRY.

TO THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.

By Lawrence Macdonald.

"Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray?"

Spirit of Beauty! were it not for thee,
I would not gaze one hour on Nature's face,
How great soe'er her wondrous works might be;
Nor yet desire to traverse boundless space,
Exploring all things, wheresoe'er a trace
Of wisdom, power, or goodness meets the eye.
Thou hold'st the universe in thy embrace,—
The rolling earth! the burning spheres on high!
And all those worlds of light that wander through the sky.

Spirit of Beauty! in a foreign land,
I've seen thee mingle with the noontide sun,
And o'er both earth and ocean wave thy hand;
And when that glorious orb its course had run,
And Night's more silent, solemn reign begun,
I've seen thee with the pale moon mount the skies,
As if mankind and earth thou sought'st to shun,
So high in azure heaven thou seem'st to rise:
But back again thou cam'st to dwell in woman's eyes.

Spirit of Beauty! may thou still prevail,
And o'er both Time and Ruin keep thy sway!
Though man's divinest works these may assail,
And with defacing fingers work decay,
Thou hast a power more mighty yet than they—
Pervading Nature and enlivening all;—
Thou mak'st more beautiful the ruins grey,
Than princely palace with its stately hall;
Witness the ivied tower, the garland-covered wall.

Spirit of beauty! woman's lovely form
Is thy fit temple and thy fairest shrine;
Thou may'st take shelter there 'mid every storm
That darkens o'er this earth, no more divine;
Although in worlds above thy light may shine,
The brightness that thou giv'st to woman's eyes
Eclipseth all those heavenly orbs of thine;
To view the radiant soul that in them lies,
'Tis said that angels have been known to leave the skies.

The poems written and published by the illustrious men I have named ought to have exercised a soothing influence on the time and place in which they lived, but, sooth to say, the influence manifested itself in a very different form. Political and personal animosity reached a height to which Scotland had been little accustomed since the days of "Græme and Bewick," or "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow." The blood shed by Stuart of Dunearn at Auchtertool had not ceased crying from the ground when two Kirkcaldy bankers must have a turn at the game of life or death, and one of them paid the full penalty. The dwellers on the Athenian side of the sea did not quite relish the feeling that their more northern neighbours should monopolise the temper of the times, and forthwith two newspaper editors tumbled into a quarrel. M'Laren of the *Scotsman*, exchanged cards with Brown, of the *Caledonian Mercury*, and Lawrence Macdonald, with his not over-cool Scottish blood somewhat Italianised, went out as the former gentleman's second, but he gained no golden opinion by the step. It would have been better, and infinitely more friendly, if he had thwarted the belligerents' overweening pugnacity in the same way as the present worthy editor of the *Scotsman* tells us that the peaceable William of Hawarden is thwarting the doughty Earl of Beaconsfield. But no! Fight they must, and, with bottleholders and medical advisers, they rushed to the field of battle; but there was more pride than blood involved, and, as far as I remember, principals, seconds, bottleholders, *et hoc genus omne*, came home scathless, unless indeed any one of them caught a cold!

At the time of which I am writing, the public attention was diverted from the higher branch of sculpture by a class of clever hewers of stone, who sprang up in several quarters of Scotland, and selected for illustration subjects with which everybody was familiar. Thom, of Ayr, came first, with the well-known group of *Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnny;* then Greenshields, of Lanark, with *The Jolly Beggars;* then Sinclair, of Dumfries, with *Old Mortality*; and, finally, Forrest, with his *Conversion of St. Paul*, and many others. These, although by no means calculated to supersede the grander efforts of the art, had by urgent advertising and continual exhibition so engaged public attention for the time, that the professional man was partially lost sight of.

During this interregnum Macdonald engaged himself upon his classic groups of *Ajax and Patroclus* and *Thetis and Achilles*, which were so much lauded in *Blackwood* by Professor Wilson. The Professor did nothing by halves, but in full tilt, but I apprehend he is wrong, both in fact and opinion, in the following passage:—"Why, Scotland is making great strides even in sculpture. Gibson and Campbell are the most eminent young sculptors now in Rome: Scoular and Steel are following in their footsteps. At home Fletcher shows skill, taste, and genius; and Lawrence Macdonald equal to any one of them, if not, indeed, superior to them all." Now, Gibson's name should have been kept out of this category. First, because he was a Welshman, and Scotland could have no reflected merit from him; and, second, however partial Professor Wilson was to Lawrence Macdonald, and however proud I am of him as my early friend and countryman, I am bound in fairness to say that, in placing him as the superior of John Gibson as a sculptor, Wilson assumes a position that it would be difficult to sustain.

CHAPTER XX.

LAWRENCE MACDONALD—*continued.*

"A perception of the beautiful and the grand in art is equivalent to the possession of another sense, for it supplies a new power of reading and appreciating the beauties and sublimities of the natural world."—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The consciousness of great power enables a man to take a firm hold of the outside world. Dr. Johnson shook his clenched hand at the society amongst which he moved. He was as poor as either Goldsmith or Garrick, but he made an elaborate balance of his own mental strength, and became the very greatest literary aristocrat the world ever saw. Sir Joshua Reynolds knew and held the position he had taken up as a portrait-painter quite as well as the world does now, after studying him a hundred intensely-artistic years. Lawrence Macdonald, while he sat dangling his limbs over the stone dykes at Gask, felt a justifying power within him that set at naught all accusations of laziness, and indifference to the trade he was ostensibly learning. His fingers itched for the plastic clay; he would perch the human ear on a gatepost,—rudely modelled certainly, but there because of a passion that could not be otherwise vanquished. It required no sleuthhound to trace him along the clay-covered road; fragments of fingers without hands, and hands without fingers, scattered about, generally betrayed the route of the rural enthusiast; and, after a lapse of fifty years, visitors to his studio at the Barberini Palace would see the beautifully-modelled feet of the Countess of Coventry reposing on a cushion of clay, naked and veined as if they contained the living blood; and in another corner those of Lady Walpole enveloped in silken stockings, yet so instinct of life as to be painfully like death.

I have already spoken of the charm which finish gives to sculptured marble, but there is a charm in the simply-modelled figure which belonged eminently, though by no means exclusively, to Macdonald. I remember an equestrian figure of Frederick the Great in the Great Exhibition of 1851, modelled by a German artist, that had a thousand times greater attractions for me than the much-lauded "Greek Slave," with all its external paraphernalia. The man was clothed in the simple though picturesque dress of his day, but so marvellously felt and manipulated, that you had set before you, the living, breathing man. I am not able to give expression to my feeling for this exquisite branch of art, but if any of my readers will take a walk into the Glasgow Corporation Galleries, and look at a little female figure modelled by Mr. James Ewing, and titled "Comin' thro' the rye," they will have no difficulty in understanding what I mean. A tale was never better told. The pose of the figure, modestly cowering under the misfortune of having "draig'lt a' her petticoatie," and trying to remedy the evil, is an achievement in art,—the shape so full of gentle womanhood, so simply draped, yet breathing through every fold.

Amongst Mr. Macdonald's early sitters and life-long friends was Miss Fanny Kemble. She sat to him for her bust when she was a girl in her teens, and in her happy way she tells a story of how recklessly she conducted herself at the outset. Mr. George Combe had, phrenologically, examined the development of Miss Fanny's head, and whispered to the sculptor, who was his intimate friend, that alimentiveness was a predominant bump. One day the all-unconscious Kemble, while sitting on the studio throne, in Combe's presence, saw her mother enter with a paper in her hand, which from certain external symbols, she knew to contain raspberry tarts. Forgetting altogether her august position, the young tragedienne leapt to the floor, and, seizing the tarts, began to munch them with a goodwill that could not be mistaken. "There now, Macdonald, I told you so!" quoth Mr. Combe. The two laughed loudly, and the clever descendent of the great Coriolanus also laughed as loudly as the tarts would permit.

Apart altogether from his talent as an artist, this highly-intellectual lady had a very high opinion of Macdonald as a man. Of her second visit to Edinburgh she writes thus:— "I found Macdonald already successfully launched in his career, having executed some excellent busts and achieved considerable reputation in Edinburgh as an artist of great power and promise. To the innate consciousness of genius he had now added the proof which compels acknowledgment from others; his conversation, always original and vivid, had acquired ease, his manner had lost its early roughness, and he was altogether a striking and interesting person."

In the autumn of 1832 Macdonald finally left Edinburgh for Rome, where he remained forty-five years, and died. His brothers, John and James, eventually followed him to the Capitol. John became proficient as an assistant;—his position always presented to my mind Allan Cunningham in the studio of Chantry. James emigrated to America. John retained, with Scottish pertinacity, his Perthshire vernacular; and, although nearly half-a-century in Rome, when any of his countrymen paid him a visit, they found him as if he had only yesterday left the banks of the Earn.

The Macdonald family were by no means isolated in Rome. The incessant flow of English nobility and gentry, together with distinguished Americans, rendered their indoor lives little different from what they would have been had their abode been in Moray Place, Edinburgh, or at Albert Gate, Westminster. So correct is this statement, that a lady visiting Rome in 1873 states that Mr. Alexander Macdonald, who inherits his father's genius, and who had never been out of Rome, speaks with a broad Scottish accent. Thus, since the death of Thorvalsden, the Barberini Palace at Rome has become a little Scottish colony, where visitors are first kindly welcomed, and then, as Mrs. Brown says, "has got their heads took off."

It is no new feature in the plastic art, that of a young man of talent going to Rome for a few years' study in the Vatican, and being so overwhelmed at first, that despair takes hold of him; but eventually a kind patron, or an encouraging word from the fatherland, together with the fascinations inseparable from art in its higher development, put a chain of gold round his neck, and fixes him for life. After three years of study and discomfiture, young Thorvalsden packed his movables, and addressed them, "Passenger to Copenhagen." But one morning while he stood surveying his model of "Jason," and despondingly scheming about its destination and removal, the door of his studio was opened, and Mr. Henry Philip Hope entered. An Englishman again to the rescue! This munificent patron of art ordered the "Jason" to be reproduced in marble at a price which utterly set aside all the young Dane's thoughts of returning home. The figure completed, and Hope's patronage, backed as it always was with a shower of gold, aided in raising the young man from the character of a returning emigrant, to the very summit of his profession, and to the occupation of the Palazzo Barberini.

Another instance of troublous beginning occurs in Mr. Shakespeare Wood—whose father I knew well and traced through his melancholy latter career—and his younger brother, who are both eminent and prosperous sculptors in Rome. Mr. Shakespeare Wood's head of Dr. Caird, modelled in *basso relievo*, while the eloquent divine was minister of Errol, is perfect as a likeness, and a most desirable memorial of that unrivalled preacher. On the death of Thorvalsden in 1844, Mr. Lawrence Macdonald took possession of the Palazzo Barberini, and thenceforth became the Signor Lorenzo de Gasco. No amount of prosperity could, in him, produce slackness of energy. Mr. William Proudfoot, who studied his art several years in Rome, tells me that he has often seen him, at half-past five in the morning, sipping his coffee in the *Café Grecco*, and bundled up in grim study, like Diogenes in his tub. John went out to shoot quails, as they came up in flocks from the Mediterranean, and nestled on the Campagna; but Lawrence sedulously confined himself to his art, and to the society of the best families—occupants or visitants of the city of Seven Hills. On one occasion, while dining at Mrs. Arthur Clive's, the well-known authoress of "Paul Ferrol," he met his clever, rollicking old friend, Mrs. Fanny Butler. She had a nosegay of snowdrops in her bosom, which riveted Macdonald's attention, and, turning to her, he whispered, "Oh! these snowdrops put me in mind of old Scotland. I did not even know that they grew here." Nothing is easier moved than the human heart, and nothing moves it more readily than a reminiscence of early days. "*Paidling* in the Cairney Burn," while the snowdrops studded the grass, moved the feeling of the dweller—the flattered, courted, flourishing dweller—on the banks of the Tiber until his eyes floated in tears.

During the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, in 1872, the correspondent of the *Morning Post* writes from Rome:—"The Royal party proceeded to the studio of Mr. Lawrence Macdonald, in the Barberini Palace, where they were received by that talented sculptor and his son, Mr. Alexander Macdonald, who is following his father's profession with much ardour and success. The Prince of Wales, who purchased a beautiful figure of a nymph from Mr. Lawrence Macdonald on the occasion of his last visit to Rome, expressed his wish this afternoon to possess a charming group, just modelled by Mr. Alexander Macdonald, and not yet quite completed, representing Cupid and Venus. His Royal Highness mentioned that he hoped to see the group in marble at the Royal Academy Exhibition next spring, and added that, if Mr. A. Macdonald came over to London to see the statue placed, he would have an opportunity of modelling his bust and that of the Princess—a task which Mr. A. Macdonald will accomplish very satisfactorily."

The following letter, from Mr. Macdonald to Mrs. Oliphant of Gask, shows not only that the Prince's commission was duly executed, but that other commissions resulted from it. It shows also the respect he had for the place of his nativity, and for the family who had been his earliest and most disinterested patrons:—

Rome, 14th June, 1873, 7, Piazza Barberini.

DEAR MADAM,—The bearer of this is a son of mine, and, like his father, a sculptor. He leaves Rome and Italy for the first time on a short tour through England and Scotland. The chief object of his journey is to assist at the unpacking and placing in safety a marble group which he has had the honour of executing for H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. A replica of the same is now in progress for a wealthy merchant and manufacturer of Dundee, in whose house my son will spend a few days.

Being thus in the neighbourhood, he is desirous of visiting the birthplace of his father, and of paying his respects to the lady of Gask—the presiding genius of the place, the promoter of all good works.

I embrace this opportunity, and beg to offer you my best thanks for your very kind remembrance of me, and for the pleasure which I derive from the presentation of a copy of Baroness Nairne's Life and Songs. The book reached me in safety a few weeks ago. In perusing its contents I am struck with admiration of the talents and virtues of the noble authoress. The poems of Caroline Oliphant the younger are emanations of a genius of purest ray serene.

With homage and esteem,
I remain, Dear Madam,
Your very humble and obliged Servant,
LAWRENCE MACDONALD.

To Mrs. Oliphant, of Gask, Perthshire.

I have not been able to ascertain who, in Dundee, is the happy custodier of this replica, consequently I can say nothing of its merits; but the business habits of the Macdonalds leave no room to doubt that it was executed, and reached its destination. "The Apollo," at Gask—originally at Orchill—is a capital specimen of the sculptor's early power. The expression of the face and figure, supposed to be listening to distant music, is unmistakable. This statue has suffered from being unavoidably exposed. The Bacchante presented to Mr. James Blair Oliphant and his lady,—who is a daughter of Mr. Gillespie Græme,—in acknowledgment of the kindness of the united families, is carefully placed in the library of Gask House. The figure is reclining gently, and is beautifully modelled and finished, but somewhat too heavy for the youthful priestess of the jolly god: the fleshy parts rather too much developed for a sparkling nymph entering on her teens.

I have seen no figure of Macdonald's equal to the "Autumn," exhibited at Manchester in 1857. The "Aurora," by John Gibson, and "Sabrina," by Calder Marshall, were its coevals, but not its equals. Such an effort of human genius only comes to us like an angelic visit. We are too far north. Art will never prosper in this stolid, cheerless land. We can sing songs, build churches, snarl at heresy; nurse a phantom of sobriety, yet drink freely; abuse our neighbour's politics, yet be impatient of contradiction ourselves. All these we do *con amore;* but there are few men amongst us who would go an inch out of their way to visit the apartments of a fellow-countryman, so universally recognised and about whom I have written so much. It is different in the sunnier south. A recent English visitor writes of these apartments:—"Not only was the beauty of our English female nobility worthily represented in the countless exquisite heads, shoulders, and profiles, but all the eminent men who, during the last thirty years, have distinguished themselves, or been distinguished by genius or station, were gathered round its walls. It was one of the most interesting galleries of celebrities that could be seen in Rome or anywhere else."

The last time I met Mr. Macdonald was in the summer of 1853, when he was on a visit to Perth. His features were little altered, but his long brown beard, of orthodox Italian cut, changed the general aspect of the man. His fingers were bedizened with gems, the gifts of his admirers; and his air was that of a man who moved amongst the upper ten thousand. Time wore on, and the next news I heard of him was from a lady, who, in 1873, saw him creeping up the sunny side of the Pincio with his hair and moustache as white as Alpine snow. The end came, and in February last the gifted Perthshire man, with fourscore active years at his debit, stretched out his limbs, and took farewell of a world that, to him, had been a world of uninterrupted successes.

CHAPTER XXI.

THOMAS DUNCAN, R.S.A.

"It is by this principle chiefly that poetry, painting, and other affecting arts transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are capable of engrafting a delight even on wretchedness, misery, and death itself."—BURKE ON THE SUBLIME.

PICTORIAL art is the most explicit of all human avocations. If a picture is excellent, it stands upon a rock; if bad, it is irremediable. An architect may build a house, and ages afterwards another architect may add a wing to it, or put a storey on it. In dramatic art we have a thousand readings of Shakespeare; and in law we have Coke upon Lyttleton; but if Millais or Orchardson were to touch a picture of Titian, the world would go into convulsions. The steam engine has been greatly improved since 1805; and Buckingham House has got a new front: but Wilkie's "Chelsea Pensioners" retains its severe *status quo*. The great pictures of the Renaissance have come down from one generation to another, as the finished souvenirs of genius, gaining nothing by the way. Hence the old masters have no modern disciples. Their manner of working and their wonderful pigments are as mysterious to us as the mummifyings of ancient Egypt. A head by Corregio, another by Velasquez, and a third by Rembrandt, might all be scraped down, analysed, and their mysterious components thoroughly expiscated; but the invested money would ruin a bank, and the *modus operandi* would be as great a mystery as ever. Some experimenting artists lay on their colours so gently that the twilled canvas may be seen; and others lay them on with the palette knife; but after going the wide world over, the luminous heads of ancient times will shine over them as the noon-day sun will shine over every new substitute. We are too late for the beauty of Lely, the grandeur of Vandyke, and the bob-wigs and boundless hoops of the illustrious Sir Joshua; nay, even Lawrence and Raeburn do not quite reach us. But within the last fifty years I have seen portraits produced in cold, meagre old Scotland, calculated to show that one branch of art is not in hopeless decay. "Francis, Lord Gray," by Raeburn, "Dr. Chalmers," by Andrew Geddes, "John Gibson," by John Graham Gilbert, "Lord Panmure," by John Philip, "Thomas Duncan," by himself, and "Mr. Campbell of Strathcathro," by the President of the Royal Scottish Academy, are works of art not to be forgot.

Perthshire has not been behind in sending out men fit to maintain the national position in the arts of painting, sculpture, and engraving. The braes of Earn seem prolific in accomplished mind. The poetry of the Oliphants, and the statuary of the Macdonalds, are justly appreciated; but it is not so well known that Wilkie's "Penny Wedding" was engraved by Howison, whose father was game-keeper at Dupplin. Poor blind Christian Gray tuned her reed on the hill-top; and at the bottom Kilgraston House was strewed with the incipient efforts of the Grants, all of whom, John, Hope, and Francis, were accomplished students in art, the last-named gentleman eventually succeeding Lawrence as the leading portrait-painter of his time, and Reynolds, West, and Shee, as President of the Royal Academy. Mr. D. O. Hill, a gentleman much esteemed as an artist and respected as a man, was a native of Perth. In pencil-sketching he had few equals. He composed well and had a fine eye for colour, but his manipulation was stifling and cumbersome, arising, I have always thought, from too much indoor practice. If an artist leaves nature, nature will leave him. Vamping up landscapes was too much a practice, even among high class men, in Mr. Hill's day, but now, if an artist does not go to nature and court her in all her moods and tenses, his pictures are set at naught. Thirty years ago an artist of very high standing exhibited a large landscape in Edinburgh, full of subject, and he told me it was entirely painted by gas light. Engravings from Mr. Hill's pictures are estimable, because the composition is always charming and the lights beautifully disposed. Richard Wilson and William Woolet initiated this school of artificial prettiness, and it has been well sustained by D. O. Hill and William Miller.

Farther up the river Sir William Murray was engaged on his admirable sketches of Scottish scenery. The pencil of an amateur has rarely produced such contributions to art as these fearless outlines, and where they have been placed in skilful hands for reproduction we have no better reminiscences of the mountains and picturesque lakes of Scotland. The late Kenneth MacLeay, although originally of Argyleshire, passed that portion of life when a love of art is naturally imbibed, in Upper Strathearn. I remember him very well, a handsome youth, rollicking about his father's gate at the east end of Crieff. A few years thereafter there appeared in the shop window of the erratic James Willis, in Nelson Street of Glasgow, two large water-colour drawings of mysterious quality, "The Poor Old Soldier," and "The Shipwrecked Sailor,"—mysterious, inasmuch as they were mere copies of coloured engravings, and thence attributable to some youth who was feeling his way, while in point of fact the work was superlative in breadth and power. I learned with amazement that these drawings were the productons of my lively coeval from Crieff. Mr. MacLeay eventually turned his attention to landscape in oil, and whatever success he may have had in that branch of art, his abandonment of his original walk filled me with regret, for he positively revelled in water-colours.

Mr. Thomas Duncan was born in Perth in 1806. His father, Mr. Samson Duncan, was for many years a successful teacher of music in that somewhat musical city, and his two surviving sons still follow their father's profession. Early in life Mr. Thomas Duncan turned his attention to painting in oil, and many specimens of his earlier work still linger about, and are eagerly sought after. His portrait of James Crow, the baker and old curiosity hunter, is a wonderful piece of simplicity and colour, and highly characteristic of that æsthetic, elderly gentleman. His head of Bailie John Ross cannot be surpassed as a likeness. It is vigorously executed, and is estimable as a souvenir of the old High Street; and that of Dr. Pringle, a man of vinegar aspect, afterwards adopted as a protesting covenanter in "Prince Charlie's Entry," is like the man, but heavy in colour and terrible in mood. One of his earliest fancy pictures, "Water from the Fountain," was painted in the year 1843, and engraved for the Association when it was a very limited affair. In portraiture Mr. Duncan was eminently successful; he possessed that indispensable faculty, a knowledge of character, which enabled him to embody its more salient points, without in any degree losing sight of what was positively before him. An artist in music may sing a solo in such a way that no critic could detect a single deviation from the sheet he held in his hand, yet by no means meet the full intentions of its composer. Another does it from the same sheet, but having mastered its design and capabilities, by exercise of judgment and correct taste, introduces subtle cadences and finely modulated expressions, which as really belonged to the original as the score of it which was before him, and were neither violations of the text nor variations on it, albeit the first performance was a very meagre likeness of the second.

Mr. Duncan's portrait of Mr. Fox Maule is not only fine in composition and colour, but eminently characteristic of that shrewd, plausible gentleman. The pose of the figure shows the wary, indomitable man, and unflinching politician in full development. The head in that of Sir John Macneil, is slightly out of drawing, and in aggravation placed too high on the canvas. It is a matter of regret that Dr. Chalmers did not come through Mr. Duncan's appreciative hands twenty years sooner. The texture of that noble face had lost its firmness, and the eye that fascinated the ardent mind and rebuked the indifferent, was now raised under its heavy lids with painful effort. In Geddes' picture the face and whole figure are like chisellings in iron, crisp, and decided in handling, in expression the very embodiment of the living man, the thumb and fore-finger of the right hand compressed, as if they were riveted together, representing the sententious and resolute orator as if he were about to launch into one of those marvellous passages, which suggested to his hearers that, of all men he was the most deeply read in God's irrevocable decrees.

"Christopher in his Shooting Jacket" has many fine points in detail; the face luminous and solidly painted, and the idea altogether well carried out; but, except in Edinburgh, where Professor Wilson could be, do, or say anything, the idea was little cherished. The man and the picture are out of keeping. At the desk or in the field he was masculine beyond his fellows, but here, dressed in character, he becomes trifling and effeminated. The head is veritably that of Professor Wilson, while the accessories are more fitted for T. P. Cooke. But the picture was doubtless an order. In addition to his perception of character, Mr. Duncan had a felicitous way of drawing out his sitter. During the progress of one of his portraits, the learned Professor called one forenoon and pled that he had an engagement and could scarcely spare an hour; but the palette was set and to it they went, painting, talking, and philosophising. Suddenly the Professor pulled out his watch, exclaiming, "I am an hour behind!"

The Trustees of the National Gallery may congratulate themselves on possessing two of Mr. Duncan's best pictures, and the way they have placed them, leaves no doubt of their full appreciation. The county of Perth may also be proud of their representative man. His own portrait is an unfailing attraction, and must remind many Perth men of their early days. No one should have his likeness twice taken, as I have tried to illustrate in the case of Dr. Chalmers. Mr. Duncan has painted himself in the full vigour of life, and although he is now dead, it is pleasant for all who knew him, to see such an estimable reminiscence of their friend in his best days. But they all yield to "Anne Page and Slender," sweet Anne Page, the lustrous, brilliant Anne. This picture is unsurpassed as a commentary on Shakespeare; she coaxes, she urges, she reasons, she fascinates, not that she is in love but because of "her duty." "Will't please your worship to come in, Sir? The dinner attends you, Sir, I pray you, Sir, walk in." Old Page comes out and swears, "By cock and pie you shall not choose Sir, come, come," and then Anne positively refuses to precede the reluctant wooer in case he should escape. She had no possible motive beyond family civility, for she pleads elsewhere, "Good mother do not marry me to yond fool." The winning face of this arch female is a triumph in art, but I have always felt that the artist has gone a little too far with Slender. He has made folly to infringe on the realm of idiocy; Slender was an incomparable fool, but not an idiot; he says himself, "I am not altogether an ass." It may be difficult to draw lines between what is foolish, what is asinine, and what is idiotic, but in the mental scale Master Abraham Slender is a degree farther down here than Liston or Matthews thought proper to put him. His answers were always shuffling, but always coherent. The poet represents his love for Anne Page as overwhelming to his shallow conceptions, for when she passed him with the wine, instead of saluting her, he merely ejaculated, "O heaven! this is mistress Anne Page." He evaded all their urgings, but his excuses were cunningly devised. When Anne came at his request, she resolved to bring him to an avowal, and said, "Now Master Slender, what is your will?" The contemptible provoking fool puts her off with a joke, not altogether a bad joke certainly, but preposterously ill-timed. "My will! od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I never made my will yet." Nothing discomfited, Anne proceeds, "I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me." He goes into one of those writhing moods in which Mr. Duncan has represented him, and finding nothing to say, he happily observed a scape-goat. Old Page presented himself, and Master Abraham Slender minced out, "You may ask your father, here he comes." Shakespeare makes Sir John Falstaff a licentious knave, Justice Shallow, an incapable public officer, and Master Abraham Slender, a domestic coward; and he is, of course, eminently successful in them all.

But perhaps Mr. Duncan is best represented throughout Scotland by the engravings of his two great Jacobite pictures, Prince Charles Stuart's triumphant entry into Edinburgh, and his concealment after the defeat at Culloden. These two incidents in the career of the unfortunate prince exhibit him in the two extremes of life; in the first he is gallantly mounted and amidst his attached nobles entering the capital city of his forefathers, and in the second, stretched on his folded plaid in a cave of the mountains, with his life in the hands of his retainers at the dignified value of thirty thousand pounds. The first of these pictures is admirably conceived, and executed with much skill and care, the groups of joyous faces and uplifted hands, the finely foreshortened prancing steeds, the impetuous desire to get a sight of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," together with the glowing turrets of the noble old city, would be gratifying to every heart tinctured with Jacobitism, were it not for the sad sequel. Scotchmen need be no way ashamed of the Jacobitism of their forefathers. Charles Stuart was the direct heir to the throne of Great Britain, and where loyalty is strong minor disqualifications are lightly regarded. They fought for Charlie, but they fought in vain; if their motives were mistaken, they died in extenuation. The tender regrets, and drooping hopes of those who to the last followed the fortunes of the proscribed dynasty, are well concentrated in these two pictures. The smiling Canongate of Edinburgh and the desolate cave amidst the Argyleshire hills, tell at a glance the story of the young Chevalier. I am not able to defend Mr. Duncan where he has somewhat closely followed Wilkie in the first picture, but in as far as the picture he followed is concerned, I think that in the various constituents that go to form a really good work of art the follower has the best of it.

Mr. Duncan died in 1845, comparatively a young man, but he has left an art legacy to his country that will carry his memory through many generations. We can little guess what is to come, who is to rise up, and what turn art may take, but Scotland will have attained a higher position than any of her present sons can venture to assign to her, when Anne Page is turned with her face to the wall.

CHAPTER XXII.

JAMES CONDIE.

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."—SHAKESPEARE.

ONE of the most remarkable features of man's career through life is the stolid and indifferent way in which he forms new ties, and submits to the severing of old ones. It is without doubt so far a necessity of his nature. Society cannot afford to wear sackcloth at the dropping of every link in the chain; but in all families and in all communities, there have at all times been, and will at all times be, individuals who, by their influence and bearing, have become so vitally part and parcel of the circle in which they moved, that their absence when dead should be lamented in some degree of proportion to the way their presence was cherished while alive. But this equitable principle is not in healthful action amongst the buying and selling citizens of this changeful world. Men whose lives have been stories of local power and sway often go down to their graves carrying their memories with them, though leaving the benefit of their good deeds behind; while, by some mere caprice of fortune, men whose lives have hovered between the indifferent and the bad, have their imaginary virtues heralded from every churchyard-wall. This led the great poet to say,—

> The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones.

When the national hero dies, the Senate, the Pulpit, and the Press send forth their lamentations. Would that it were the same with lesser communities, for it cannot be denied that many men who have spent their lives in little townships have, in their sphere, exercised as beneficial an influence as those who have fought their country's battles in the field, espoused its temporal interest in the senate, or its spiritual interest in the pulpit. Hence we expect some moving of a city's heart when her marked men leave the street; but it is more characteristic of the race to fawn on rich, living men than to mourn over the good and useful when dead. We open our eyes to the procession of riches, but shut our ears to the sound of the muffled drum.

For many years the Condie family—father, son, and grandson—held the foremost rank as business men and influential citizens of Perth. Thirty years ago, Perth without it would have been like a chess-board wanting one of the squares, entirely out of joint. Throughout broad Scotland, James Condie, of Perth, was a name to buy and sell upon, and more transactions, of one kind or other, passed under its potent influence than any name familiar to Perthshire men. Letters came to his office with the Oban post-mark addressed simply, "Mr. Condie." If a London man wanted a shooting, or a Perthshire man wanted a farm, his first impulse was, "Write to Condie about it." The amount of business resulting from this wide-spread influence was very great, and the patronage much courted and sought after.

In politics Mr. Condie was a Conservative; and great as his influence was, in the early days of the Reform Act, he got credit for more than could be compassed by any one man. The following amusing story is told by William Nicoll, in a letter addressed to his brother Robert, then editor of *The Leeds Times*, and dated "Perth, 26th August, 1837." Politics run high enough at the present time, and crimination meets recrimination with more vigour than taste; but the present race of politicians are poor in invention compared with those of the fourth decade.

> So Stormont is in for Perthshire; Maule was bad enough, but this is worse. The means by which he did get in are horrible in the extreme. Some of them you would see in the papers, but I will tell you one which I don't think is as yet public. A person in the establishment of a certain great Tory lawyer in town told me that they had had writs of sequestration against upwards of forty voters, mostly, if not all, in the Liberal interest, but they were kept back, and hopes held out to the poor farmers that if they voted as they were desired they would be allowed to escape altogether. *They did so*, and —mark the strength of Tory promises—the very day succeeding the election every soul of them was sequestrated.

The news of this terrible story reached me, and after seeing William Nicoll I called at the denounced office for information. Mr. Condie said, "Man, these are awfu' big figures, but wait till I see Maury." After a few minutes I was answered, "It is exactly a month since the election, and not a single sequestration has been issued from this office during that month, try Archie Reid's."

It was confidently expected, by those who desired peace, that an era of political sobriety would succeed the passing of the Reform Bill, and no man wished for such a time with greater earnestness than Mr. Condie; but although such a story as the above would not go far at present, there is no political sobriety, but the most reckless political debauchery. Happily, however, for men who, like myself, have little leaning that way, the world still goes on; and although the air is tainted with reciprocated accusation, there is still room to breathe. In 1833 the goddess of Liberty was expected with every breath of wind, but she came not, and the demon of tyranny waxes stronger day by day. It is proposed by the Permissive Bill to give me the privilege of dictating to my neighbour what he is to sell, and, by the caucus, whom be shall vote for; and I have no doubt whatever but that very breathing room in which I have been exulting, will be put into my hands and that as one of a majority, I shall be called upon to dictate to the minority whether they are to eat their beef roasted or sodden; and to the invalid, whether he is to go to Crieff, Pitlochrie, or Dunblane. "Liberty 's a glorious feast."

No man of his day possessed in fuller action the rare faculty of conducting business smoothly between landlord and tenant than Mr. Condie. He was frequently accused of a lavish use of the *suaviter in modo*, and of "never sending any one away with a sore heart;" but it was only when matters did not end quite satisfactorily that this was fallen back upon, or even discovered. Some men have not the faculty of laying bare their fears to an interested party, the deficiency generally arising from real goodness of heart. The public are not to be pleased. A man who places matters before it in their naked aspect is thought severe; and he who buoys it up by cheering hopes is called time-serving and plausible. But however much Mr. Condie may have tried to soften the edge of adverse circumstances, his main aim was to deal with equity, and to shelter the interests of those who were likely to "have the worst." If any unscrupulous or far-seeing person showed a desire to supersede his neighbour and Mr. Condie became aware of it, he came speedily to the rescue.

A keen sportsman himself, he was rather an equivocal authority on game matters; but his thorough knowledge of the Game Laws in all their bearings enabled him, as far as his own predilections would tolerate, to act with discretion in all cases involving the preservation of game.

In 1837 Sir John Steuart had two farms falling out of lease at the separation of next crop. The steadings were both in ruins, and it was resolved to throw the two farms into one, and build a new steading. The tenant of No. 1 curried favour with the factor in order to secure the double farm; and the tenant of No. 2 being aware of this, began to look out for himself elsewhere. A farm on the Athole property came into the market, and after he had examined it and partially made up his mind, in an unwary moment he took No. 1 into his confidence, not doubting but that the united farms would fill his hands. He made him a party to his offer, and took him to see the farm; but while he was chaffering with the Duke's factor about a modification of rent, his friend No. 1 stepped in, and, although he had abused the farm when consulted about it, he gave £20 more rent, and secured a lease at once.

When tenant No. 2 heard of this, he called on Mr. Condie and told him the story. "Man John, what a fool you were to tell him anything about it. Meet me at the Hospital to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and after I see Chalmers, we will try what can be done." No. 1, after securing the Athole farm, began afresh to open negotiations about the two that were to be joined; but one morning when he went out to begin work, he found his neighbour and one of James Chalmers' clerks staking out ground for a new steading at his very door.

Whether or not John kept this circumstance in healthful remembrance I am unable to say; but the deep ingratitude of the following affair, an affair of more recent date, was enough to blight a life, and shut a man's ears against all the selfish solicitations of his fellow-men. Those who knew the four parties will perceive how intensely characteristic of each were his movements in the business.

Mr. Condie had a client—with a purse very large and a heart proportionately small—for whom he did a trifle of business. This client had a fair daughter who fell in love with one of the clerks in her father's office. Marriage became a necessity, and the old gentleman purchased an ensign's commission for his son-in-law. By the aid of the same purse, he was raised, step by step, until he gained the rank of Captain. One morning, the old gentleman waited on Mr. Condie, primed, loaded, and armed at all points, his drama complete in every detail. He said, in set terms, "My son-in-law is very anxious to obtain the Adjutancy of the —— Regiment, which is at present vacant, and I am quite prepared to pay the money—upwards of £1,000; but a good deal of influence is necessary, besides the payment of the money." Mr. Condie expressed fears of being able to aid in forwarding his object, but his client was ready, and replied, "You are very intimate with Lord Panmure: one word from him would do it." His Lordship was then Secretary at War. Mr. Condie felt a chill come over him at the proposal, but his courage was not equal to a negative, and he replied, "I shall write to Lord Panmure, but I fear it will have no effect." But the plot was laid. "His lordship is to be at Perth Station, on his way north, at four o'clock this afternoon; perhaps you would see him," quoth the pawkie applicant. Mr. Condie, thus caught, consented, and in the afternoon walked up to the station. Lord Panmure arrived, and scarcely had he alighted from his carriage, when the matter was laid before him. "Oh, no, James, I cannot do that! I would do much to oblige you, but I really cannot do that; besides, money would, no doubt, be wanted." "The money is ready," said Mr. Condie. During this conversation, the military gentleman, with contemptible taste, presented himself on the platform, and the quick eye of the practised official at once picked him up. "That is your military friend, James?" "Yes," was the half-suppressed reply. "I don't like him; I don't like him at all," said his lordship, drawing Mr. Condie towards the refreshment room; "he is liker Bardolph than Hercules."

When Mr. Condie returned to his office, he found his client and the Captain's lady waiting for him. They expressed much fretful and unmannerly disappointment, insinuating that the affair had been badly managed.

Within a few days, an enquiry came to Blackfriars House, from Lord Panmure's secretary, about Mr. Condie's military friend—his name, regiment, and rank; and within fourteen days the appointment came, and money not so much as named. Mark the end with horror!—the next time Mr. Condie met this military gentleman in George Street, he declined to acknowledge his patron's salutation!

This is the way influential men have their patronage abused; first taken advantage of and then spurned. The subject of this essay participated deeply in this treatment. I could fill a volume with similar circumstances in the life of my worthy friend of forty years; but I have simply recorded his name amongst those of his contemporaries. I could not do less; and if the position assigned to him took rank from my esteem of the man, it would be higher I shall never forget the thrill of delight with which I met Mr. Condie on one of the crowded thoroughfares of London, in the year 1838. The broad, honest Perth face rose up before me like a glimpse of sunshine darting through a forest. The cordial greeting of the warm-hearted, substantial citizen in the midst of the gay throng sounded oddly but gratefully. The *bon ton* clangour that met me at every step died out of hearing before the "How are ye, my dear fellow?" of the homely Scottish gentleman. Thirty years afterwards I made an appointment to meet him in London, but I found it impossible to be there before he left. His health was giving way, and he writes me regretfully:—

London, May 9th, '54.

MY DEAR P. R.—I am very sorry to say that we are not to meet in London again; I go to Manchester immediately, and home to-morrow. If you had come a week ago I could have accompanied you, as you desired, to Windsor, and Hampton Court, and Dulwich, but that is all past.

Yours very truly,
J. CONDIE.

During Mr. Condie's stay in London at this time, a meeting of farmers and others was held in the George Hotel, at which it was resolved to ask him to a public dinner in the County Hall. He was written to, and, in course of post, returned a peremptory refusal. "What pleasure would it give me," he said, "to see a parcel of men standing up and telling *lees* about me, and me being obliged to *lee* back again. No, no; thanks—many thanks; but I certainly would rather not. Your proposed chairman is my best friend, but do not name such a thing to him."

As time was wearing near its close with him, Mr. Condie fell into deep trouble; and those who knew him best sympathised deeply with him. He set himself to retrieval, but fate had resolved against him, and Timon did not want his plausible Ventidius, nor his churlish, wise Apemantus.

When Fortune in her shifts and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, his dependants,
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top,
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

The picture had another side, however. Mr. Condie had many true friends, who adhered to him in business, in person, and in feeling to the last day of his life. But no amount of heartfelt wishes, no accumulation of friendly pleadings will shut up the grave like a sealed book; if it were so, men would be going about like so many Salathiels. That would not be desirable. Man goes to his long home, but mourners should be seen about the streets.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PATRICK GILBERT STEWART.

"Sir, I have heard another story.
He kept with princes due decorum,
He was a most confounded Tory,
Yet never stood in awe before 'em."
SWIFT.

THE municipal government of Perth, previous to the Burgh Reform Act, has been styled in derogation, "The Beautiful Order." It has been treated scoffingly, and sneered at, but no man could arrive at a valid title to do so by comparing it with the orders, beautiful or otherwise, that have arisen since. The thirteen gentlemen who have filled the civic chair under the new régime have been respectable citizens, men of fair acquirements and popularly elected, but it cannot be said that they were, either necessarily or in point of fact, better men, or that they reflected greater honour on the city, than the thirteen that immediately preceded them: "Of such turf as we have we must build the dyke," and men do not become wise by Act of Parliament. I institute no comparisons, but I willingly aid in removing a stigma that is false in its conception and gratuitous in its application. The municipal authorities were then elected by majorities, and they are now elected by majorities. If the sweets of office were then sought with eagerness, and are now regarded with apathy, it goes to prove deterioration rather than advancement. A man who accepts an appointment with indifference will execute its duties indifferently. During the last twenty years the number of enfranchised citizens of Perth who do not trouble themselves to go to the poll has grown time after time, until, at last election, it formed an important portion of the community. A little more of the pride, and a little more of the consequence which attached itself to office, in the days of the so-called "Beautiful Order," might with propriety be incorporated with the unconcern that now manifests itself in our burgh elections.

As the world grows older, it does not necessarily grow wiser; because the current generation always begins business on its own account, adopting or rejecting the schemes of its predecessors, and all the wisdom it possesses is required for that object, which keeps the stock, hereditary or acquired, in a perpetual state of *status quo*.

In the year 1780 two young men, who had learned their business with the Newrow Linen Weaving Company, began business in the Watergate of Perth, under the firm of Stewart and Macnaughton. They succeeded well in trade, and although they did not amass large fortunes, they both held respectable positions in business, and both obtained civic preferment. Mr. Stewart was first promoted to the municipal chair in the year 1822, and alternately with Provost Ross he held the office for nine years, giving way in 1831 to Mr. John Wright, the well-known brewer. The latter gentleman, after the passing of the Reform Bill, abdicated in favour of Mr. Adam Pringle, who was the first Provost of Perth under the new régime.

For many years Provost Stewart took high rank as a citizen of Perth. In his younger days he was an enthusiastic musician and a leading member of an amateur instrumental band, but when he became agent for the Bank of Scotland, and the cares of a family rose up before him, he forsook his first love, and instead of studying musical numbers he betook himself to the study of number one. In person he was ponderous and heavy limbed. He had a court dress in which he went to Edinburgh to meet George the Fourth, and fourteen years afterwards he appeared in it at a ball in the County Hall. His figure might have passed muster where the circumstances were all known, but when limbs are encased in silk stockings, we expect their development to harmonise, to a fair extent, with their external garniture; but here that fastidious feeling was utterly set at naught. Long afterwards I had the misfortune to twit Mr. P. S. Fraser, of Edinburgh, on Provost Forrest's slovenliness in lying in bed, while his Queen was knocking at the municipal door: "O, quite true," said the great wag, "but it is equally true that the Provost of Perth got up in such a hurry to come over here to meet George the Fourth, that he put on his legs with the wrong ends down."

These personal defects were neutralised in Provost Stewart's case by a sagacious, well-regulated mind, perceptive and energetic business faculties, and gentlemanly disposition. As a politician, he espoused Conservative principles, and fought some stout battles in their defence. During an election he entered into a correspondence with Francis Jeffrey, which the great critic treated with characteristic loftiness. Still the Provost maintained his point and published a clever pamphlet in support of his views. Sensible and moderate in his political creed, he conducted the affairs of the burgh in a liberal spirit and in a manner which met the approval of his fellow-citizens and the magistrates of the county with which it is so deeply involved.

When the writer of these papers began business in Perth, Provost Stewart showed him great kindness, and although neither a great reader nor a book-buyer, his calls and good counsel were always welcome. He had a great appreciation of a joke, and possessed a fund of racy anecdotes, generally relating to the Highlands and Highlanders. These he related without the necessity of assuming the Celtic idiom, for it stuck to him with undiminished pertinacity to the last day of his life. Nothing pleased him more than a chat in the Bank parlour, and his reminiscences of Bank matters were instructive and highly amusing. The following are given, as near as possible, in his own language.

"We had three clients, a brother and two sisters, of the name of Macpherson. They came from Strathtay, and had three hundred pounds lodged with us. Punctually as the balance came round the three called for their interest. One year they did not appear, and when a second passed without a visit we began to anticipate a legacy; but on the arrival of the third year, they were shown in to me here.

'O, how d'ye do? How d'ye do? What has become of you? We were beginning to fear that something had happened, and that you were all dead!' 'O no, Proveest, we're no dead.' 'So I see; what have you been about?' 'We have peen in Amairika.' 'O, indeed! then you've seen the Falls of Niagaara.' 'No, Provost, but we haard them.' With a loud laugh I rejoined, 'If Adam and Eve had been like you we might have a' been in Paradise yet.'"

For a time the bank had a very unsteady accountant, a first-rate officer, but latterly so abandoned to drink, that they reluctantly gave up his case as hopeless. After an absence of some days, he presented himself in a maudlin state at the Bank counter, and expressed a desire to see the manager. He was shown in, and in a whining, pitiful tone he expressed his contrition, pleading evil companionship and deprecating personal tendency. The Provost had made up his mind that the suppliant should be no more behind the Bank counter; but he began to give way before his protestations of amendment, and the delinquent observing this, followed it up by solemn asseverations that he would never again absent himself, morning, noon, or night, from his duty. "Very well," said the Provost, "I will give you another trial." During this repentant interview the petitioner stood between the window and the Provost's chair, and in passing out he bent over that forgiving gentleman's shoulder, with a view, it was thought, of giving grateful expression to his feelings; but no! he cried with the most perfect slang accents, "Ye're back's a' baarm, sir; ye're back's a'baarm!"

Neither Dean Ramsay's old lady, who, on being asked by the sitting magistrate, if she knew where all drunkards go, answered, "Where they get the best whisky;" nor that cool young Arab, who, when asked by Bailie Cleland, of Glasgow, where all Sabbath-breakers go? answered, "Just down to the laigh green;" showed half the amount of stolid abandonment that a client of Provost Stewart's did, when similarly catechised by that well-disposed gentleman. This youth, who came from a neighbouring county, and began business in Perth, lodged a sum in the Provost's Bank, and opened a current account. After a year or two he began to present bills for discount, mostly drawn on, and accepted by tradesmen of the little town he had come from. By and bye suspicions arose that these bills were *machine made*, and after some little correspondence, such was ascertained to be the fact. Fortunately for all parties none of them were current when these suspicions were confirmed. But the Provost, in order to put a stop to the business sent for him, and forthwith he presented himself in the Bank parlour. The lecturer, in order to save his client's feelings, began in a general way; but he might have saved himself the trouble, for the panel never turned a muscle, and when directly accused of presenting bad paper for discount, he did not deny the accusation as a first principle, but stated with boldness that the paper could not be very bad, for it was all paid. Thus discomfited, the Provost went upon another tack. "You must feel," said he, "that when you are forging a bill you are telling a lie, and I suppose you are aware where all liars and forgers go?" The culprit's callousness did not allow him fully to realise the Provost's question, and he answered, "I don't know where they all go, but I generally come here." This closed the account.

Tales were told of the Provost and his friend and countryman Charles Anderson; but Charles denied them all. The following is so characteristic, however, that I am inclined to give it full credit. Provost Stewart was far from being an uncivil man, and if circumstances necessitated his dealing sharply, he did it apologetically, and if possible, without offence. One day, while he was behind the counter, Charles presented two bills for discount. One was taken, and the other handed back. Charles inquired the reason, and the banker would willingly have declined answering him; but, driven into a corner, he replied, "Ye're a very honest man, Charles, but ye're very poor, how is y'ere faither?—its no convenient."

Robert Nicoll composed the first portion of his satirical verses entitled, "The Provost," in Perth, and took Mr. Stewart for his model; but after he went to Dundee he altered it so as to destroy its original identity. The following verses belong to the first set, and as a matter of course, treat a Tory Radically.

He was twenty-first cousin to some Highland laird,
  His tartan was o' the chief's colour;
But nae sort o' wark cam ajee to the Celt
  If ye made him but sure o' the siller!

He bowed and he beckit till by a bit desk
  He had come to a safe kind o' anchor;
And ere lang our slee callant was off to the kirk
  Wi' the dochter o' Guineas the banker!

Mr. Stewart married Miss Robertson, one of the five children of Mr. Laurence Robertson, banker in Perth. Her sisters were Mrs. Peddie and Mrs. Stoddart; and her brothers, Mr. David Robertson, banker in Perth, latterly of Liverpool, and Mr. Laurence Robertson, many years manager of the Royal Bank of Scotland, in the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

One word at parting with the memory of my old fellow-citizen. Without calling the order he belonged to "beautiful" or otherwise, I can look back to the days when he and his immediate successors occupied the civic chair, with more cherished remembrances than I can to any municipal period that has intervened.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN WRIGHT, CRIEFF.

"And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head."
COLERIDGE.

SUCH men as the subject of this paper are by no means common. Peaceable money-making worth, kindness that can neither be bought nor sold, indifference to the world and its ways, are all met with in every-day life, but seldom in combination. Mr. Wright possessed them all in active operation. He was prompt and taciturn to a fault, not to be moved from his way, it mattered little to him what opposition he encountered. He went on slowly and with an air of "hard to be pleased." Happily for him, the immediate concerns of the outer world did not affect him much. He was independent, without encumbrance, self-made, self-contained, and as far as a man could be, self-existent. His means subjected him to many overtures for help, against which he affected to set up a fence of inaccessibility, but still the heart could be moved and through it the hand could be opened. Any man or woman who received a kindness—of whatever nature—from John

Wright, could rely with implicit confidence that it would never meet him on the street. Charles Lamb says, "If you give a neighbour a friendly lift and twit him with it, he owes you no gratitude, you have paid yourself although your coin may not become current." No man ever needed to accuse Mr. Wright of this. Whatever he did with his purse, he kept his tongue on the peace establishment.

Mr. Wright was for many years the Rothschild of Crieff, and all his movements carried influence with them. Circumstances which in the case of a poor man would have passed unheeded by, in his became historical facts. The riches and the stolid eccentricity together, rendered whatever he did or said of great importance, either as amusing characteristics or as showing the whimsical sway of uncounted wealth.

Thirty years ago, a widow woman of the name of Hodge, kept a little grocery shop on the north side of the street, a little east from "The Square." Her husband, William Hodge, a miller with Mr. Caw of Millnab, had died and left her in trouble, with an empty till and two bills current. The first of these bills became due,—as bills will do, in spite of all the counsels of wisdom and prudence—and Mrs. Hodge had only £9 to meet a demand of £14. On the night before the last day of *grace*, she counted her nine notes nine times over, spreading them out one by one, then squeezing them slidingly between her finger and thumb, but no! like "The bachelor of the Albany" they refused, point blank, to increase. She looked again into her threepenny day-book, "Two shillings due in Hill Wynd, ten shillings at Alichmore, but what would that do?" although she got it; she went to her bed despairing. "Tired nature's sweet restorer" would have nothing to say to her, and she conjured up visions of bills and of Pate Smith and the jail. When the morning sun beamed past the old steeple and heavy feet began to tramp along the pavement, she got up and counted her notes again—nine; then she took a slate and set down 14 in large figures, and 9 below, and carefully deducting the less from the greater, 5 still stood out against her. She took down her little shutters, and a decent neighbour wife came in for half an ounce of tobacco. The widow opened her mind to her, trying to obtain relief. "If I were you," said the neighbour, "I would ask the len' o't frae Mr. Wright." "Me!" said the widow, "I never spoke to the man in my life. Borrow five pounds frae a man that I'm feared at, na! na! Lizzie, I couldna' do that." Ten o'clock came round and the bill was presented. She had thought over her neighbour's suggestion and resolved to try Mr. Wright. At twelve he came stalking up the street, hermetically sealed, impervious as one of Chubb's locks. The widow crept up to him and curtseying, said faintly, "Mr. Wright." He paid no attention to her; she then laid her hand gently on his arm, saying, "Ye'll no ken me, Mr. Wright." No reply. "My name's Mrs. Hodge; my husband's dead ye ken, and though I have as much as pay every body, ane o' our bills is due the day, and I have a' the siller except five pound, if ye wa'd len' me that, Mr. Wright, I wa'd pay ye every penny back on this day fortnight." Mr. Wright took out his pocket book and handed her a five pound note. She kept on curtseying, and protesting, and *greetin'*, till her benefactor was several yards away from her, then counting her money once more, she rushed off to Peter Scott's bank and came speedily back with the bill, exulting as much in what she had achieved, as her neighbour Sir David Baird ever did in taking Seringapatam.

Time strode rapidly on, but the widow was a match for it, and by dint of the day book and the till, the five famous pounds were ready at the appointed time. Rothschild came east at twelve as usual, and the widow went out with firmer step. "Mr. Wright," said she. No reply. "I have brought ye the five pound I got the len o' frae ye, and I *canna'* tell ye how much I'm obleeged to ye, I'll no forget it as long as I live." Mr. Wright took out his pocket book, deposited the five pounds, and went on his way.

This was a highly satisfactory transaction, and no doubt many equally satisfactory transactions have occurred, but the peculiarity of this one was that Mr. Wright never opened his mouth at either meeting, and Mrs. Hodge maintained that he did not even look at her.

When the estate of Braco came into the market, Mr. Wright was publicly named as a likely purchaser, the same of Monzie and Culdees, but if he had any such intention he kept it to himself. However, the proprietor of a small estate on the northern slope of the Ochils, had fallen into trouble, and having resolved to sell his little patrimony, he bethought himself of John Wright the rich tanner as a likely customer; accordingly he made overtures to him which received little attention at first, but persevering, Mr. Wright consented to look at the place, and appointed the owner to meet him at Crieff and they would drive to it in Mr. Wright's gig. Accordingly on a cold day in March they started; Mr. Wright, taciturn as usual, did not trouble his fellow-traveller much, but the anxious exposer kept expatiating on the many advantages of his property, by the way. The public burdens were very light, and men of skill said the subsoil indicated coal; and numerous other inducements to purchase were placed before the immobile speculator. When they reached the top of the moor of Orchill, the keen anxious eye of the exposer noticed that a blink of sunshine had fallen on his long cherished home, and he drew Mr. Wright's attention to a white house away up on the verge of the Sheriffmuir, with a few stinted Scotch firs between it and the bitter northern blasts, saying, "Yonder is the place." No reply was made, but the wary theorist gave one steadfast look at the spot indicated, and then away up the back of the Ochils where pertinacious patches of snow were still adhering, then throwing up the gig apron as a hint to his friend to get out, he tightened his reins and wheeling round, drove back to Crieff with accelerated speed. The cold northern slope of the Blackford Hills was not for Mr. Wright's money. There was no use of chaffering about a transaction which would never have a beginning, let alone an end, so he dropped the man and the estate together, giving himself no trouble about the former, whether he ever found his way home, or the latter, whether it ever found a market.

During his long life Mr. Wright's weekly visits to Perth were regular as clockwork; he was punctually on 'Change, and carried on a large business with precision and profit. If his gig did not pass through Methven toll-bar at a certain hour, the pikeman could swear there was something wrong. On one occasion he was driving into Perth past the back of Abercairney, when he came up to Andrew Baxter, a Galvelbeg weaver, on his way to Perth. His feelings were awakened by thinking on the poor man's long pedestrian journey and slowing a little, he said, "Will you take a ride?" Baxter, like a vulgar fool as he was, replied—making for the gig—"I don't care though I do." "I don't care either," said John, and giving his horse the whip, left the astonished weaver in the middle of the gutter. Baxter saw that with himself lay the blame, and went on his remorseful journey. The affair had an amusing but happy termination. Andrew Baxter was a clever man but full of contumacy and talk. He felt that he had lost his morning ride by a palpable indiscretion, and he resolved to recoup himself by going on the opposite tack. So on the return journey he waylaid Mr. Wright at a place on the road where he thought he would be driving slowly, and stepping smartly up to the gig, he said with civil emphasis, "Mr. Wright, I would really be very much obliged to you if you would gie me a ride to Crieff." Mr. Wright *almost* smiled, and throwing aside the portentous apron, took the philosophical weaver in beside him, but both history and tradition are silent as to what passed between that ill-assorted pair that night on their lengthy journey. Baxter would argue with a windmill and have the last word, but it is clear that he had not tried it on that occasion with Mr. Wright, for the gig was pulled up at the loan of Galvelbeg and the weaver let down, whereas if he had attempted any of his speculative disputes he would undoubtedly have been dropped at New Fowlis.

CHAPTER XXV.

ROBERT EDIE.

"The sun came up upon the left.
Out of the sea came he;
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea."
COLERIDGE'S "ANCIENT MARINER."

IT is certainly essential to the successful delineation of every man's peculiar qualities that the very nature of the circumstances into which he is led, should aid in their development. If you want to test a preacher, you place him in the pulpit; if an actor, you put him on the stage; if a merchant, you take him on 'Change. But in studying the points of interest in the character of such a man as Robert Edie, the accessories must be simple, quiet, and unobtrusive. Were I to place him in the midst of a giddy throng, or in a situation where prompt, energetic action would carry an end, I would fail in unfolding a single latent peculiarity, except his unfitness for the situation in which I had placed him. Hence the quiet incidents of a three days' accidental companionship form all the material out of which I have to form this short notice of an interesting and really good man.

Mr. Edie came originally from Fife, perhaps unconscious of the normal superiority claimed as the birthright of every child of that ancient kingdom, but certainly bringing with him reminiscences of some of its best men, and of a few of its most characteristic days. Dr. Douglas, Andrew Lumsdaine and Lady Anne Lindsay had all passed before his day; but a bright galaxy had arisen, of which Mr. Edie was proud, not exulting in parallelisms, or local peculiarity, but cherishing the glimpses of budding eminence which his early life had afforded him, and nursing what appeared to be a leading feature of his mind—an intense admiration of every man and of every thing that had fairly and unequivocally acquired greatness.

One sunny Wednesday afternoon in the month of July, 1847, as I was slowly pacing the deck of the steamer "Perth," of Dundee, while she was clearing out for her weekly voyage to London, a respectable looking little gentleman, dressed in black, came up, and, offering his hand, spoke kindly to me by name. I did not remember him: but at starting, a *compagnon de voyage* is always welcome, provided you are not already furnished with one, or more: so I cordially received my fellow-traveller, and, except during hours of sleep, we did not separate until he left London on the following Saturday.

He told me his name was Edie, and that he farmed Elliothead, near the Bridge of Earn. Mr. Ballingal, a Fife gentleman, accompanied him, and they were each on his first visit to the great Metropolis. As we bounded out of the Firth before a stiff breeze and under roaring steam, Mr. Edie drew my attention to the places of interest along the coast of Fife: the classic St. Andrews, with its stormy bay: and, away to the south-west, the high-lying Magus-moor, where an unprincipled churchman met his terrible doom, and Scotland incurred one of her terrible scandals; while from the offing the Bell-rock light-house loomed on our weather-bow, holding to its base in the midst of the heaving ocean like Lear in the storm, done in porphyry. The wind blew, the clouds rolled, the waves tumbled, and the breakers dashed, but that work of man's hands treated them all with apparent contempt.

As night began to close around us, Mr. Edie's friend betook himself to his berth, while he and I adjourned to the cabin for the purpose of discussing some beer, and some matters of interest which began to spring up between us. He told me this was his first visit to London ; and that, after remaining till Saturday afternoon, he intended going down by railway to Peterborough, and staying there over Sunday with a friend. I expressed my surprise that such a very short time should be held enough for his first sight of such a vast city. He replied, "Beyond London itself there are only two things in it which I care much about seeing, and if I could only make sure of getting a sight of them I would be quite satisfied."

My curiosity was much excited. What two things in London could it possibly be that this sedate elder of the Free Church of Scotland desired so much to see, that he undertook a journey of four hundred miles for little other purpose? I thought of the Houses of Parliament—No ! he could make sure of these. The National Gallery and the British Museum—No ! he could certainly see them for one shilling. Rowland Hill's Tabernacle in the Borough and the Catholic Chapel in Moorfields — No ! Sunday was the day for them, and he was to leave on Saturday. Guess again. Drury Lane Theatre and the Italian Opera —Certainly not ! These cogitations exhausted my patience, and while Mr. Edie was talking away about some other matters, I struck in, "Might I ask, Mr. Edie, what two things in London you are so anxious to see, that you have restricted the fruit of so long a voyage to them alone?" "Oh, yes," he replied ; "they are St. Paul's Cathedral and the Duke of Wellington."

The generous enthusiasm of the man prevented me even smiling. There were no longings after the classic oratory of the Bishop of London, or the Dean of St. Paul's; no hankering after a higher development of Disruption politics, or Presbyterian exclusiveness ; but a simple desire to see the great temple in which so many generations had worshipped, no matter what their form, and the "hero of a hundred fights," no matter whether he fought for his country in the field, or for his class in the senate—Mr. Edie wanted to see "St. Paul's Cathedral and the Duke of Wellington."

The numerous passengers had gradually disappeared. The Dundee draper, who alleged that he had cheques in his pocket sufficient to purchase half the silks and calicos that were to be found in Fore Street, and the uproarious butcher from Newgate Market, who swore that he had penerated so far on his travels into the West Highlands that the slow and benighted inhabitants were still praying for George the Fourth, and the dust under the inn-beds belonged to "the venerable age of James the Sixth of blessed memory," had both retired, and Mr. Edie and I were left alone.

I rallied him on his admiration for the Duke of Wellington, remarking that soldiering was surely an inapposite subject of study for a man who had taken such a forward part in theological controversy. He replied, "I detest war, but I admire talent in whatever shape it shows itself. I have plenty of theological controversy at home, and do not require to go to London in search of it. Perhaps a little relief from such matters is more what I desire." He then told me the following story, which greatly increased my interest in him:

"When I was a young man I went, by invitation, to a harvest-home at a neighbouring farm. A party was there from the Manse, consisting of the minister's son—a tall, fair-haired youth of sixteen, his two sisters, and a stout, square-shouldered lad of about the same age. They were very different in character as well as in person. The fair-haired youth was very fleet, a fine dancer, and of a yielding temperament; his friend was no dancer, but was an adept at a round of Scotch proverbs, and it was even alleged that if his memory failed to supply him when it came to his turn, his invention came in to the rescue. He was, moreover, hard-headed and resolute. After the maiden feast, we all went to the stack-yard for a game at "Barley-branks." The girls endeavoured to keep the stacks between them and the moon, but Tom led on a flank movement, and made them bound like grasshoppers. The fair-haired youth caught them at all corners, but somehow they always escaped from him; whereas his slower-going companion, when he made a capture, was not so easily shaken off. The evening was spent by some in dancing, by others in playing at all sorts of rollicking games, the two youths from the manse making themselve conspicuous at whatever they engaged in, and being the frequent subject of remark. These two young men made each an important figure in the world afterwards."

All anxiety I asked, "Who were they, Mr. Edie?"

"Dr. Chalmers and Sir David Wilkie," replied the privileged Fifian.

D. "These men were your personal friends afterwards, I presume?"

E. "They were my personal friends before that. Wilkie left Fife a young man, but my intimacy with Dr. Chalmers has continued uninterruptedly till this hour."

D. "During the three years that Chalmers and Irving were conjunct ministers of St. John's Church, Glasgow, I was a young sitter in the congregation, and imbibed ideas of preaching that, alas, were never to be realised."

E. "It is not only as a preacher that he excels, but whatever he engages in he does it with so much singleness of heart and earnest devotion that to know him is to love him."

D. "Did you ever observe any of those youthful eccentricities that common report gives him credit for?"

E. "Nothing but what you like to see in young men; he was lively and energetic, yet thoughtful, and, amongst youth, remarkable for an inflexible sense of justice. Every one must have his right, whether it was obtained by persuasion, stiff argument, or fighting,"

D. "I heard him introduce the Reverend Mr. Somerville to the new Chapel-of-ease in St. John's parish. The sermon was intensely practical. He read out his text, but no divisions or subdivisions. On he went in whispers, not loud but deep, clenching the pulpit with his square, bony fingers; the most gorgeous images seething through his rugged provincialisms, the little unshapely scrap of paper for ever going wrong, and the gown and bands requiring incessant adjustment."

E. "Do you remember the text—I should like much to read that sermon."

D. "No, I do not remember the text; but the sermon will, no doubt, be amongst his collected works. I shall try to give you some idea of it, that you may know when it comes in your way; remember, however, that it is five-and-twenty years ago; and as I draw entirely on my memory, my version may have only a faint resemblance to the great original. He inculcated the absolute necessity of a holy life on earth, in order to obtain the necessary *moral* *adaptation* for a life in heaven, thus: 'Our ideas of heaven may be too ethereal. For aught that we know, its external glories may consist in gorgeous landscapes, wood, valley, and waterfall—that would be no heaven for the blind; or in choruses of seraphic music, modulated to the lofty conception of the angelic host—that would be no heaven for the deaf; or in strains of impassioned eloquence and apothegms of perfect wisdom—that would be no heaven for the man of defective intellect. All—all—must undergo the *moral adaptation*; and whether all or any of these be the realisations of a future world, holiness must be the pervading principle, so to be fit for entering heaven. Be ye holy.' He was remarkable for singular application of words, not only in spontaneous debate, but in his most studied discourses. In pressing the spread of the Gospel, he would say, 'The Gospel ought to be expatiated over the length and breadth of the land.' And, in urging a point, 'I demand your unbewildered attention.'"

During this conversation, morning had broken in upon us, and before turning in, we went to take a round on deck. The weather was foggy in the distance, but clear a long way round the ship; the sea calm, but sparkling in the hot radiance of the coming sun, like metal simmering in a pot. Suddenly a vibrating filament of the sun appeared above the watery horizon, resembling, through the fog, a piece of iron at welding heat. Slowly the great luminary emerged, his expanding disc encompassing a prodigious breadth of sea. The distant fog enabled us to look the sun in the face. All we wanted was an object to put in contrast. The thought was scarcely formed when the officer of the watch came running along the quarter-deck, and placing a telescope across the gunwale, cried to me to "look at the sun." By this time the orb was more than half its diameter above the sensible horizon, and slowly creeping across the lower margin of its visible surface from right to left, appeared to me the tiniest possible model of a ship, under a press of sail. "What is it?" I cried, and moved the glass to my companion. "I take it to be one of the Aberdeen traders on her voyage to London?" the officer replied. "She is surely sailing north," I said in answer. "Oh, no; it is only the sun and we that are too many for her," suggested the officer, waggishly. "How many English miles do you think the ship is distant?" I enquired. "Perhaps ten," was the answer. "Do you see such interesting sights often?" enquired my fellow *voyageur*. "Oh, no; we require the sun, the ship, the mist, and the glass to be all in conjunction, and that may not happen once in a lifetime." I can readily conjure up recollections of this interesting phenomenon by thinking of a butterfly moving across a circular target of twenty feet diameter.

Next day we had many conversations about the youth of Sir David Wilkie.

E. "Between the time that he returned from Edinburgh and the finishing of 'The Country Fair,' the pencil was, in waking hours, scarcely ever out of his hand, Sunday or Saturday, at kirk or market, and much scandal was raised about his sketching in the kirk. One of the elders of Cults went to remonstrate with his father. The worthy minister complained that too much was made of the matter, and by way of excusing his son's active enthusiasm, produced a chalk drawing of a human foot. The elder was unappeasable, and said snuffily, "It is liker a fluke than a foot."

D. "Wilkie was, all his life, such a careful drawer, that one is forced to view this as a mere piece of ill-nature."

E. "So it was, no doubt."

D. "The present minister of Cults told me himself, with marked indifference, that when Mr. Gillespie got possession of the manse of Cults, two of the smaller rooms were covered with *ugly* faces, which he ordered to be washed out, and when he, Mr. Anderson, succeeded, he ordered the whole to be papered over. If I had seen these drawings, I have no doubt of having found amongst them many familiar faces, possibly the perplexed mother in 'The Pitlessie Fair,' or the musical mason in 'The Blind Fiddler,' or the abstracted newspaper-reader in 'The Village Politicians,' or a hundred others whose identity is unmistakable, and who eventually took their places in one or other of his faithful delineations of Scottish domestic and rural life."

E. "A great many of his sketches are scattered through Fife, and the possessors of them are beginning to have some sense of their value."

D. "'The Pitlessie Fair,' which created so much disturbance in Stratheden, illustrates that fact very clearly; Mr. Kinnear paid twenty-five pounds for it, which, in the circumstances, was perhaps a fair price, the prompt, early patronage taken into account. But mark the sequel. An intimate friend of mine offered, for the liberty to engrave it, seven hundred pounds in money, a proof impression of each of Wilkie's seventy engraved subjects, and fifty proofs of the engraving from itself, which, *in cumulo*, cannot be stated at less than twelve hundred pounds."

E. "And would Mr. Kinnear not accept of the offer?"

D. "No! and while apparently not averse to his picture being engraved, he declined naming his price, and the fine picture has been lost to the general public. Latterly it has become a fashion to decry Wilkie, the initiative being taken by Mr. John Ruskin, a man who, within the same year—nay, in the same paper—absurdly lauded and abused him. In this way he did it; he restricted the Community of Artists, ancient and modern, to six! and hesitated about introducing Wilkie, eventually casting him out, but giving his reason. Now, if a man makes such a narrow escape of being one of the six artists which the world, ancient and modern, has produced, why decry him? Could Mr. Ruskin not have drawn up his sublime category, and left Wilkie where he left the hundred thousand others? The most absurd portion of the story is, his introducing Richard Wilson, the clever painter of a bundle of meretricious landscapes, where objects are set in conjunction that never met since the world began, and never will meet so long as the principle of attraction is met by that of repulsion. The sanity of the man might well be doubted who would draw up a list of the six greatest novelists which the world has produced, naming Mary Ann Radcliffe and keeping out Sir Walter Scott."

E. "I would be sorry to blame any one for indifference about our great countryman, because I was long indifferent myself; but a man who has afforded the public so much pleasure, and was himself altogether so estimable, ought not to be lightly esteemed."

D. "It will be a matter of regret to you to learn that there are artists living that can no more set a palette or mix pigments than they could compound the witches' cauldron, yet will turn up their august noses at Wilkie, and stamp and strut as if a bedaubed canvas were necessarily a picture, forgetting that a man may know a good shoe from a *bauchle* although he has not been bred a shoemaker. The Cults elder thought Wilkie could not draw a foot, but the public have found out that he knew the anatomy of the human hand, when clothed with flesh and blood, better than any man of his day. In drawing, grouping, colour, character, and feeling your great countryman had few equals, and no superior."

On arriving at Hore's Wharf, I said to Mr. Edie, that if his friend and he would accompany me to a house in the heart of the City, where I had frequently boarded, we would have breakfast, and I would try to find St. Paul's and the Duke of Wellington. This was at once agreed to, and we drove to 22, Ironmonger Lane. The landlord was a native of Pittenweem, rejoicing in the classic name of Joseph Andrews, so my Fifish friends agreed to board with their countryman. This is the house to which a Perth friend of mine went to board, on the occasion of his first visit to London. On his return, his mother asked. "Where did you lodge in London?" "At 22, Ironmonger Lane, Cheapside," he replied. "O aye, Jamie," said the old lady, "I was sure if there was a cheap-side in a' London ye wad find it out!"

For some years before and after 1835, this rather well-frequented Scotch house was tenanted by Joseph Andrews and Kirsty his wife; but one morning, the year before the coronation of our good Queen Victoria, Joseph put on his best suit, packed up his portmanteau, and having placed a nice little pile of carefully selected sovereigns in the breast pocket of his coat, he told his watchful spouse that he was going down to Greenwich to spend a day with an "old shipmate." Being naturally somewhat of a sea-faring disposition, the proposal did not surprise her much; so he went off without "the better horse" exercising her veto. Next day he returned not, nor next week, nor next year. Nay, for five long years did this lone woman fret and pine, and worry her customers by declaring, "I might as well have no husband at all."

Eventually she lost patience, and married a second husband right off, keeping her own secret and the old door-plate. But "the course of true love never did run smooth," and one morning the great bell of St. Paul's had just rung out five, and day was breaking, when the brass knocker of No. 22 struck the hollow door like a sledge-hammer, sending its echoes through every hole and cranny between Gresham Street and Cheapside. The door was opened, and a stranger carrying a carpet-bag came boldly into the passage. He wore a rough sailor's jacket, and a fur cap with the flaps turned down over his ears, and was altogether rather too fierce-looking for the newly-wakened girl's nerves. "Do you want a bed, Sir?" she asked, timidly. "I want the mistress," said Bluebeard, striding up the first flight of steps. "She is in bed, Sir," said slavey. "I will go to her," said Bluebeard. "Oh, no, Sir!" said slavey, and ran to intercept him; but with undaunted presumption and mysterious geographical knowledge, he went straight to "missesses" room, and, going in, proceeded to shake up the dame. The poor girl listened nervously, expecting to hear a shout of murder. She did not wait long when a round oath came from the scene of conflict, followed by a loud scream and a half smothered under-current of swearing. Speedily the stranger came out of the room, and that with greater force than a man was likely to come of his own volition, and a pair of boots followed him with as fierce impetuosity as if they had been charged with gunpowder. The stranger remonstrated, but "they knew not Joseph." Bluebeard walked into the parlour and, throwing off his cap and coat, ordered breakfast.

The return of the long-lost Joseph, proved at first a very disturbing business at No. 22; but when people are reasonably moderate in their expectations difficulties that may at first appear insurmountable can be easily accommodated. It was finally arranged, and that without attorney or priest, that the husband in possession should remain master in the meantime, and that the husband *in petto* should take upon himself the exalted office of "Boots." Rather humbling for Bluebeard! But the reserved chance of succeeding was worth consideration, so he took kindly to his office, and for a good many years Joseph was well known as "Boots" at No. 22. About 1842 the husband *in loco* died, and the husband *in petto* came into office; and that morning, when my two friends and I drove up to the door, a spectacle presented itself which all but sent me into fits. At the head of the first flight stood Joseph Andrews, clad in doleful black, every available part of his body hung with trappings of woe, sufficient in all to mount a parish hearse; a capacious black coat, with the sleeves reaching a little beyond the points of his fingers, and two bands of white muslin, each about three inches broad, sewed round the cuffs, a web of white cambric tied round his neck, with ends as big as a sheet of quarto post, a crape band reaching to the top of his hat and descending in two massive folds nearly to the calves of his legs. Then the trousers were of the true sailor cut, reaching to the ground of course, and wide enough to absorb the boots from heel to toe. When he lifted his hat to give us welcome, he did not lift it off his head, but off the top of his shirt collar, which went all round his head in the same way as a lady daintily places a piece of white paper round a bouquet of flowers; only Joseph reserved an opening for mouth purposes. As soon as I had recovered breath, for it may be believed that this dismal pageant had taken it quite away, I cried, "Hillo, Joseph! what's all this about?" He raised his arm exactly like the ghost in Hamlet, and forcing out about an inch of finger, pointed down to the burying-ground on the other side of the lane, saying, in a voice compounded of joy and grief that Kemble himself was scarcely equal to, "She's down there now, and I am lord and master: she's down there now."

When told this tale of true love, my two friends opened their eyes in amazement, and when they drew comparisons between Bluebeard in the bedchamber, and the piece of vital mortcloth before them, it opened a vista in human life to which the dwellers round the "Blue Lomonds" are utter strangers.

Breakfast over, we adjourned to St. Paul's. I purposely led my friends, by a circuitous route, to the bottom of Ludgate Hill. The morning light threw strong shadows on the west front of the building, giving breadth to every pillar and cornice, while the golden ball and cross loomed away up among the half doubtful rising smoke. The current of eager business people began to set in, jostling the impatient sight-seers; but they elbowed their way until the object of their solicitude stood up in sullen and majestic grandeur before them. Half-past nine rang out from Bow bells, and at ten we were round and back again at Ludgate Hill, Mr. Edie reminding us that the journey was a mile to a spider, who had to dip into every intricacy. The monuments were carefully examined. I pointed out a stair, where a soldier that I had met in my early days got his back broken at Lord Nelson's funeral. "What became of him?" was asked. "When the back healed it took a shape like the section of a circle, and of such strength that twenty years afterwards he could carry with ease five hundredweight. He had two shillings and sixpence a day as an out-pensioner of Kilmainham Hospital, and a Peninsular medal," I replied. By pertinacious climbing we reached the top of the dome, from whence we saw the people swarming through the streets like insects, and felt the hum of busy life as it came up through the twinkling atmosphere, loaded with joy and grief, fever and gin, the loud laugh and the wail of sorrow, all floating imperceptibly on the pregnant air. In one direction long reaches of the Thames crowded with shipping, and farther on the Surrey Hills fringed with the gold of approaching harvest. In another, over the smoke of immediate London and the suburban hamlets, great expanses of merry England, Enfield Chase, Epping Forest and Waltham. Exultant, sorrowing, rejoicing old England!

At a few minutes past eleven we were at the York Pillar, and on reaching the bottom of the flight of steps, I observed the Duke of Wellington on horseback coming slowly along the front of Carlton Buildings. I temporized with my enthusiastic fellow-traveller, asking him, "Are you satisfied with your visit to St. Paul's?" "Yes, highly satisfied," he replied. Laying my hand upon his shoulder, I said with marked emphasis, "Well, there is the Duke of Wellington." The two positively laughed at me. "O, impossible!" said Mr. Edie; "that cannot be him; there is nobody looking at him. No, no! that cannot be the Duke." The two gentlemen had made so much of seeing the great General, that I thought it a pity to let them lose so good an opportunity, and urged their attention. "Depend upon it, that is the Duke. He is Commander-in-chief, and is on his way to the Horse Guards. Look at his groom, with the brown livery, coming far behind. Step on, and if you lift your hats, you will see him raise the first and second fingers of his right hand to his hat as a return salute." No, they declined that, which provoked me; and the Duke came slowly up. There was no one near; and when I lifted my hat, he did exactly as I predicted. This staggered them a little, and Mr. Edie coolly asked me to enquire at a man who was sitting on one of the forms, with his back to us, if that was the Duke. "No!" I replied, "I shall do nothing of the kind; I know it is; but you may ask him if you choose." Mr. Edie with great modesty went up to the man, and touching his arm said, "Please sir, do you know if that is the Duke of Wellington riding away down there?" The man looked over his shoulder and said, in the driest possible manner, "Yeas, I should say it 'eeas." The two strained off, like hounds from the slips, and managed to reach the Horse Guards before the Duke. They saw him alight and chat a few minutes with a gentleman before entering, and they came back full of pride, which I rather dashed, out of revenge, by asking if his grace bowed to them.

I did not let Mr. Edie easily off from this escapade, but years after, when we met, I asked him, "When did you see the Duke of Wellington?" His answer was a suppressed laugh and an explanation, "I thought it too much good fortune that the two things in London which I had most set my mind on seeing should both come in my way before I had been four hours in it." The good easy man from Strathearn seemed unconscious of the fact that there were hundreds of thousands moving through the streets of London on that summer day who had never seen the Hero of a hundred fights, and probably another hundred thousand wallowing amongst its *back slum* population, who had not even heard of him.

Mr. Edie died in 1851, under circumstances that enabled all who knew him to say that, as he lived he died. If enthusiasm without bigotry, and piety without ostentation, are estimable endowments of the human mind, I found them the most prominent features in his character, and while admitting that my short acquaintance with him may be thought insufficient to justify me in speaking confidently, it is fortunate for me that I am backed by the recorded opinion of such an authority as Dr. Chalmers, of whom Mr. Edie was a lifetime friend and disciple.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN.

"Who is he that hath clothed himself with honour, that is spoken of in the City with praise, and that standeth before the king in his council? Even he that hath shut out idleness from his house, and hath said unto sloth, 'Thou art mine enemy.'"—ECONOMY OF HUMAN LIFE.

THREE eminent Scotsmen, now dead, all of whom I have known, are constantly associated in my mind as akin in manner though diversified in talent; in grandeur of mind similar, but in its development wide as the antipodes:

these were the Rev. Edward Irving, Professor Wilson, and the Rev. George Gilfillan. Irving was eloquent, enthusiastic, and pious, but mistaken. Wilson was deep-read, deep-learned, felicitous, and droll, but ireful. Gilfillan was moderately gifted, energetic, and generous-hearted, but profuse. The first-named reverend gentleman preached eloquently and prayed fervently, but he wrote comparatively little for the press, and as a natural consequence, that little was profoundly studied. Suasive in reasoning and fluent in diction, the learned Professor wrote snatchily, but with amazing vigour and concentration; and had Mr. Gilfillan, whose duties as a minister and ever-active church-disciplinarian were, no doubt, highly onerous, written less, the element of duration, in what he did write, would have been more deeply infused. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," neither is it in him to increase them. However versatile and however assiduous he may be, quantity must involve dilution where there is only one productive faculty. He may write one page in a day, full of mind and original thought; but will he increase the number, and go on day by day without visible exhaustion? Reason and experience say No. I admit there are numerous examples to the contrary, but there are also numerous examples of men living one hundred years, and we are told on high authority that it is "by reason of more strength" that they do so; yet he would be a bold man as well as a strong one that would make the reaching of that great age an element in his speculations.

The intense feeling manifested by the people of Dundee on the death of Mr. Gilfillan must have arisen more from their generous recollections of his large-hearted, lovable nature than from any sense that a deep wound had been inflicted on their pulpit services, or that the world of letters had become paralysed. One leading Dundee newspaper says, "the whole of Scotland was startled by the shock of the sudden death of its most distinguished author and minister," which very conclusive statement, instead of exciting regret in the minds of those who never heard the sound of the reverend gentleman's voice, awakened conflicting sentiments, and personal opinions that had better never been moved. Mr. Gilfillan was, no doubt, one of a class of men that form the salt of the earth, but the amount of local fervour and pathos awakened by his death was quite out of proportion with the position he held in life, either as a preacher, or a man of letters. Kindly social qualities and good citizenship, naturally endear a man to his own immediate circle, but when these are paraded before the cold outer world in conjunction with claims of imperial superiority, they are in imminent danger of being scrutinised, and possibly pooh-poohed. This excess of loyalty is however, an error on the right side. "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets," was the order of the old world, and is the natural inheritance of the new. Mr. Gilfillan's chapel stood in the very centre of Dundee, he had for many years gone out and in before the throng of her busy citizens, and when, without an hour's warning, his remarkable figure disappeared for ever, his friends were deeply grieved, and the general community

Lamented a chief of the people should fall.

Perhaps his own words came up before them as a warning—" some men are shovelled out of memory as soon as they are shovelled into the tomb." But although in their encomiums and press lamentations they certainly drifted into excess, it was a pardonable departure from the rules of good taste, and was much easier overlooked than the stolid callousness which I have more than once taken occasion to complain of in the course of these essays. Respect for the worthy men of the earth as they pass away, is a commendable feeling of our nature, besides an evidence that we keep in healthful remembrance the memorable injunction,

Be ye also ready.

Before his death last August, Mr. Gilfillan had finished a third work on Burns, and thereby given evidence of a frank conciliatory spirit; for in early life he joined issue with his friend the Reverend William Anderson, of Glasgow, in leading on the sanctimonious crusades which for a long series of years beset the quivering memory of the poet. The simple fact, apart altogether from what the forthcoming life may be, gives unequivocal evidence of a changed mind; for much as Burns and his works have been decried during periodical eruptions of saintly ardour, no one has ventured to embody these captious feelings in an extended life of the illustrious poet. Indeed, so far as it has appeared, Mr. Gilfillan's memoir offers to be a valuable contribution to the literature of Burns. It is to be no in-door painting, but one taken from nature: the haunts, the homes, and the proud, honest struggles that acted so powerfully in the formation of his character are examined and carefully considered; the authors personal knowledge of the country from whence the poet's ancestors came, enabling him to give his work an interesting start.

The number of lives of Robert Burns that issue from the press, year by year, is a thing beyond all precedent; no literary man can go peaceably down to his grave until he has said something, wise or otherwise, about the Ayrshire ploughman. That short life of his was fraught with the texts of ten thousand sermons. It was singular beyond all other lives; it was not a life of penury nor of rubies and gold; it was neither the life of a prophet nor a priest, nor a man of war; it was not spent in the senate, in the academy, or in the cloister, but amongst the pine-woods, and beside the Afton, and the Doon, and the Ayr, where it became impressionable as water, yielding as the bough that shrinks before the wind, and unexampled in its humanity.

One abject feature stains every life of Burns, and we only reach the second page of Gilfillan's when it presents itself. He tells us that William Burness had gone to Edinburgh, from whence he sent occasional remittances to his aged parents at Clochanhill. "Once a bank note of some value arrived, they stared at it with astonishment, they had perhaps seen such a thing before only in the hands of haughty lairds or cruel factors at an unapproachable distance." Now individual cases no doubt arise, but lairds are not necessarily haughty, neither are factors necessarily cruel. "The insolence of office," and "the factor's snash," are strong images used for an immediate purpose, but they do not initiate a claim to characterise in ordinary life lairds as "haughty," or factors as "cruel." The saying is abstractly not much to complain of, but at the very outset of a memoir, where we expect candour and manly forbearance, we are sorry to see creeping in, that class antagonism which, as we have stated, unhappily holds too prominent a place in every published biography of Robert Burns. We have seen his countrymen abused for neglecting him; the Government abused for putting him into the Excise, Mr. George Thompson abused for not forcing money upon him, and Mr. Riddel of Woodley Park, abused for allowing him to dip too freely into his generous claret; all as if the great poet had been a piece of mere facile simplicity, that could be moulded, fashioned, and treated at the caprice of every one with whom he came in contact, whereas he was positively a ruling power, a strong minded, resolute, proud man, that no one dared to tamper with. One remarkable incident proves the position he held. He thought the Dumfries ladies rather partial to red coats, and he scrupled not to tell them his mind. On one occasion entering a ball-room, he found Miss Benson moving into a waltz with an officer. He took no notice of her, but the instant she observed him she withdrew her hand, whispering "There's Burns"! We cannot predict with much confidence what Mr. Gilfillan's final estimate of the poet's character will be. In 1846, he described his life and death as overwhelming in their wickedness and remorse. In 1856 he characterised his life as a "deep and painful tragedy," thus rendering those who value his opinion somewhat solicitous about what is to come in 1879. But he is no literary quack, but a repentant admirer, and he has made deep enquiry and writes in a kindly earnest spirit, which makes his readers hope for the best.

During the early years of the century, the Presbytery of Auchterarder initiated that demonstrative career which culminated in the disruption of the Church of Scotland. Religious controversy as the frequent accompaniment of religious zeal waxed wroth within its borders. Such preachers as Russell of Muthill, and Cameron of Monzie, amongst the churchmen, and Imrie of Kinkell, and Gilfillan of Comrie, amongst the Seceders, kept up the balance of power in the pulpit, while they fed with bitter ingredients the outdoor sectarianism. In the midst of these party combatings, George Gilfillan was born at Comrie, and whether or not they exercised any planetary influence over the young dissenter, they foreshadowed in strong type his character and future destiny. His father the Reverend Samuel Gilfillan, was a highly popular preacher of the same school as that to which the son adhered, energetic, unsparing, eccentric and plain spoken. In his life of Dr. Wm. Anderson, George Gilfillan tells that the reverend gentleman was accused of entering his pulpit on the first Sabbath of January, and wishing his congregation a good new year. This was denied, but it was highly characteristic, for it will ever be found that the clergyman of an eccentric turn, is constantly meeting with little peccadilloes that enable him to gratify his peculiar tendency. Rowland Hill, Sydney Smith, William Anderson, and Samuel Gilfillan, had many *asides*, while Chalmers, Thomson, and Irving, would not bend the proud knee to any such weakness. A young friend of mine accompanied his father to hear the Reverend Samuel Gilfillan preach at the sacrament of Pitcairngreen. The tent was placed at the bottom of the hill which rises behind the village, while the congregation sat away up on the rising amphitheatre. The situation was not only well suited for the hearers, but it afforded the preacher complete surveillance of every movement amongst his audience. Two urchins sitting near my young friend listened a short while to the learned gentleman's prelections, but getting uneasy they began to move towards the outside of the throng. Gilfillan observed their movements, but said nothing until they had nearly gained the open ground, when he shouted, "Come back my lads." The delinquents only mended their pace, and when he vociferated a second time, "Come back my lads," adding, "I have something to tell you," they took to the hill, and the louder he cried, the faster they ran, until they disappeared beyond the horizon. The preacher went on with his discourse as if there had been no interruption.

On another occasion the reverend gentleman's audience had their risibility dangerously provoked. He was preaching from a tent surrounded by an attentive audience. The plate for receiving the offering stood away back about thirty yards from the place where the people were seated, and when the service began, the elder in charge left it and drew near the tent, keeping a "greedy glower" on the late comers as they entered the prescribed ground. While the preacher was doling out his commendations of the good, and denouncing evil doers, a sturdy, well-dressed little boy, four years of age, observed the distant solitary stool, and leaving his mother's side, he made his way stealthily towards it; many of the people saw the proceeding but they dreaded no evil; when the young man reached the plate, he bent over its edge, apparently admiring the little bing of bawbees that reposed upon its bosom. Presently he stuck his hand amongst them, and lifting as many as he could grasp, he spread them among the rank grass as far as he had strength to throw them. A rush was presently made towards the scene of action, but when the young rascal saw it he commenced sowing with both hands, and as his mother stretched forth her hand to seize him, he gave the stool a shove, upsetting plate, stool, and remaining bawbees into the middle of a bush of whins. The audience was paralysed with astonishment, and Mr. Gilfillan sisted proceedings until quietness was restored, when he remarked, "That lad will come to something yet."

Born in 1813, Mr. George Gilfillan came a little too late for the great normal seminary of the west. Whilst he was a youth at School Dr. Chalmers had preached his best in the Tron Kirk, Edward Irving had passed over the city like a mysterious luminary, Bennie had come from Stirling, preached some time with great acceptance, gone to Edinburgh and died young; Dr. Wardlaw had left the scene of his early and more vigorous prelections in North Albion Street; William Anderson had collected the Glasgow shopocracy around him in John Street, and had long before inaugurated a fifty year ministry, which he neither allowed to slumber nor sleep. Yet I am able to give personal testimony to the many truthful and tender characteristics of these illustrious men, which he has brought together in his life of Dr. William Anderson. Most people who knew Anderson, will think the life altogether a little too high pitched. Mrs. Oliphant in her life of Edward Irving has described the rapt man in simple language, but Mr. Gilfillan in his life of William Anderson has described the simple man in rapt language; a man of very susceptible feelings is not a safe biographer; where he admires, he adores, and where he dislikes, he despises. Mr. Gilfillan's great loving nature developes itself in his lavish encomiums on William Anderson, but it may be asked, what spirit within him led to his assault on Matthew Gregory Lewis, in "The Life of Sir Walter Scott." Lewis possessed talents of a very high order, he was the close personal friend of Sir Walter Scott, of William Erskine, of the Duke of Argyle, of Theodore Hook, of Lady Charlotte Campbell, and of Lady Dufferin. He was a member of the British Parliament, and the author of one of the most touching lyrics in our language "The Banks of Allan Water," and many other popular ballads; and how a man of such visionary proclivities as Mr. Gilfillan should come forward after Lewis had lain for fifty-three years at the bottom of the Atlantic, and denounce him as a "scarecrow," a "little over-dressed mannikin," and a "monkey," can only be accounted for on the theory I have set up, that a highly susceptible man is a dangerous biographer. True, Mr. Lewis was no son of Anak, and he was author of "The Monk," a romance of rather daring moral, although not more so than "Adam Bede" or "Jane Eyre"; and that was an evil which Anderson and Gilfillan set themselves to remedy. On one occasion I heard the former reverend gentleman make a fierce pulpit attack on the parties high in power at the time. He spoke of "their Bacchanalian revels, and their Harriet Wilson whoredoms," which ill-judged words, coming from the pulpit, were a greater scandal to public morals than anything contained in "The Monk" or "Alonzo the brave." Anderson was a well-disposed good-hearted man, but in his earlier days he committed singular escapades—as an example, I once heard him preach a sermon to his John Street congregation in Latin!

I have been led into these reminiscences of Dr. Anderson by the way in which Mr. Gilfillan has identified himself with him. In outward conduct the two were of marked resemblance; both earnest, clever, and humane; but singularly unequal in their public appearances. At one time impassioned and vehement, truculent as lions; at another time conceding, brotherly and humble. In debate, often more forcible than logical, and morbidly impatient of opposition. But here the parallel ceases. Gilfillan was constantly engaged in the study of some public character, either ancient or modern, and like a good biographer, he allowed his hero, for the time, to absorb his whole soul; but unfortunately, when he came out to the ordinary world, that hero stuck to him like his own shadow, tincturing with his spectral presence every word that came from his mouth. On a recent occasion he took part in a simple local discussion into which he persistently foisted the name of Galileo, where that of Rob Roy would have been equally appropriate; and, in more remote times, in trying to soften the asperities of an ecclesiastical quarrel, he made forcible and frequent allusion to the character of Napoleon Bonaparte, thus demonstrating the amount of heart and thought he was bestowing on the object of his more immediate study. But wherever Anderson presented himself, he was all there, body and soul. He appeared to take no delight in elevating the character or protecting the memory of the great, though sometimes mysterious spirits, that flitted across the earth before it received his straitened footprints. Where he could fortify the narrow, bristling roadway to heaven, which, in the generosity of his heart, he had staked out for one and all, he scrupled not to scathe and libel, to the full extent of his limited—happily very limited—influence, the memory of men whom his more liberal, and infinitely better informed coadjutor, has delighted to honour. In this broad and ever-diversified world of mind, breathes there a man, a single living, respiring man, who would not grind his teeth, if he saw a minister of religion lift his pulpit Bible between his hands, and heard him pronounce, with all the emphasis he could command, the following studied sentence? "If there is truth in this book,—if this Bible is the word of God, the soul of Robert Burns is in hell fire." I have lived half a century to tell this tale of the Reverend William Anderson. Had he repented of it, my pen should never have recorded the impious and daring words, but, absenting myself from a feeling of sheer disgust, I returned to his church after three months, and, by what subtle or fiendish influence the conjunction arose I am quite unable to say, but I saw the same Bible again raised, and heard the same words uttered: "If there is truth in this book, if this Bible is the word of God, the soul of Lord Byron is in hell fire."

As I did not know where this fearful scheduling of the dead was to end, I left the reverend gentleman's church, and never again went under its desecrated roof. I was a young man, and my copy of the Bible was not quite so explicit as his, for although I had read it every word, and Burns and Byron every word, I felt that I was in no position to argue the matter with him; no ray of light—not the most tiny, twinkling streak of sunshine, had reached me respecting the fate of these men. But, God forgive me, I thought some of their writings the nearest thing to the Bible I had seen, and even to this day I often make bold to dip into "The Doge of Venice," and "The Cottar's Saturday Night," encouraged, as I have been, by the hero of my tale, George Gilfillan, who, writing of Burns twenty-three years ago, says, "he was one of God's gentlemen," and who, while standing on the top of Lochnagar, said of Byron, "We could fancy that this hill was designed as an eternal monument to his name, and to image all those peculiarities which make that name for ever illustrious."

The "Galleries of Literary Portraits" hold the first place amongst Mr. Gilfillan's contributions to biographical literature. They contain candid and vigorous notices of men in every scale of existence, men of every political, and many theological creeds, poets, nobles and potentates, with an occasional villain. They are full of literary wrath, and honest approval, deep judgment, and enormous research; but the purely personal or strictly biographical portions are much too limited. They are like strings of pearls without the gold setting. While we are full of admiration of the man's literary achievements, we are left to guess where he was born, where he lived, and when he died. The incessant roll of critical opinion tires the reader; he longs for alloy; he "cannot live on bread alone." When we come to an eloquent sentence or a noble verse of poetry, and a man's name at the top of the page, our curiosity is excited and we become eager to know something about him; it matters not what rank in fame he held. When we read the line—

> Yon moon and stars, high heaven's resplendent host,

we do not need to be told that it is written by John Home; but as we go into learned disquisitions on the poetry, we become still the more desirous to know his story. It is the vein of life upon which their deeds move that intensifies our interest in the heroes of Macaulay's and Thackeray's essays. It is the filament which keeps together what would otherwise be a rope of sand. In what is termed a "Gallery of Literary Portraits," life incidents may not be strictly necessary, but it is the invariable desire of every writer to give interest to his page, and had these intellectual throbbings, that read like accumulations of proverbs, been woven into a web, with talent for its warp and life for its woof, the interest in them would have been infinitely greater.

The most remarkable feature of these essays is their broad non-sectarian spirit. Their author frequently strikes with a whip of scorpions, but never from narrow-minded prejudice. Such an amount of personal matter without class prepossession, is so little characteristic of the times in which George Gilfillan lived, that it is doing his memory but stinted honour to say, that it deserves hearty recognition. A man of such muscular antipathies, such strong affections, the nursling of dissent, the champion of polemics, the fearless hero of the church militant, casting aside all preconceived fancies, and treating with lofty candour friend and foe alike, is a phenomenon about as rare as the flower on the American aloe, which appears only once in a hundred years.

The following quotation from his essay on "Benjamin D'Israeli will illustrate this remarkable fact.

> We fancy that we perceive the continued prevalence of this ungenerous feeling in the recent attacks of a large portion of the press upon Benjamin Disraeli, and we shall try, in this paper, to do all we can to counteract it. We are no Jews nor Greeks either; no admirers of Disraeli's political character, or of all his literary works; but we love fair play; we know Disraeli to be a man of high genius, and altogether independent of our praise; but we know also how easy it is for base underlings, and an irresponsible gang of minor and malignant critics, to injure any reputation, and derogate from any name, and wish to devote a paper to place this brilliant man's literary merits in a proper point of view.

Mr. Gilfillan's pulpit ministrations were highly acceptable to his people. His manner was cogent, his matter more deeply imbued with hope in a substituted Saviour than with urgent calls for grinding in sackcloth and ashes. Like Dr. Chalmers, he seldom divided his discourses into heads and particulars, but delivered them rather as orations. "The tenth particular on the seventh head of discourse," was a sound unknown in his pulpit. His congregation did not only profit by his preaching, but privately by his advice, and, when necessary, not infrequently by his purse. The body to which he belonged had the benefit of his ever-ready counsel, and whatever his views were, he avowed them with manly frankness; right or wrong, George Gilfillan was the unflinching disciple of progress. He preached and he prayed, he lectured and he wrote. His motto was, "On! on!" He walked across the earth in the full belief that he was sustaining what was healthy and good, and trampling down what was viperous and unsound, and if his strides were sometimes rather far-extended, he never flinched in the effort of maintaining his ground. But this earth is bordered by the sea, and when his masculine step had reached the last projecting cliff, he went at once down amongst the billows, saying in death, as he had said through life,—

The will of the Lord be done.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAVID SCOTT, SURGEON, PERTH.

"In the tossings of youth, and in the lethargies of age, he was ready to console and anxious to relieve."—Edward Irving.

Although Perth, as a city, has not changed its aspect with the same active rapidity as the manufacturing towns of Scotland have done during recent years, her communities have been quite as evanescent. Where is the business man that threaded her oil-lighted streets and crooked lanes in the year of grace 1818? The spirits that hover around the dead at the Greyfriars and at Wellshill can answer the question. The last *we* saw of them was within their silent spiritual jurisdiction, and the place that once knew them now knows them no more.

As we advance from 1818 to 1828, we begin to creep in amongst a race of business men, some of whom remain, like solitary oak reserves amongst the underwood; but the age to which Dr. Scott belonged is nearly wound to its close. There is a kind of speculative philosophy which teaches, that when a man is dead, the world has done with him as a combination of body and spirit, what remains of him may be burnt or disposed of in the most convenient way. This is a long journey from man's common nature, but there are two roads to it. Either by that refined study which soars above all physical evils except such as give physical pain; or that negative kind of study which eventually plunges him into the depths of callous indifference. The matter is too serious. Regretful thoughts of our buried dead are the reverential dole of bereaved survivors, and will never be suppressed. The spirit has left its clay tenement; but any citizen of Perth who has known Dr. Scott for fifty years, as I have known him, and whose mind never turns to the little spot of earth under which he was laid a few days ago, little deserves the companionship of such a man.

I was introduced to Dr. Scott in 1828, by Dr. Wylie, of Errol. I had dropped a curling stone on the instep of one of my feet, which caused a slight swelling, and from careless treatment resulted in a bad sore. I had to undergo painful cutting and slashing, but it led to an incident that drew Dr. Scott and me together for life. Mr. James Moncrieff carried on business as a tinsmith in the corner shop of the Kirkgate and High Street, lower side. During the operation he stood between his door-cheeks, rosy and rubicund, with his apron white as snow, and his hands immersed in pockets behind the apron, altogether in, apparently, a most happy frame of mind, while I looked over to him in my agony. When the business was finished, I said to the operators, with little show of reason certainly, "That infernal fellow over there would not have sympathised with me although you had taken my leg off." This original proposal tickled Dr. Scott very much. A week or two afterwards, I accidentally met him in the High Street. "Oh, how d'ye do? How is the foot? Come away in, and let me see it." "It is improving, Doctor, and I do not wish to give you trouble." "Come away in; you know I have a *prescriptive* right to you now."

Seven years afterwards, we were standing together on the pavement, when a little girl, passing with a flagon in her hand, lost her footing, and in trying to save herself drove the flagon through a pane of glass in Richard Wylie's window. She was immediately grappled and three shillings and sixpence demanded. The flagon and a penny were all her personal property, except tears, which came in abundance. The police were spoken of, but it occurred to Dr. Scott that if the girl belonged to respectable parents the money might be got without the aid of the police. "Where do you live?" enquired he. The girl sobbed out, "I live in the Shuttle-field." This wretched locality negatived all chance of recovery, and the Doctor, turning round to Mr. Wylie, with his generous heart and facetious mind in full play, said, "It is a *pane*ful case; I will pay the money." Then, turning to the girl, "Run away to the Shuttle-field, and keep the shuttle going."

He always carried a supply of threepenny and fourpenny pieces about him, I presume for charitable purposes. His sight was not very good, and with the nail of a crooked finger he went round the periphery of each with amazing dexterity. However, in paying Mr. Wylie, he inadvertently laid down one of the lesser for the larger coin. The wily draper perceived it at once, and being a professed wag himself, he handed it back, saying drily, "You have kept this one too long, Doctor; it is worn down to a threepenny." Scott, offended at the whole transaction, retorted, "You can keep it till it grows again."

Dr. Scott was a man of small stature, but large of heart and open of hand, His jokes, if small, were abundant, and it is impossible for a man to go on, day by day, hatching witticisms, and studying the art of repartee, without occasionally running against something that is worth repeating. His incessant flow of humour gathered his friends around him; and if a group assembled, every ear was set to hear what was to come next. If he failed in carrying his audience, it was not his fault, for his stories were always followed by the initiatory laugh. He aimed, not so much at his own success as an ever-ready punster, as he did at the establishing a sort of republic of humorous retort, kindly conceit, and smart rejoinder. Hence an encounter where he was checkmated afforded him quite as much enjoyment as one in which he came off with flying colours. Three of the leading men of this droll republic were Adjutant Gibbons, a man of six-feet-three; Mackenzie the weather prophet, who spoke with a squeak; and Dr. Scott. One drizzling, very disagreeable day, the Doctor came up to me in a state of ecstacy, saying, "I never was so completely done. Going up the street a little ago, I saw Weather-wise Mackenzie before me, carrying his head very high, and abusing the weather through his blue spectacles. I thought I would surprise him; and in order to conceal myself, I reached as far up as I could and struck him in the cuff of the neck. He turned round with a start and squealed out, 'Oo, is that you?' 'Aye, it's me, wha did ye think it was?' 'I thought it was lang Gibbons!'"

On another occasion, as he was rushing along Methven Street to attend a Mrs. Campbell, as accoucheur, he met Mr. Archibald Reid, who was also in haste. The Doctor cried, "I am in a hurry, 'The Campbells are comin'.'" Reid replied, "If ye 're in such a hurry, you need not take time to *deliver* jokes by the way."

Dr. Halket was a very stout man, upwards of six feet in height. One dark night he was driving past some cottages near the Bridge of Earn, where a poor woman was ill. When his gig-lamps were observed, the cry got up, "There 's the Doctor." An attendant ran out, and cried hurriedly, "Are ye the little Doctor?" Halket's giant voice answered, "No, I'm no' the *little* Doctor, but I might perhaps do as well as he. Hold my horse." The two gentlemen met next day. Halket told the story, and said to Scott, "You 'd better send in your bill." Scott could not resist the chance of a joke, and, looking at Halket, he replied, "Well, I do not think you would charge much, and if your account were little, what would it be when it came down to me? I think we will not trouble the poor body." "Quite right," said Dr. Halket.

Without founding on this instance alone, but on it and many others, I write it down as a matter of convinced feeling, that if Perth had cause to be proud of any class existing within her borders, during the years to which these sketches apply, it was emphatically her medical men. God knows what is their power in averting calamity, but who is frail man to lean to? How many hearts have been gladdened by the simple words, "There 's the Doctor!"

I remember dining with Dr. Scott at Mr. William Stewart's, in Athole Street, about the year 1840. He was in great spirits, and told us many interesting stories about shopkeeping in the High Street at the beginning of the century. I cannot pretend to give the following characteristic affair in the Doctor's words, but the substance will be enough:—

A young man opened a draper's shop opposite the Meal Vennel, a little below the shop so long occupied by Mrs. Kemp, mother of Provost Kemp. He had some cash, but not enough to stock the shop completely; so he found, to his great horror and disgust, that he would have to grant a bill at four months for forty pounds. The shop was opened and the bill accepted, due on the 4th, for the 1st of March.

Matters went on slowly, and as the winter dragged its weary length he consoled himself by soliloquising, "My bill is aye the farther off the slower time passes." February did come, however, and on the morning of the 4th he sat down behind his counter to wait for customers, and brood over the fact that one short month hence he would be called upon to pay £40, of which £40 he was at that moment innocent of possessing one halfpenny. Wretched and cross-tempered as it was possible for man to be, he looked out to the hungry street and away into the ragged vista of the Meal Vennel, variegated with black garments and snow only a shade less black. He groaned internally, and was about to conclude that the world was not worth living for, when the door was opened smartly, and an urchin came in with a piece of blue paper in his hand, saying confidently, "A bill due to-day at the Perth Bank." "What bill? what bill?" roared the vendor of tape, and giving the youth no time to explain he shouted, stamping his feet, "*My* bill is not due yet. Impossible, you're wrong; it is due in March—December, one, January, two, February, three, March, four—it is due in March; run to the bank and tell them that." The lad was cool and slow to move, which exasperated his adversary beyond control, and he made a dart at his hat that he might rush to the bank and blow the roof off. As he was passing out the young ruffian opened the bill, and, looking up to the name on the shop beam he said, with the utmost *nonchalance*, "I have made a mistake, it is next door!" "You infernal rascal! D—n ye, I'll bill ye;" and clutching the nearest yard-stick he bolted frantically after the retreating messenger, and managed to give him a thwack across the shoulders as he passed the end of the Guard Vennel. By midday he had cooled down, and a customer coming in bought a good parcel, which restored his equanimity. Business gradually improved, and the 4th of March was easily got over. To this hour bills are paid in Perth through the proceeds of that man's shopkeeping.

This story led on to another, and as I knew the parties intimately, the Doctor's pawkie way of telling it gave it, to me, great effect.

Two High Street grocers, one of them still alive, flushed with success in business, and desirous of making a dash, resolved to have a Sunday drive down the Carse, as far as Inchture. Ten days before the great event they waited on Mr. Davidson, of the George Hotel, and engaged his most elegant trap, and steed to match, zebra hammercloth, silver-hilted whip, and flowing martingale. Away they went, and as they rattled over the pavement of Errol, their internal inquiries were, "Who will the people here think we are?" The driver threw the reins to the ostler, with the dash of a finished Jehu, saying, "Rub him well down, and I shall come out presently to see him fed." After discussing some brandy and water, the waitress was called, and instructions given for dinner, to be ready on their return at four o'clock,—"Something very nice now."

Back they came full of conscious superiority, and dinner was served. After soup the waitress was called, and a bottle of sherry ordered. Some minutes elapsed, and the sherry did not appear. Another pull at the bell; "Why have you not brought the sherry, girl?" She turned demurely, and shut the door; but no sherry came. The bell was again rung with vehemence, and when the poor girl appeared, one of the disgusted visitors rose to his feet, and said angrily, "You stupid girl; why have you not brought the sherry?" Driven into a corner, she blurted out, "There noo, I told them three times that ye wanted a bottle of sherry, but they would na believe me!"

The incessant flowings of small wit and joyful little punnings that fell from Dr. Scott's lips would fill a folio volume, and cannot be attempted here; but the three that follow may be accepted as an index. He was called to see a lady whose stomach had become *deranged*. First question: "What had you to your supper last night?" Answer: "Weel, Doctor, I had some pie." "Weel, Mary, when ye are *piously* inclined after this, gang ye to the kirk, and nae fear o' your stomach."

When the church in York Place was finished, Mr. James Gowans took him to see it, and with some loftiness, drew his attention to its superior construction, finishing thus: "And you see, Doctor, we have two spires." "Ye're an aspirin' lot," said the Esculapian.

One afternoon I met him in Bridgend; the sun was shining brightly on a house with a wasted front on the other side of the street. "That house has had a bad case of small-pox," said he. I tried to explain, "It is built of Murrayshall stone, which is very soft; and to make matters worse, some rascally mason has set the half of them on cant." "He was a cantin' hypocrite." He left me, and I have every reason to believe that before he reached Clockserie another encounter of the same kind would occur.

Such was Dr. Scott's stock of current small-ware; but when anything impressive arose, the active mind joined issue with the heart, which was always in its proper place, producing one of the most kindly, genial little men that ever the sun shone upon.

Besides these more ostensible points in his character, he had a forcible perception of the absurd or ridiculous, which vented itself in a quiet under-current of sedate reflections. On one occasion a man was brought into his shop, injured by a cart that had been driven recklessly through the crowd of farmers and others congregated before his door. The delinquent carter was retained, pending the Doctor's verdict. After examining his patient, he said there was nothing serious, adding, "You may let the lad go, for the truth is, you have no right to be there, intercepting the thoroughfare." The farmers demurred to this, and the Doctor said, "We need not get into a discussion about it, because each of us will promulgate his own interested views." He had no sooner pronounced this wise theory than his face began to kindle up, and his hands to frictionise each other; "I will give you an instance," said he: "The other Friday a wife came up through the crowd drawing a barrow filled with great clarty fish, with their tails hanging a foot over the sides of the barrow, and besmearing every black coat that came in the way. When a farmer observed how he was defiled, he cried after her in language of exasperation, while she, confident of her rights, went on bawling, 'Will ye no haud aff the fish men! Will ye no haud aff the fish!'"

Mr. John Lothian kept a druggist's shop between the Doctor's and mine. He was a gentlemanly lad and dressed exceedingly well. One fine summer morning, while Dr. Scott and I were standing on the middle of the street opposite Lothian's shop, that gentleman presented himself at his door with his hands stuck ostentatiously into the pockets of a pair of very pretentious semi-white trousers; presently three urchins, smutty as a boiler-chimney, came down the crown of the causeway. One of them left the group, and going over close to Mr. Lothian, on a mission of inspection, he turned round with his nose elevated to a pitch of infinite disgust, and cried to his interested companions, "Humph! corduroy-breeks!" The way in which this was said overwhelmed us, and the Doctor went off chuckling, whispering to Lothian as he passed, "That face was *inexpressibly* funny."

Although not a family man himself, Doctor Scott laid claim to many young people in Perth, calling them his bairns. He attended a lady at Cherrybank, who had a large family; but after the youngest boy was born his visits were less frequent. This youngest boy went early abroad; and when, after many years, he presented himself at the Doctor's shop, a man of six feet, he very naturally said, "You will not know me." The Doctor, looking away up, as Flimnap of Lilliput did at Lemuel Gulliver, answered, "No, I have not the pleasure of knowing you." "I'm —— ——." "O, really! but it is no wonder that I did na ken ye; man there's an awfu' odds on ye since I saw ye first."

Dr. Scott was born at the south end of Newrow, in the year 1795, and when he began to practice in 1818 the people of that neighbourhood patronised the young doctor, and many were his reminiscences of St. Leonards and Claypots. Amongst his clients was the family of Robert Hall, a cartwright, at the middle of the Newrow. Robert had a son who was named Robert, but always called "Rabbie Ha'." He was a joiner like his father, and not only a joiner, but an enthusiastic naturalist. His father's house and shop were overrun with animals of the lower creation, dogs, cats, rabbits, and rooks; birds singing, and fish swimming. Amongst other small fry, he had a tamed toad, that went sprawling about with a piece of red tape drawn through the skin of its neck. In spite of all Robbie's care, he "would a-wooing go," and, indulging his fondness for company, he would actually be whole nights amissing. One day, when Dr. Scott called to see the naturalist's mother, who was ailing, a little fellow came running in, holding the petted reptile in his outstretched hand, and exclaiming, "Eh, Rabbie, there's ye're taed; I fand it sclatching amon' a wheen puddocks at the back o' Lizzie Fenton's byre."

Any man that has been sixty years engaged in an active business in the heart of the same community, will naturally be missed when he takes leave; but men in masses are like soldiers in the battle-field, when one is cut down his comrade takes his place and the fight goes on. Some years ago Dr. Scott stole silently away, and his accustomed haunts saw him no more. Hopes of his return were entertained, which kept his place in the public mind still open: but the race was run, the well-known step was no more heard, and the kindly, sympathising face, that greeted us at every turning, was withering under an insidious disease. His general health gave way but slowly, but his limbs refused their office; and contented, Christian man as he was, he felt the hardship of his continued alienation from the long familiar aspects and cheerful welcomings of the outer world. He thought, as many dying men have thought, that a walk round the North Inch would relieve him, thus illustrating a fact that is every day apparent, and may be described as the mind weakening in sympathy with the body; for if the practised physician, who had been beside so many deathbeds, had, while in good health, seen before him a man in his eighty-third year, who was erewhile full of life, crippled, shrunk, and spiritless, he would certainly not have failed to conclude—whether he expressed it or not—that the cherished walks upon the North Inch were for ever at an end.

Dr. Scott's only surviving sister had long kept house with him, and had nursed him in his protracted illness. She was the last domestic link that bound him to earth, and when he lived to see it broken by her death in September last, he felt that his accounts were squared, and within two months, the good citizen of Perth, the friend of those that were otherwise friendless, the welcome visitor at many bed-sides, slept the sleep that knows no waking.

In civil politics Dr. Scott was a Liberal; in ecclesiastical, a United Presbyterian. He believed in Lord John Russell as a model statesman, and in Garibaldi as the patriot of patriots. His munificent gift of £1000 to the North U. P. Church Building Fund, and his liberality to the Perth charities will embalm his memory in the hearts of his fellow townsmen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROBERT CHAPMAN.

"The world's a book, writ by the eternal art
Of the great author, printed in man's heart!
'Tis falsely printed, though divinely penned,
And all errata are placed at the end."

"On fine days I am much out amongst my people, but if a shower comes I go in and look at my Stranges."

A GREAT English authority says that "All mankind are born alike;" and another corroborates the statement, but adds, "Well-directed study and application make the man." The first position is untenable; the second partially correct, wanting only, the admission that a certain something is necessary to direct and urge on that study. No two things in nature are precisely alike. The human form has a thousand developments, and no doubt the mental form has an equal number. However much a man's character and conduct may be in conformity with the recognised rules of life, he possesses some distinct faculty or taste or genius, which will, if cultivated, obtain him excellence. It is the diversity of these tastes that gives society its interest; they keep up life to the standard of endurance. The making of money is a necessity of our nature, and is followed by all; but the means employed for that end are, as the poet says,

> Various as the roads they take,
> In journeying through life.

These essays would little represent the varied phases of human society if they did not embrace the connoisseur and the virtuoso along with the poet, the philosopher, the man of character, the painter, the sculptor, and the politician.

The second motto at the head of this essay is a sentence uttered by a Perth county gentleman—a man of education and an author—during a conversation I had with him on the street some years ago. I needed no explanation, any more than a man whose mind is absorbed in the immediate enjoyments of the time, needs to be told what is meant by "A night wi' Burns." The accomplished musician would prefer the simplest madrigal, well performed, to the grandest oratorio in incompetent hands; and the eye being quite as acute as the ear, the accomplished judge of art will prefer a master's engraving of a master's subject to the strugglings of inferior art. But the musician enjoys his madrigal, and the virtuoso his engraving;—the first because he cannot reach the Italian opera, and the second because he is not able to buy Raphael, and Titian, and Velasquez, and Turner. Sir Robert Strange engraved sixty subjects from the great masters, and to turn these over, examining the curve of every well-directed line, the brilliant combination of these lines to produce effects, and the innate consciousness that the original is there in full presentment, forms a source of enjoyment to which mankind in general are strangers.

Robert Chapman was born in the year 1770, and died in the village of Dunning, in the year 1835. I have reason to believe that these dates are correct, but I may be slightly wrong. I visited Mrs. Chapman after her husband's death, and attended the sale of her effects at Rollo Cottage, Dunning. At that time her husband's name, together with the dates of his birth and death, were on his tombstone in Dunning Churchyard; but my esteemed friend, the late Mr. Lawson, banker, Dunning, told me last year, in regretful mood, that the inscription had given way, and was now replaced simply by "Robert Chapman."

A letter-press printer's apprenticeship in Glasgow, and an early taste for books and engravings, are all that have come to me of Mr. Chapman's early life. When we met, he was a man of fifty and I was a youth under twenty. He had previously carried on a large and prosperous business, and was accepted as the successor of the brothers Foulis, and aimed to cope with M'Reery, of Liverpool, Bulmer of London, and Ballantine, of Edinburgh. In that he was not quite successful, however, but as a man of taste and judgment in books and graphic art, he took the lead, not only in the west of Scotland, but throughout its length and breadth. Mr. Leith, of Edinburgh, had a passion for numbers, and made a very large collection of ancient and modern engravings. Mr. Chapman had not the same rage for numbers, but his collection of books and prints was perhaps the most *recherché* ever brought together by one man. When you entered his library, the smell of Russia leather was quite overwhelming. The tall Shakespeares, Miltons, and Homers, the Encyclopædias, Bibles, Hogarths, and Dibdins, stood up in lofty rows, tastefully broken by single and double titles, raised bands, and flexible backs. The bindings were principally by Carss, of Glasgow,—the Heyday of his time;—and to this day plenty of evidence exists to show the great superiority of that gentleman's taste and workmanship. The numerous portfolios for holding engravings were exquisitely finished in morocco, and stood round the room on stands.

Although prosperous in business and in easy circumstances, Mr. Chapman fell into domestic trouble, which led him to realise upon the whole of his effects in business and his superb collection of books and prints, and to invest the proceeds in an annuity on his own life and that of Mrs. Chapman. The collection of books and engravings was sold by Mr. Robert Malcolm in the Black Bull ball-room on the evening of Monday, 4th March, 1822, and nine succeeding lawful evenings. The biddings of the Glasgow magnates were liberal and unflinching. Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery sold for 40 guineas; Boydell's Milton, 20 guineas; Don Quixote, with proofs of Smirke's plates, 17 guineas; Boydell's splendid edition of Shakespeare's works fell to Mr. Henry Monteith of Carstairs, for 36 guineas, and twenty years afterwards I saw the same copy for sale for £8 at Mr. Stillie's, of Edinburgh. Don Quixote or some other fanatic must have exorcised the library at Carstairs.

At that time there were a number of print-collectors in Glasgow, and Mr. Chapman's brought prices that are now unknown, either there or anywhere else. The taste for fine engravings has given way before litho, photo, oleo, and other graphs. A few rare proofs of Raphael Morghen's and Desnoyer's, are still sought after: but the Willes Woollets, and Stranges, which formed the staple of Mr. Chapman's collection, are *pro tempore* not held in the same esteem. It is fondly to be hoped, however, that the happy day will return, when genuine art will again take its place, when the muddled shadows, that have lately run away with the public, will be discarded, and when the tender tracings of the engraver's hand—beautiful in themselves—will bring back pictorial art, and the blots of semi-mechanism will be driven from our walls. It would be well that every paper picture that has issued from the press since William Miller, of Edinburgh, engraved Turner's Italy, and Ryall the Columbus of Wilkie, *et hoc genus omne*, should be cast into the fire, root and branch, and let the world begin anew. The fact must be painful to every lover of genuine art that while the full-length of Napoleon, by Desnoyers, after Gerard, sold at Mr. Chapman's for £19 10s, an equally good impression sold at Mr. Condie's for 16s. People are enslaved by a rage for colours, whether laid on by the multiplied evolutions of the press or the hand of a fiftieth-rate modern painter. True, Raphael Morghen's "Last Supper" was only worth 15 guineas in the first state in Mr. Chapman's day, while it is now worth 300 guineas; but that is the caprice of the wealthy virtuoso, not the general or competitive love of engraved art. Morghen's engraving has been five times copied; first, by Pavon; second, by an American; aud three times in England. These copies are all the same size as Morghen's, and evidently taken from it—not from Da Vinci's picture;—some of them are remarkably good as engravings, but fall far behind the Raphael Morghen. Mr. Thiovenetti, late of the Perth Academy, brought from Rome, six copies of Pavon's engraving, in the first state, one of which is in Kinfauns Castle; another was sold at Mr. Condie's sale. These six plates would furnish a single hand employment for thirty years,

As a specimen of the spirited way in which the Glasgow merchant-princes of those days pursued the object which they had at heart, I insert in detail the catalogue description of a few of the articles, and the price realised:—

No. 23. Cartoon. Paul preaching at Athens, *brilliant proof*, Holloway after Raphael, £17.

No. 24. Christ's Charge to Peter, do., do., £16 16s.

No. 25. Death of Ananias, do., do., £17.

No. 26. Elymas, the Sorcerer, Struck with Blindness, do., do., £13.

No. 27. The Beautiful Gate of the Temple, do., do., £16.

No. 28. The subscriber's right to the last print to be published of the series of cartoons by Mr. Holloway, for which seven guineas were deposited at subscription, £7 17s. 6d.

Thus, five engravings, and the right to a sixth on publication, were sold for £87 13s. 6d. Lot No. 24, of book sale, "Hume and Smollett's History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the end of the reign of George II., Scholey's Edition, 16 volumes, royal paper, Russia super extra, embossed sides, marbled leaves, embellished with one hundred engravings on copper and wood, by Nesbit, Bewick, Clennel, &c., from designs by Thurston, proof impressions of the plates" brought £23 4s.

But perhaps the most coveted article in Mr. Chapman's collection was "The Death of General Wolfe at Quebec," engraved by William Woolet, after Benjamin West. Although only a print, it sold for £17, whereas a proof is now only worth three guineas. A story was then told about this engraving which gave it an additional interest. It was one of the few historical pieces which Woolet engraved; landscape was his *forte*. When West proposed to paint "The Death of Wolfe," the London cognoscenti thought that he would fail, the dresses of the British soldier during the American war being so little calculated for heroic display; but when the picture was finished the cry got up, "The President has triumphed." Thus encouraged, John Boydell resolved to have it engraved by a first-rate artist. Woolet reluctantly consented, and nobly performed the work; but while the printing was in progress, he had the plate in his studio, making some slight alteration to please the fastidious publisher, when an altercation arose, and the engraver, in a passion, threw his hammer at the plate, striking it on the most delicate part, the face of General Wolfe. When cooler moments arrived, the plate had to be restored; and connoisseurs pretend to tell, by the aid of powerful magnifiers and "expert" judgment, the impressions that are "before and after the hammer." Whether this tale be true or false, one thing is certain, there is a marked difference in the copies, particularly at the spot named; but that can be accounted for without the hammer catastrophe. The plate was of copper, and the lines in the face of Wolfe exceedingly sharp and delicate. As the printing progressed, the more slender lines would lose sharpness, and the impressions sink in brilliance. Besides, a heavier pressure would be necessary, whereby the print would become inky and lose colour. Woolet engraved "The Battle at La Hogue" for the same series. Both prints, in good state, are now very rare.

Mr. Chapman possessed a most superb proof impression of "The Death of Cleopatra," after Guido, by Sir Robert Strange, the whole-length figure, the original of which was, in 1840, in the possession of Mr. Munro, of Novar. This is a specimen of line engraving which has never been surpassed. His collection was especially rich in Willes. About 1820, a certain Mr. David Hatton, of Princes Street, Edinburgh, carver and gilder, learned that a great many engravings by the talented Frenchman were in the hands of the trade in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and he pawkily went over and picked up the lot. He sold them by auction in Edinburgh, and enriched many cabinets. The private room of a highly respectable Edinburgh bibliopole contains, at this day, four very fine Willes, which I have no doubt came from Hatton's sale.

Although a very young man, I attended Mr. Chapman's sale, each of the ten nights, and had an intuitive love of books and art put into more active movement by the openly expressed opinions and retorted jealousies of the many parties present; in some cases a sound appreciation of art and a matured judgment; in others, mere dilettanteism. A priced catalogue of the books and prints in this collection, is now highly esteemed. I had seen Mr. Chapman's collection, but did not possess his personal friendship at the time of his sale, but afterwards obtained it under somewhat peculiar circumstances. One afternoon, walking into Barclay and Skirving's saleroom, then situated in the wide court between the lower end of Brunswick Street and Hutchison Street, I found Mr. Skirving making an inventory of some furniture and books, accompanied by a stranger. One of the porters, removing a pile of books from the top of an old piano, unfortunately upset the inkbottle, besmearing the piano and a roll of engravings which lay on the piano-shelf. The stranger went into a towering passion, directing his ire partly against Mr. Skirving and partly against the porter. "These three engravings are worth ten shillings," he roared out. Mr. Skirving said very quietly, "They are no worse." "Are they not?" he was answered; "I will make you pay for them at any rate." "Were they ever worth ten shillings?" I asked, beginning to remove the inky paper from the parcel, in order to check the danger. "That is the price of them," said the irate gentleman. "One, two, three. Very well, here is your money," I answered. Now, if this violent stranger had asked ten and sixpence, I could not have been the purchaser, for beyond a cherished half-sovereign, carefully wrapped in paper, I had not an available penny in the world. Mr. Skirving enjoyed the thing amazingly. It never occurred to him that I had made a rash bargain in order to throw oil upon the waters. He knew better; he had perfect confidence in my judgment in a matter of engravings; and he quietly rejoiced in seeing his unreasonable customer's mouth so effectually shut. It would be impossible for me to describe, so as to be understood by the uninitiated, the intense pleasure the possession of these three engravings afforded me. The merest glance at them during the bargain was quite enough. I stuck them with affected indifference under my arm, and walked away; but I confess to a sad want of dignity in the end, for, after I was fairly out of the auction passage, I ran to Clyde Street, as if Edward Railton's pack had been in full cry at my heels, thinking I heard the ink-fiend shouting after me, "Give me back my pictures!"

After recovering breath, I spread the three prints out before me, placing a book on each corner:—"Les Musiciens Ambulans," Wille after Dietricy; "Instruction Paternelle," Wille after Terburg; "Le Petit Physicien," Wille after Netscher, all brilliant impressions; "The Little Physician," a proof. The real value of the lot need not be named here;

the initiated will know. After twelve months' enjoyment of these gems of art, I sold them all at tempting prices. "The Itinerant Musicians" went into the cabinet of a young friend of mine, who is now a prosperous business man in Edinburgh; "The Satin Gown" to Mr. Vary, Session-Clerk of Glasgow; "The Little Physician" to James Willis, printseller, of Nelson Street, Glasgow. Next visit I paid to Mr. Skirving, he handed me Mr. Chapman's card, and desired me to call for him and bring the three Willes. I saw by this that the story of the inkbottle had been repeated. I called for Mr. Chapman, and when he opened my little portfolio, his eyes kindled up, and he said quietly, "I have not seen Wille in greater perfection." I never saw this illustrious local authority again.

Mr. Lawson was the only man I found in Dunning, two years ago, who knew Robert Chapman. He told me that so anxious was that gentleman for the welfare of the operatives of Dunning, that he sent to his manufacturing friends in Glasgow for hundreds of webs for them to weave, handing them the manufacturer's remittances, besides performing many other deeds of unostentatious benevolence.

In all his doings he was guided by a principle of excellence. Of the many collectors of engravings and books I have known, I have found none so exclusively devoted to what was of a high class, and who so pertinaciously eschewed dealing and chaffering. Hence everything he possessed was a pattern to go by. Neither have I known anyone who so completely laid aside every tendency to continue collecting articles of taste after successfully indulging in it for thirty years; but he had realised sufficient means to carry him to the end of his days, and in contentment he strolled about his adopted village, far away from the wranglings and perpetually changing aspirations of city life, and avoiding that excitement which is apt to carry a man shoulder-high to his grave.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FRANCIS MACNAB OF MACNAB.

A Highlander never sits at ease on a loom; it is like putting a deer to a plough."—
MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN.

"GANG up, Tonald, an' pe hangted, to pleasure the laird," is a very old story, as far as the hanging is concerned, but pleasing the laird is a weakness fresh as ever. Tenant farmers are said to be driven like serfs to the poll; but the interests of the nation suffer little, seeing that there are two drivers. There is a principle involved which no power on earth can destroy or weaken; neither crowns, nor sceptres, nor parliaments, nor armies will ever neutralise the influence that property has on the civil policy of a nation. We do not grieve at the fact so much as we do at the absence of personal participation. Independence, patriotism, and self-denial are matters to boast of, if founded on fact: but where they are most boasted of, they will be often found non-existent. Suppose Francis Macnab, who was a Tory, and his cousin, Lord Breadalbane, who was a Whig, had each a farm of five hundred acres in the market, equally good in every respect, and it was well understood that one of them could be got at one hundred pounds less rent than the other. Now, if *serfdom* will produce one man that will lease the dear farm, because the proprietor and he are of the same political creed, the patriotism and self-denial will become apparent, otherwise they are myths bred of self-conceit. But when "pleasing the laird" merges into the criminal or physical policy of a people, as it is said to have done in Macnab's case, it speedily works its own cure.

Men who are under lairds ought to consider well their relative position. A tenant for one year is very simply placed; but when his tenancy extends to nineteen years, it becomes one of the most complicated of all the attitudes in which one man can stand towards another. A landlord may, legally, over-rent or over-game his tenant; he may under-house or under-fence him; a tenant may, without any breach of law, thwart his landlord in every available way, and boast of it; but these things bring reprisal, and are at once destructive of the interest of both parties.

The Macnabs were originally proprietors of extensive estates in Glendochart, stretching from the base of Benmore to Loch Tay, besides large possessions in the parish of Callander. They were sometimes styled "The Macnabs of Auchlyne;" at other times, "The Macnabs of Bovain," "The Macnabs of Kinnell," and "The Macnabs of Glendochart." Francis was the last relic of the ancient, stern, feudal system; the chief of a tribe, compared with which he looked upon the Campbells and the M'Leans as creatures of yesterday. He acknowledged no superior, not even those whose heads were decorated with regal crowns; and when his family pride met a momentary check, in his own mind, by a feeling of conscious poverty, he would break out with an oath, "By my saul, the lawyers of Stirling have more income out o' my estates than any mushroom laird of them; aye, curse them, more than King George has out o' his bit estate o' Hanover!"

When the French war broke out, he embodied a corps of infantry, which he styled, "The Laird o' Macnab's Volunteers." His ideas of volunteering were quite as original as his other feudal notions. One day, when Lord Breadalbane was driving down Strathyre on his way from Taymouth Castle to Stirling, he encountered a cart containing neither Glenlivet nor braxie ham, but, strange to say, the carcasses of six sturdy Celts, tied neck and heel. At the front of the cart were two Highlanders, with claymore in hand, by way of pioneers; in the rear another brace, armed with firelocks. The post of honour, viz., driving this living hearse, was entrusted to a gilly of a superior order. This rather novel spectacle caused Lord Breadalbane to call a halt. On enquiring what they could possibly mean by handling men in such a manner, he was answered by the kilted Jehu, "Ma Lort, tem are six tam scoundrels that refoose to be the Laird o' Macnab's Volunteers, and sae we're just takin' them doun to Stirling, ta curst hallions tat they are, ta see if ta cauld steel will mak' them do their duty, an' plaise the laird!" This is hardly what is understood by volunteering in our more captious times, and the method of pleasing the laird seems an intermediate step between the being hanged and being driven to the poll.

Macnab's brusque spirit often led him to take a revenge which was not only more legitimate, but generally more applauded than what is recorded above. Being at Leith Races one year, and rushing in to see the result of a heat, his pony broke down under his great weight, and was much injured. Next year, a puppy, who thought he would raise a laugh at Macnab's expense, said, sneeringly, "Macnab, is that the same pony you had here last year?" "No," said the laird,—and, by one well-aimed stroke with whip and shaft, making his interrogator bite the dust,—"but it's the same whup!"

Between the years 1812 and 1815, this noted chieftain occasionally rode down Glenartney to attend the Crieff markets. He was of gigantic size and form, and was generally mounted on a dark-brown, long-backed pony, with shaggy hair and uncut mane and tail. He was altogether a remarkable man, and so lofty in his gait and so abstracted in his look that every one he met was bound either to know him or to enquire who he was. The stories of him current in Crieff were endless, and some of them little calculated to raise him in the world's esteem.

In 1842, there reposed in a niche of the library at Taymouth Castle, two volumes of scraps in manuscript and cuttings from the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Literary Gazette*, entirely devoted to Francis Macnab and his eccentricities. He acted as a sort of henchman to the first Marquis, and was a great deal about Taymouth. His portrait by Raeburn was painted for his lordship, and was long shown in the Breadalbane apartments of Holyrood House. It was there before the institution of the Scottish Academy, and I did not consider a visit to Edinburgh by any means complete in those days unless it embraced a visit to that picture. It is a full-length, in Highland costume, fully accoutred, and in aspect bold as a lion.

Macnab's most formidable peculiarity was pride of family antiquity and rank. He was perfectly furious on that point. "There were questionless, mony Maister Macnabs, but the auld black laad may hae my saul if I ken but ae Macnab." It was quite enough to put him in a frenzy to dignify with the title of "chieftain" any one, however high in title or fortune, who he thought had no claim to that super-imperial rank. It is not to be supposed that this was ever done for the pleasure of beholding the laird in one of those passions which resembled one of his own uncontrolable mountain-storms. No; he was not the man to hazard such a joke upon; and could he have suspected for a moment—a thing almost impossible—that any person whatever attempted to play upon him, miserable would have been the fate of the unhappy wight who made the daring experiment.

On one occasion, according to the Breadalbane scrapbook, a stranger who was not aware of the inflammable material which he ventured to touch gently, ran an imminent risk. It occurred after dinner, the laird being a little mellow, for, as to being drunk, oceans of liquor would have failed to produce that effect, at least to the length of prostration. The unhappy querist began: "Macnab, are you acquainted with Macloran of Dronascandlich, who has lately purchased so many thousand acres in Inverness-shire?" This was more than enough to set the laird off in furious tilt on his genealogical steed. "Ken wha? the paddock-stool o' a creature they ca' Dronascandlich, wha no far bygane dawred (curse him) to offer siller, sir, for an auld ancient estate, sir. An estate as auld as the flude, sir; an infernal deal aulder, sir. Siller, sir, scrapit thegither by the meeserable deevil in India, sir, not in an officer or gentlemanlike way, sir; but (Satan burst him) makin' cart wheels and trams, sir, and harrows, and the like o' that wretched handiwork. Ken him, sir? I ken the crater weel, and wha he comes frae, sir; and so I ken that dumb tyke, sir, a better brute by half than a score o' him!"

The querist interjected, "Mercy on us! Macnab, you surprise me. I thought from the sublime sound of his name and title, he had been, like yourself, a chief of fifteen centuries' standing at least."

The instant this comparison was drawn, the laird's visage grew ghastly with rage. His eyes caught fire, and he snorted like a mountain whirlwind. The skin of his forehead moved to humour his awful front, while every muscle of his body quivered with suppressed indignation. A fearful tornado was naturally expected; but, restraining himself with a convulsive effort, thus he cried, or rather bellowed out:—

"By the saul o' the Macnabs, sir, naething but yere deabolical Lowland ignorance can excuse ye for sic damnable profanation! Hear ye me, sir. It's fifty year and mair bygane, ae time I was at Glasgow, wanting some tyking or Osen brugs, or what the fiend ca' ye them, what ye mak' pillows and bowsters o'? Weel, sir, I was recommendit to an auld decent crater o' a wabster, wha pickit up a meeserable subsistence in the Gallowgate. I gaed east a bit past the Spoutmouth, then up ae pair o' stairs—twa, three, syne, four pair o' stairs—a perfit Toor o' Babel in meenature, sir. At last I quat the regions o' stane and lime, and cam' to *timmer*, sir. About twenty or thirty rotten boords, that were a perfit temptation o' Providence to venture the fit o' a five-year-auld bairn on. I gaed in at a hole; door it was nane, sir; and there I found a meeserable deevil, the perfect pictur o' famine, sir, wi' a face as white as a clout, an auld, red Kilmarnock on his puir grey pow, an' treddle, treddling awa wi' his pitifu' wizened trotters. Wha think ye, sir, was this abortion o' a crater—this threadbare, penniless, and parritchless scrap o' an ante-deluvian wabster? This was Macloran's grandfather, sir. [In a voice of thunder.] That was the origin o' Dronascandlich, sir; [in a lower tone, accompanied by a truly diabolical grin] and a bonny origin for a Highland chief, by the sauls o' the Macnabs."

Macnab's last grand escapade is narrated at great length in the Breadalbane archives, but I cannot pretend to give it in full here. It was shortly as follows:—

The pressure of a declining revenue and a long arrear began to tell heavily on him, and he had occasionally to grant bills for his purchases. To render these consistent with the territorial supremacy of a mountain chief drove him to his wits' end, but he would make no compromise;—he had a magnanimous contempt for the petty, paltry regulations established by the sons of vulgar trade;—regarded with lofty indifference the periodical maturity of these bills, and as little thought of putting himself about to retire these "scraps of paper" as he thought of paying the national debt;—he considered it would be a most unchieftain like practice to notice them in any way after they were signed. For many years these bills were always discounted at the Perth Bank, and the directors, knowing their money to be sure, humoured his freaks, and took his acceptance even although signed "The Macnab." Unluckily for the laird one of these "*cursed bits o' paper*" found its way to the Stirling Bank, an establishment with which he had no direct connection; and, having no personal friend to protect his credit at Stirling, it was duly noted and protested, and notice sent to him, but of course these steps were treated with contempt. He was effectually roused, however by the alarming information that a caption and horning had been issued against him, and that a clerk belonging to the bank accompained by two messengers, would proceed on the following Friday to Auchlyne House, for the special purpose of taking him into custody. The laird called a council of war. Janet, his old and faithful house-keeper, and other two trusty retainers formed a plan to which the laird consented. Money was out of the question at Auchlyne, and the Laird of Macnab in jail would paralyse the Highlands. Friday morning came, and with it the three "limbs o' the law" started on their mountain journey:—no conveyance whatever, roads like sheep-tracks, up Strathyre, down Balquhidder, up Glenogle, up Glendochart; and, as the sun began to descend behind Ben Cruachan, the turrets of Auchlyne House appeared in the far horizon. After matters were finally arranged, the laird said to Janet, "To clap me within four stane wa's, an' for what, think ye? a peetifu' scart o' a guse's feather—deil cripple their soople shanks. It would ill become me to hae ony hobleshow wi' sic like vermin; so I'll awa doun to ma Lord's at Taymouth, and leave you, my bonny woman, to gi'e them *their kail through the reek*." Having thus primed the old lady, the proscribed chief departed.

The ancient carline had been long on the outlook, and when she saw the three wayworn travellers approaching, she hastened to give them welcome. "O, sirs," quoth she, "ye maun be sair forfoughten wi' your langsome travel. Sit down, and get some meat. The laird's awa to see a friend, and will be back momently. What gars ye glower that way? There is what ye're wantin' in that muckle kist in bonnie yellow gowd, fairly counted by his honour this blessed morning." So saying, she spread before them a plentiful store of mountain delicacies, including kippered salmon and braxie ham—fare congenial to empty stomachs, especially when washed down by oceans of gude over-proof Glenlivet. The laird did not return so soon as Janet appeared to expect, which formed an excuse for another pull at the greybeard. "Nae doubt," said Janet, "his honour will be doun at the Yerl's, so ye'll just take yere beds here, an' the first thing ye'll get to yere hansel in the mornin' will be a sonsie breakfast and weel-countet siller." The terms, for obvious reasons, were closed with, and the two lower limbs of the law were bestowed in a room the window of which faced the east, while the clerk was shown to a bedroom at the other end of the house. Under the narcotic influence of the Glenlivet, the three were speedily asleep. Opposite the window of the room where the officers slept, grew a huge tree, with wide-spreading branches. During the night this tree creaked, and moaned, and twinkled prodigiously; and although the Glenlivet kept its hold, there were certain "startings and shiverings in the inconstant wind;" but when the beams of the morning sun first shot past the southern shoulder of Ben Lawers, one of the emissaries of justice rose from his bed to go in search of a cup of cold water, when, horror! swinging backwards and forwards on one of the branches of the tree, the body of the clerk dangled, with his boots and great-coat on, as if he had been ready for the road. The poor man gave a howl that nearly lifted the roof off the house. His companion leaped out of bed, and the two beheld with sinking hearts the fate of their poor companion. The house was alarmed by the gentlemen rushing downstairs; and Janet, who was wide awake, demanded in fierce tones, "What the foul fiend d'ye mak sic a din for?" Quaking in every limb, the only words their tongues would give utterance to were, "What's that on the t-t-tree?" "Oh!" said Janet with an eildritch laugh, "it's a bit clerk body frae the Bank o' Stirling that cam' here last night to deave the laird for siller. We've ta'en and hangit him, *puir elf*." The effect of this appalling disclosure was electrifying. Fear added wings to their speed, and the terrified brace of messengers made no enquiry about the body of their companion, which Janet's confederates had disembowelled and removed during the parley inside, but rushed with precipitation on the road to Stirling, never casting an eye back until they had reached the bottom of Glenogle. When the unconscious clerk arose and asked for his companions, the veracious beldam said with a mysterious air, "The Laird's gillies have ta'en them awa' to the holy pool of Crianlarich, an' they'll be here for *you* directly." Pulling on the dead man's boots and great-coat, which he found in the lobby where he left them, he decamped as if he had been shot from a cannon, Janet crying after him, "I hear them comin'!" Whether the money was ever paid has not been told, but the estates of all the Macnabs that ever existed would not have tempted another embassy of the same three to Auchlyne.

A man in a false position is a common, but generally a short-lived phenomenon, yet here was one of great shrewdness, of extensive and varied information, of much tact and acuteness, who lived eighty-four years, deceiving himself, and trying unsuccessfully to deceive the world, bolstering up the last fragments of rotten family pride, skulking like Richard Savage, and lying like Caleb Balderstone. Macnab was the perfect type of a class, now extinct in the main line, but still to be traced through the ranks of everyday life: poverty which is deplored, joined to pride which is detested.

CHAPTER XXX.

JOHN SCOTT, MILL OF GASK.

"Ken when to spend and when to spare,
And when to buy, and you'll ne'er be bare."
SCOTTISH PROVERB.

As a cultivator of the soil, Mr. Scott began his career on the farm of Dubheads, in the parish of Madderty. He formed a prominent link in the chain that connected the bad farmers of the eighteenth century with the improvers of the early part of the nineteenth, and lived to see his native county become one of the great producing districts of Scotland, and himself a successful practical agriculturalist. For threescore years he was well known at the Crosses of Perth and Crieff; the perfect embodiment of a canny Scotsman; slow in movement, slow in enunciation; but emphatic and opinionative; sly, waggish, and fond of a joke. He dropped his words as carefully as a man sets nine-pins; and if he did make a mistake, it was never from being in a hurry. In early life he was a beau, but latterly a tall, bent, and confirmed bachelor. Early in the century he left Dubheads, and leased Mill of Gask, a fine farm on the estate of Moncreiffe, where he died in 1857.

While at Dubheads, Mr. Scott's oracle was Peter McOwan, the district cartwright. No wooden plough passed from

Peter's hands without being subjected to the critical eye of Mr. Scott. "Too much beam, laddie," meaning, the beam was too much to the land. "Keep her left line straight." When Peter Barclay produced the first iron plough made in Strathearn, these two were at their wits' end, but kept very reticent, in case of committing themselves; and when Wilkie of Uddingston's plough became famous, and Meikle had set up his new thrashing machine at Alloa, McOwan was despatched as a *deputation* to examine and report, and when he returned, the pair met in solemn conclave. The diplomatist began to make a speech, but was interrupted: "Where are your drawings, laddie?" "Drawings! I have no drawings, Mr. Scott." "No drawings! Then how are we to get on?" "No fear of that," said the deputy, striking his forehead with the palm of his hand, "It's all here!" "Well, perhaps it is all there," said Mr. Scott; but, giving an incredulous look at the smitten brow, he added slowly, "I have some fear that it will remain there."

Mr. Scott was amongst the first Perthshire farmers who fattened stock and went with them to the Glasgow market, and a stiff job it was, in those pre-railway days. Forty cattle made a big market. Two fleshers would join and buy a bullock, selling it at 4½d. a pound. Mr. Scott would have as many as ten beasts, each realizing ten or twelve pounds. He generally took up his abode in my apprentice master's house, where he was always welcome, as an old friend. I was often sent to the "buchts" with him, knowing the King Street fleshers rather better than the Strathearn farmer possibly could. The first time I went I observed that Mr. Scott had each beast named in a book with the price opposite. When an animal was priced, he would run his finger slowly down the page, while one of the fleshers would glance over his shoulder, and quickly pick up the price of every one of them. I drew his attention to the fact. He looked at me incredulously, and said, "Can the deevils read?" He grew tired of the trade, and afterwards sold his cattle to the dealers at home.

While Mr. Scott was tenant of Dubheads, an old man died in the parish of Madderty, whose burial place was at Forteviot. He had no male relatives, and Mr. Scott and my father agreed to conduct the funeral. The cortege, consisting of the hearse and four gigs, moved away across country, through the wood of Gask, and past the "Swell o'

Green-dams," until it came to Upper Cairnie. Here they rested a little, being much knocked about by the roads, or rather by the want of roads. They considered themselves safe now, however, and began to move away down the narrow angular road that led from Upper Cairnie to the Bridge of Forteviot. On the right was a deep ditch, and on the left a strong wooden fence protecting a heavy crop of wheat. After advancing some two hundred yards, a cart of hay emerged from a turn of the road, tearing up the brae as if nothing could possibly stop its way. The funeral party were seized with consternation. To return was impossible in either case, so when the hay-cart came near, Mr. Scott and my father went forward to see what was to be done. The person in charge of the hay-cart was a great lumbering, raw youth, but he had a vast idea of his own importance, and vowed he would go on. It was finally arranged that the hearse should be drawn up close to the wooden fence, leaving every possible space for the hay-cart to pass. This was done, and Hodge moved on. But the bank of the ditch was too soft to carry the great weight, and it gave way, precipitating horse, cart, hay and man into the ditch. Instantly the funeral party ran to assist, and the ploughman, gathering himself up out of the bottom of the ditch, with wisps of hay hanging from his head like the hair of a red Indian, stood for an instant paralysed; then shouted with a voice like thunder, "D'ye see what ye have dune noo, wi' ye're d—d burial!"

Many years after he had left Madderty, Mr. Scott was riding one Hansel Monday morning past Dubheads, on his way to Kintocher, while a shooting raffle was going on. "What is this," enquired he. "It's Peter McOwan's shooting," was the answer. "Oh, I must give Peter a shot;" and dismounting, he made his way to the crowd. "What's to pay? What's to pay?" "A shilling for three shots," he was answered. A target or door, as it was called, with a centre nail, was set up in a field, away from danger, and forty yards from it a cart, without the back and front boards, was placed, bearing direct on the target. A piece of turf was placed on the back bar of the cart, and the shooters went in between the shafts. "Mill o' Gask" was supplied with a loaded gun, and laying himself down on the cart, he fixed the gun at a point near the muzzle over the piece of turf, settling himself as if he were going a long journey. Two minutes elapsed. "Fire away, Mill o'

Gask." "Give me time, bairns; give me time." Another two minutes,—"Fire away, Mill o' Gask." "Give me time; this is no field o' battle." Another two minutes; "Fire away, Mr. Scott; the people are impatient and angry." "Give me time; give me time; give me time." Another minute, and down came the flint. The crowd watching the target collapsed, and a shout got up, "The nail's out! Hurra! the nail's out." The judge came running to the cart, crying excitedly, "Mr. Scott, you have gained the prize; the nail's out." Mr. Scott did not move a feature, but handing the gun to its owner, said with the greatest coolness, "I thought so!" He began to move off, but the clerk cried, "You want another two shots." "Oh, no, I'll give them to Peter." "But your prize, this arm-chair." "Oh, give it to Peter." The sly wisdom of this was great, for he felt that if he tried another shot, the ball would in all likelihood not light in the park where the target was placed.

After the Rev. Mr. Ramsay of Madderty's death, Mr. Scott came from Mill o' Gask, to the sale of his effects, and became purchaser of the family carriage and harness, an immense lumbering machine, with wheels five feet high, and the endless folds of a leather hood piled up behind. It had been stowed in the hen-house, and was superbly ornamented. The price of carriage and harness was thirty shillings, and the purchaser was so proud of his bargain that he insisted on taking it home with him. Passing Dubheads, my father got his eye on the charioteer, and saluted him. "Hillo! Mill o' Gask, what's that you have got?" "Do you not see," said Scott drily. "Oh! I see now; but at a distance I thought it was our smith's old bellows on their way to be repaired." Scott, with great good nature and presence of mind, gave his horse a twitch of the reins, saying joyously, "That's the way I am so *windy* about my purchase."

"The Brown Cow" was Mr. Scott's Perth house, and if the walls of that ancient hostelry could tell tales, they would speak of many a stiff stable fee discharged within them by "Mill o' Gask." He came in on Friday morning, but the thought of going home the same day, never once occured to him. He preferred the moon to the sun, because, like Allan Masterton's guest, he could defy "her arts to wile him hame." One hot summer morning, the flies were annoying his charger very much, on the inward journey.

He gave them a cross scourge with his whip, exclaiming audibly, "Get out o' that, and try me coming hame."

When any of the party proposed to go away, Mr. Scott would say ," Stop a wee, laddie, till I tell ye about Johnnie Cowan o' Corrodie." "Yes! yes! Mill o' Gask, tell us about Johnnie."

"Johnnie Cowan was tenant of the 'Hill o' Corrodie' on the east side o' Glenshee, and the low country bodies who were not weel off for strae, gaed up to Johnnie for a cart o' heather, which they got for half-a-crown. After the heather was loaded, Johnnie accompanied his customer to the Inn at Glenshee, where a little refreshment was thought prudent, ae gill, then anither gill, then a third gill, which came a' thegither to sixpence, and when they raise to gang awa, Johnnie dashed the table with his closed hand, 'Sit doon! plenty o' heather on Corrodie, anither noggin, and then.' Johnnie paid the bill, and when he gaed hame and balanced his accounts, he generally found the whisky had it."

Another round would be ordered in, and another piece of gossip would come from Mr. Scott. He had a great dislike to Perth tradesmen becoming farmers, and spoke very lightly of those who did so. "Yes laddies, a windy callant gaed out the ither day to tak a farm from Lord Kinnoull, and after the rent and everything was settled, his Lordship said, 'So far all right, but who is to be your security?' 'George Kidd my Lord.' 'And who is George Kidd?' 'George Kidd is a man who knows neither what to eat, nor what to drink, nor what to put on.' 'Extraordinar'' quo' the Earl."

Thirty years ago, I went on a visit to "Mill o' Gask." During the forenoon he showed me his crops, but the housemaid had mislaid the key of the granary, and he could not show me his stock of wheat, but after much fretting and flyting, he said to me "Ye'll just hae to keek in at the key-hole." I asked him to show me the piece o engineering skill which he told us of in Glasgow twenty years before. "Oh yes! my tundel." Away we went to the river side. It appeared that while draining the field which lay along the mill dam, a difficulty arose with the level, the surface of the water in the dam being higher than the ground outside the embankment. This was obviated by making an opening under the dam-dyke and carrying the field water in pipes out at the tail of the dyke. This Mr. Scott called his "tundel," and in my apprentice days he was sometimes called "Tundel the engineer."

After dinner he told me of the troubles he had with his men. "One little rascal" he said, "that I sent to the plough the other day, cam' in to me showlin' and crying that the plough had come against a stone and near knockit his brains out. I said, 'Dear me laddie, whaur did it strike ye?' 'Just on there' said he, laying his hand on his hip! Another lazy deevil told me that a ploughman could claim eight days in the year to himself, 'Two for markets, two for Sacraments, two for marriages, and two for burials.' I said to him, 'Is ye're folk a' bapteezed.'"

Mr. Scott went to see the Great Exhibition of 1851, and paid me a visit on his way home. I asked him what he thought of the Exhibition. "The show was fine; but I got a devil o' a blow." I enquired if some one knocked him down. "On, no, it was the wind; but it knocked down our funnel." He had taken a particular look at the Mansion House. "Because," he said, "brawly did I ken his mither" (meaning the Lord Mayor's mother). "I saw the Review in Hyde Park, too, and it minded me o' the Battle of Bambreich, where your father and Davie Nicoll and me took the cannon."

Notwithstanding these amusing peculiarities, Mr. Scott was a gentlemanly man, a good citizen of the world, and a peaceable, kind neighbour. He farmed well, and possessed very considerable means. He was very fond of money, but, as a boon companion, liberal and free-handed; not to be hurried; not lightly daunted; polite, yet strong-minded, and not easily swayed. When paying a tavern-bill, he would say, "I was at Leckie's schule, and he told me, 'Be aye first to put your hand in your pouch: but be aye the last to tak' it out'"—which means, that your generosity, though apparently forcible, should not prevent you giving your more prompt neighbour a chance.

On a Friday evening, before going on a cattle-buying excursion, I accompanied him to the "Brown Cow," to partake of his stable-fee. We were there joined by Mr. Lowe, of Lawhill, and Mr. Samuel Richmond, of Chapelbank. After a while, a stout little Englishman came into the room, accompanied by three Perth friends. Potatoes were talked of by the Englishman and his friends in terms which the farmers thought rather boastful, and they did not scruple to shake their suspicious heads. One of the

Englishman's friends stormed at this, and, rising to his feet, he came down upon the table with his clenched hand, saying, "I will bet a sovereign that my friend—meaning the Englishman—has more money in his pocket at this moment than all the rest of the company put together," and immediately tabled the sovereign. The farmers took no notice of the tendered bet, which raised the grandeur of the other party to boiling height. Mr. Lowe said, quietly, "Gentlemen do not generally carry money about them after bank hours." "Bah!" said the betting party, "that is mere pretence; at any rate, they ought to be more civil to those gentlemen who do." A good deal more chaffing ensued, which, on the part of the Perth party, became somewhat insolent. At length, Mr. Richmond said, "If Mill o'Gask will join me, we will accept the bet." "No, no, laddie," said Scott, "Lay ye down the sovereign, and I will try to find the notes." The sovereign was tabled, and presently the Englishman laid down on the table a pile of notes about three inches high. I saw they were all small notes, and although the bundle was large, I had confidence in my friends. "Table your money," said the belligerent Perthie. "O no!" said Scott, "just hover a wee," and drawing a big leather bag from his pocket, he thrust his hand into it up to the elbow; after some manipulation below the table, he drew forth a twenty pound note saying, gingerly, "Will that do?" "O no! thank you." Down goes the arm again, and forth comes another "twenty," "Will that do bairns?" "No! it will not do." Down goes the arm again,—amidst whispers of "He's making them," and visible looks of misgiving.—Mr. Scott drew out another "twenty," and laying it down on the top of the others before Mr. Lowe, said testily, "Just lat me ken whan ye hae enough, lad, and we'll maybe get through afore the mornin'." Another two "twenties" settled the business, and the Perth gentlemen seemed to enjoy it amazingly. Mill o' Gask looked at the betting man with an air provokingly patronising, and whispered "Foolish laddie, we'll fine ye a beef steak, and a tumbler to each of the company." This was at once agreed to, and a very happy evening spent. One of the party said to Mr. Scott, "Are you not afraid you be robbed on the way home?" and was answered, "O no! It's a long way to the bottom o' yon pouch." The parties were very anxious to know how much money Mr. Scott really had on him, saying their friend had a hundred pounds; but he knew better; John could keep his own secret. He put them off by saying with philosophic precision, "Ye see, laddies, I have really no ground for telling you how much is in my hugger, because if ye thought there was o'er muckle, ye might be for takin' some out, but if ye thought there was little, ye're no the likely men to put anything in."

One dark December night Mr. Scott and Mr. Lowe, extended their orgies at the same hostelry, until it was far into the night. Mr. Scott was to give Mr. Lowe a drive home in his gig, but they waited for the rising moon, and somehow or other Luna postponed her visit, and one of the gig lamps took the pet, and would not burn. In the midst of this dilemma the gentlemen started, and when they came to the *Street-road*, the lamp was dubious, the horse passive, and the men trustful; so they drove on twenty yards and turned in to the quarry. A few minutes, and the horse, in spite of whip and rein, refused point blank to go any further. Mr. Scott descended, and going to the horse's head, came bang against a stone wall. His arms dropped, and turning up to Mr. Lowe in perfect bewilderment, he exclaimed "Hech sirs! weel laddie, I ha'e travelled mony a lang journey, but I never came to the end of a road before."

Riding home from Crieff on one occasion he passed a neighbour, who spoke to him, but received no answer. After going on for a couple of hundred yards he came back at a hand-gallop. He made no apology, but merely explained, "I was inventing a new riddle to my thrashing mill."

When Mr. Scott took possession of Mill of Gask, he continued—being a dissenter—to worship at Kinkell or the Broom, but eventually he drove occasionally to Perth. His old housekeeper was, at first, very much against those Sunday visits to Perth, and tried to throw obstacles in the way, but was generally silenced by some dry remark. On one occasion however, she had the best of it. Mr. Scott had just taken his reins in hand, when she cried, "I have pitten some bread and cheese in the box o' the gig for ye're noon-piece." "Aye!" said he, "could I no get my dinner at the 'Brown Coo?'" "Oo' aye! nae doot o' that," said Janet, "but I'm fear'd that if ye dinner at the 'Brown Coo' every Sabbath ye gang to Perth, the cost will o' ergang the profit."

During the times of Burke and Hare, when the whole country was put into a state of excitement by the alleged doings of the resurrectionists, a woman of eighty-four, who was understood to be rather a burden to her family, died. Her remains could be of no service to the exhumers, but her son became alarmed and went in very downcast mood to consult his neighbour, "Mill o' Gask." "So ye've got ye're auld mither buried," said Mr. Scott. "Yes Sir," said his visitor, "but it is reported they're gaun to lift her again." "That would be a pity," said his counsellor, "for I suppose you are getting on as weel without her."

CHAPTER XXXI.

WILLIAM GLENDINNING, MILLER.

> "I live by my mill. She's dearer to me
> Than kindred, child, or wife:
> I would not change my station
> For any other in life."
> OLD SONG.

DURING the first twenty-five years of the present century, William Glendinning rented a meal and barley mill in the western district of Perthshire. He paid occasional visits to Glasgow with product, and acquired a little more knowledge of the world than generally belongs to his class. He had a copious supply of stories culled from his long experience as a public man, in his own immediate district. Those living in active town life are carried away by the blaze of superficial scholarship, and constant change of circumstances, which are its frequent attendants, and can form little idea how the current of thought moves on in the mind that is more left to feed upon itself. A great river is hurried forward by its own impetus, but a little drop of water hesitates and percolates about until it finds its way into a groove where it dashes not, but if not led away is likely to be original in its movements. William Glendinning was a bluff, straight-forward, hard-working man, and a good neighbonr. He was a staunch adherent of the old Church of Scotland, and although sometimes a little forgetful of her discipline, he always excused himself to his many dissenting neighbours by saying, that "they had a great deal more ecclesiastical knowledge than religion," and "instead of going up to God they tried to bring God down to them." Every little escapade was carefully concealed from his family, and within his own household he was a strict disciplinarian. The Sunday evening catechism was an established institution, and all the family, servants included, had to learn two double verses of a psalm. Jamie, the eldest of the Glendinnings, thought that his father was rather severe upon him, making him grind in the mill all the week and grind at psalms and catechism all the Sabbath, but remonstrance was not to be thought of. On one occasion, however, he ventured to give an unequivocal opinion as to how matters stood. He had dallied about the whole forenoon, creeping along the fences, looking for birds' nests and bee-bikes, utterly neglecting his psalm and catechism, and when the hour of trial came he was found wanting. His father stormed, and said bitterly, "Laddie, if ye dinna learn yere lessons better ye'll be sent to the ill place." Jamie cogitated, balancing the chances, and speculating on comparative life, and then replied, "Deed, faither, I'm in an ill enough place already."

William had himself a besetting sin, which no means that either his wife or the minister could use, would make him shake off. The mill-lade contained excellent trout, and the miller being an expert disciple of Izaak Walton, inoculated his master, and the two went to it together. Their method was very unsportsmanlike. They constructed a dyke across the lade with certain openings in it, and as the trout attempted to pass through these openings, they caught them with their hands. Nothing very wrong in this, but the business had a worse feature; it was frequently on the Sabbath day that this was indulged in. The Sunday practice was heavily taxed too, for the footpath between the church and the manse ran along the side of the lade, and only one of them could go in to fish, the other having to watch the minister. On one occasion they were both so engaged with a plethora of trout that his reverence was on them ere they wist. When his sharp voice, fresh from the pulpit, sounded in their ears, they both started up bolt upright, bare-limbed to the knees and dripping with water, a most un-Sabbathlike spectacle. William lifted his bonnet, stroked down his hair, and looked in most despairing mood. He came up out of the lade, but the miller stood where he was and the lecture began.

Minister. "I thought from what you said to me in your own house that there would be an end to this disgraceful practice; but it appears not. You are ruining yourself and your family, besides scandalising your neighbours, and as your minister I find it to be my imperative duty to attempt putting an end to it in some way."

William. "I thought as weel as yersel', sir, that I wad never do it again, but I saw the lade fou' o' trout, an' I just forgot mysel', and cam' out for a wee while, but I promise now to gie it ower entirely."

At the conclusion of this penitential proposal, a big trout walloped over the dyke, and William, losing self-control, shouted, "D——n ye, Jock; can ye no catch that ane." The minister left, and gave up his parishioner as hopeless, but Glendinning felt so much affronted that he never took another fish out of the lade on the Sabbath day during the remainder of his life. Another affair happened about the same time which humbled him greatly, and although little to blame in it, the two together softened his temper and rendered him more circumspect.

In those days oatmeal was all sifted by the hand, and in front of the mill *e'e* was a space, divided off and kept very clean, technically called the trough. Here the sifting operation was performed. Glendinning was standing one forenoon inside of the trough without shoes or stockings, when a neighbouring gentleman's gamekeeper came in and asked for a firlot of meal for his dogs. This was weighed and put into a small bag brought for the purpose; but in turning round to look for a piece of twine to fasten the bag, William saw two big dogs romping amongst his meal bags with more freedom than he considered them entitled to, and without thinking that they possibly belonged to his customer, or indeed giving the matter any thought at all, he lifted a cast metal pound weight and pitched it, in a random sort of way, at the intruders. One of them must have been struck, for they both rushed to the door howling frightfully. The man said nothing, but seizing the bag by the two bottom corners, he hurled its contents into Glendining's face, and walked coolly after the dogs. Mouth, eyes, nose and ears were deeply buried, and the poor man stood for a second or two, like a half-modelled figure in plaster of Paris. His reasoning powers were utterly dashed, and he could neither hear nor see nor smell; but giving himself a shake, such as one of his canine friends would have given himself on coming out from amongst water, he bolted after the delinquent. Through his foggy vision he saw him pushing his way down past his own house, and barefooted as he was, he sprang after him with terrible impetus. His wife and servant girl observed him coming, and in such a plight that they concluded something awful had befallen him. "What is't, Willie? what is't?" cried his astonished wife. "Stand back," cried the miller, while

The meal flew frae his tail in cluds,
An' blindit a' their een;

but the two closed before him, and William in his reckless rage, gave his wife a push aside, and to save herself she clutched the girl, and both went down together. He went on a few yards, but his wife's fate checked him, and when he looked along the road, he saw his foe marshalling his two dogs for the combat. This settled the affair for the present, and William returned, panting and nearly blind, to his fair protectors. Before the miller's family went to sleep that night, the whole matter was explained and, by them, forgotten.

But "there are always two at a bargain making." Next morning early, a man of sinister aspect presented himself at the mill, and told William in mysterious terms, that an information had been lodged against him for committing an assault on his wife, and that he must at once go to Dunblane, together with his wife and servant, to see the Fiscal, or it might be worse for him. Within two hours they were all on the road, mounted on one of the mill carts; a respectable looking group considering their relative positions. When they reached the Fiscal's office, they found their accusing friend waiting them. Mr. and Mrs. Glendinning were shown in to the official presence. "Is it possible, sir, that you have been guilty of committing an assault on your wife?" "No! it's quite impossible." "Tell me your story." William told everything, and when he came to the part where his wife appeared, he became proud, and tears began to gather in his eyes. Mrs. Glendinning, drowned in tears, denied being struck, and said she was only pushed aside, and lost her footing. The Fiscal saw the animus that led to the accusation, but he thought it possible, and only natural, that the wife might endeavour to shelter the husband; and the servant was called in. Now this servant girl's name was Kitty Loughrie. She was from the Emerald Isle, green as turf, but clever and truthful. "Well Kitty did you see your master strike your mistress yesterday?" "I did, sor." "Oh! what hand did he strike her with?" "I could not say, sor, for the maile." "Did he strike her sore?" "Sowle, how could I tell that, sor, it was not me he strok."—Fiscal upset,—but he was desirous of knowing if she approved of the gamekeeper's proceedings, and rejoined, "No! he did not strike you, but if he had, what would you have done?" "Strok back to be shure." "Then you would have appeared here in a worse position than you are now in; do you not know that striking is against the law?" "Yes sor! but I did not know that striking back was agin the law."—Fiscal again upset,—"Now! my good girl, give me a direct and simple answer to this question:—Did your master actually strike your mistress, or did he merely give her a push?" "Yes indeed sor, he was in a fareful posh." "Did you see him lift his hand and strike her?" "I tould ye afore, sor, that I could not say for the maile." William Glendinning explained, "She means that she could not see for the meal."—Fiscal, rising to his feet—"You may go away home William. I do not see much against you in this case, only you ought to be a little less fiery," and opening the door, he said to the gamekeeper, "That man has a serious action of damages against you, you had better make your peace with him; I shall see your master about this day's proceedings." William Glendinning, pursuer in an action of damages! No! though fiery, he loved peace in the main.

On a stormy afternoon, while the wind blew great guns without, as William and his family were sitting at their quiet dinner, the door was burst open and the miller shouted, "A man in the dam, a man in the dam!" The whole household hastened to the rescue, and William grasped the *cleek* which always hung at the mill door. By the time they reached the pond, the man had given his last struggle and gone down in nine feet of water. The miller who was an expert swimmer, got a glimpse of him as he descended, and throwing off his coat, he went after him like an arrow. In a few seconds they came both to the surface, the miller striking from him, but the man a dead weight; a few convulsive struggles and down they went together; a longer time below, and the miller came up, but he was not able to lift the drowning man above the water and they went down a third time, but the miller speedily re-appeared a little nearer the bank. The anxious people on the side thought he had lost the man, and cried to him to save himself. Little Jamie had thoughtfully run for a rope, and his father having hurriedly formed it into a sort of lasso, threw it with remarkable dexterity over the precise spot where the struggle was going on. The miller grasped it and was gently but speedily brought to the bank. On nearing it the beholders were astonished to see that he still kept his hold of the strange man. When they were taken out of the water the miller was greatly exhausted, and the stranger apparently dead. Every means within reach of the family to restore animation were taken, with little apparent effect, so Jamie was despatched on horseback for the village doctor. Meantime hot blankets, friction, and every other remedy known to the family or their neighbours, were successively applied. Eventually William Glendinning, as he rubbed the clammy skin, thought he felt a slight movement in the patient's chest, and after a little he put his mouth close to his ear and gave a prodigious shout. The poor man opened his eyes and looked round him in absolute bewilderment. Half-an-hour more and he began to look for his clothes, which were being dried; another half-hour and he was dressed. Jamie Glendinning returned, but the doctor was absent and could not be at the mill in less than an hour. The patient heard all this but "ne'er a word he spak'." William intended to ask his name and his story, but waited until he would gain a little more strength. The gudewife, brought out her bottle, and put the tea-pot to the fire. While she was doing this, the stranger showed some uneasiness, and rising to his feet he staggered to the door. Some minutes elapsed, and Jamie was sent out to look for him. Presently he came back crying, "He's scouring o'er the hill, and here is the doctor." This rural practitioner was a clever man, but eccentric, and a little given to indulgence, not overwhelmed with practice, nor overloaded with money. He dashed up to the door, and in an instant he was in the kitchen, shouting, "Where is the dead man?" The answer did not come quick enough, and he roared, "Where the devil is the dead man?" "He's awa'," said Mrs. Glendinning. "Awa'! do you mean to his lang hame?" "Oh! no," said Mrs. Glendinning, rather sheepishly, "he's awa scourin' o'er the hill." In an instant the Esculapian was in the saddle and off at full gallop after the delinquent. He was seen going over the hill using both whip and spur, but whether or not he recovered his lost patient never transpired.

These few narratives must be characteristic of William Glendinning because they were taken from his own lips. There was an undercurrent of real excellence in him, that developed itself more fully as he advanced in years. An older brother died at Malden, and left him a thousand pounds, which set him fairly above the world. He prospered apace, and from very pride, stayed all Sunday trouting and mealy escapades. His children went out in the world, and, in his own words, he never needed to blush for any of them. Long after the fag end of these anecdotes, and while George the Fourth was King, William and his motherly wife were still stirring about the mill, and although the lade was open in his own children's youth he had it fenced for his grandchildren, "because they're no' my ain," he said. These grandchildren came in the summer and toddled about among carts and sacks of corn, forcibly reminding their grandfather of his early days. He would have a friend at night too, and over their toddy they would go back through years of dearth and years of plenty, through times of war and through times of peace; dwelling over the era of Pitt, Fox, and Dundas, drawing parallels between them and Canning, Sidmouth, and Home Drummond; marvelling at the Deanston spinning, and the moss being sent to sea, and conjuring up soft memories of Susie Blamire singing, "The Days o' Lang Syne" in the woods of Gartmore; and Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre walking along the river side arm-in-arm wi' Robbie Burns, the Ayr poet, William sometimes adding jocularly, "That was the year that I was catched by the minister," or "I mind it like yesterday, it was the same year that I was ta'en afore the Fiscal at Dunblane." At the end of the journey William Glendinning and Mary his wife were laid side by side in Drymen Kirkyard. Few months intervened between their deaths, and they both died within the click of the mill, yet the water gurgled on, the barley stones birred, and the loaded carts arrived and departed as if nothing had happened. Death refuses to recognise the prescriptive term of forty years, and mocks at real possession. Man's term is short, but men's terms are long. The sluice is shut by one miller and opened by another, but the water runs on for ever.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JOHN HASTIE, FARMER, WHINNYBURN.

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right:
> In faith and hope the world will disagree,
> But all mankind's concern is charity."
> POPE.

JOHN HASTIE was a farmer in Western Strathearn, an indifferent ploughman, a gruff neighbour, and an unbending seceder, but withal honest and straightforward. As a theologian, he maintained that Satan dwelt in high places, and that asceticism was the sure compromise for future bliss. As a practitioner, he overlooked the simpler doctrines of the Bible, and plunged headlong into the subtleties of polemical divinity;—was more a disciple of the Covenant than of the Crucifixion. He believed in no ecclesiastical dogma whatever unless it emanated from the Rev. Mr. Imrie, of Kinkell, and in no blue bonnet unless it came from Alexander Wylie, of the Meal Vennel of Perth. His theology was fierce as dry bones—a sort of holy mensuration. Heaven was exacting; hell, inexorable. He scouted the generosity that should ever characterise the creed of the redeemed. The old Covenanters riveted their armour because they stood in the front of the battle, but John forgot that when the battle was over, then ought to come the peace. He was one of those who strut across this earth, and look up to the great firmament above as if they thoroughly comprehended its entire economy, who can tell you at once what to do and how to do it, what ought to be the length of your prayers and the breadth of your phylacteries. He maintained that the grace of God was sufficient to make a man a good preacher, although he was every day cognisant of the fact that it would not of itself enable him to spell his own name. Yet, with that reliance on grace, he held the laws of God stern and irrevocable; hence he was for ever on the horns of a dilemma. Although himself the most cautious of all theologians, he was impatient of contradiction, and when his wife ventured to remonstrate with him on the soundness of his views, which she sometimes did during family worship, he resented it by some clenching argument. He uniformly began his prayer, "O horrible and terrible Lord God Almighty;" but during the disastrous harvest of 1814, when the prevalence of east wind, laden with incessant deluges of rain, exhausted the farmer's patience, Janet observed that he dropped the first of his outrageous ascriptives and said to him gratefully, "John, I am so glad that you do not say that ugly word noo when ye begin your prayer." "O!" says John, with the utmost *sangfroid*, "it is not needed for a change of weather. 'Fair weather cometh out of the north. With God is *terrible* majesty.'" Towards Martinmas, however, when the stooks were getting green, John was on his knees, praying earnestly, but humbly, for a change. Janet thought he wanted energy, and said, "Insist, John; what for d'ye no insist?" John said, "There is no use insisting till the change o' the moon," and went on his way.

On one memorable occasion, this great disciple of John Knox was expounding to his family the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, and when he came to the third verse, he bawled forth, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragoon"—"Hoot, John, ye're surely wrang. My certy! there's few o' them gangs there," said Janet. John was fierce at this interruption, and, looking over his spectacles, replied, testily, "Foolish woman, d'ye no see that this ane gaed there for a wonder."

A small portion of John's barn was appropriated to the night accommodation of the itinerant craft—tinkers, beggars, fiddlers, cutlers, and pedlars, *et hoc genus omne*,—a large community in those days, as many as a score being from time to time admitted in pairs as his occasional guests. They had certain blankets allotted to them, and plenty of clean straw; boiling water from the kitchen, and occasionally a drop of skimmed milk to moisten their sorry meal. One severe winter, an old "blue-gown," Robbie Haliburton, became ill during a storm, and made his quarters good for the winter. He had some store, and John eked it out by contributions from himself and his neighbours. When the spring came in, Robbie's health returned, and he took the road fresh and invigorated. He was a clever, pawkie, well-informed man,—had been in the Peninsula, but the only pension he enjoyed was the badge stuck ostentatiously on the lapel of his coat, to which great importance was attached, and which proved a passport wherever he went. The coat itself might have dated from the Roman invasion, it had so many symbols of years. Thus equipped, and carrying a pike-staff five feet long, Robbie, with his face ruddy as the morn, sallied forth on his spring campaign.

A new minister had been placed in the parish who knew not Robbie, and to whom our seceding friend had no great goodwill. His reverence, it was alleged, was better at preaching charity to others than bestowing alms himself. So it was arranged that Robbie should make his first fresh essay of skill on the new divine, and away he trudged to the manse. The two met at the entrance-gate, when the following sharp dialogue ensued :—

Robbie. " Would ye bestow a bawbee on a poor, worthless auld body o' a soldier?"

Minister, " Were you a worthless soldier?"

A. " O aye, a worthless soldier."

Q. " Were you ever at a battle?"

A. " O aye, but I was awfu' fear'd."

Q. " Did you run away?"

A. " Yes, when I could."

Q. " But when you could not?"

A. " I kept near a tree."

Q· " Were you ever wounded?"

A. " O aye."

Q· " Where?"

A. " On there," striking his hip.

Q. " But at what battle?"

A. " At Bunker-hill."

Q. " Is it not generally understood to be a bad sign of a soldier when he is wounded in the rear?"

A. " It proves that he is a good manœuvrer."

Q. " How?"

A. " Because it shows that he receives the enemy's shot with contempt."

The reverend gentleman saw that he had met his match, and he tried the old soldier on a new tack.

Minister. " I am afraid I cannot give you anything; your hat is better than mine."

Robbie. " It is not *my* hat; I got the loan of it."

Minister. " But you have a good coat, too."

Robbie. " It belongs to George the Third."

The minister, thus baffled, thought he would cut matters short, and remarked, curtly, "Well, at any rate, your face is both fatter and fresher than mine."

"O! but," says Robbie, stroking his chin with his opened hand, "this face does not belong to me, either; it is a new face a' thegither, and it belongs to John Hastie, wast at Whinnyburn, for he has been pottying at it a' winter, and it was only finished yesterday."

It occurred to the mendicant that this keen-edged encounter was little calculated to soften the feelings of a gentleman whose character seemed so very well understood by the conclave of dissenters at Whinnyburn, so he prepared to resume his perambulations. But the event showed how little we ought to be guided by first impressions, and how very little deference we ought to pay to the opinions of men who are more guided by a desire to blacken the character of those opposed to them than by a desire to know the truth. Robbie Haliburton was taken to the manse kitchen, a substantial meal set before him, a shilling put into his hand, and his wallet filled with odds and ends sufficient for a week of shortcomings. Ever after, when the old soldier was seen coming across the Moor of Orchill, with his lyart locks waving in the breeze, he seemed to long for the turning of the road where he would get the first glimpse of the manse, with its whitened walls, round which he intended to oscillate for a week or two before his arrival at Whinnyburn. When, in the course of tender events, the minister brought home his young wife, Robbie speedily gained her good graces and the dole of her generous hand; and when he came to die at his old home at Whinnyburn, portions of the best which the manse could afford found their way to the pauper's bedside, and John Hastie, under a sort of protest, allowed the minister to pay him frequent visits. I will leave it to prompter casuists to say whether the dying soldier was likely to be most benefited by the semi-physical, semi-mental ordeal to which John Hastie endeavoured to subject him, as a preparation for death, or the tender counsellings of the minister, who cheered him with the hope, which was all he had to depend upon, and allowed his mind to alternate between the journey that was before him and the hardships of his early life and his subsequent thirty years' wandering without a home, of his blistering marches below the burning sun of Estramadura, and freezing winter nights under the cannon's shelter before the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom.

Man's endowments are generally susceptible of very great finish. His education can be elaborated to the most classic point. His deportment may be polished to the utmost loftiness. His taste may be refined by studying the finer forms produced in the schools of nature and art; but his religion must retain its sharp edge. The stern Presbyterianism of the year 1800 has been burnished into a sort of rude Episcopacy. Episcopacy has been rubbed up to Ritualism, and Ritualism requires only a little elevating friction to become Roman Catholicism, the most refined and luxurious of all faiths. To strong minds this refining process may be safe and advantageous; but where the primary substance happens to be somewhat filmy, there is very great danger of it being rubbed out altogether. True religion cannot run with safety in all these grooves, and is frequently shunted off.

John Hastie wisely kept innovation at arm's length. He held his creed inviolate as the Persian law, and it extended to every heavenward movement of human life. He entered the church on Sunday, and walked to his pew with his bonnet on; and, to set at defiance every mood of the Episcopacy, sat with it on, until the minister appeared. The pews in Kinkell church on Sunday morning looked like rows of blue fungi tipped with red. Immediately after the blessing was pronounced, the bonnets were again mounted, and when the strict worshippers reached the open air, instead of mutual congratulations on the service of the day, they drifted into loud discussions about how far the doctrines of the preacher squared with what they called "The Fundamentals." They would not sing "St. Asaph's," because it was an Episcopal see; nor "Dundee," because of Claverhouse; nor "French," because of the Pope; and the precentor had to read the line in order to give them breath to do full justice to "Elgin," "Martyrs," or "Coleshill." A new tune durst not be thought of, and they called the organ introduced into St. Andrew's church, Glasgow, "Ritchie's Fiddle." When "Elder John" went round with the "laidle" to collect the "offering," he drew it slowly past every one's face; and if he thought something should come where nothing appeared, he remonstrated by a momentary standstill. On some glaring occasions, it was said that he gave the recusant ratepayers a rap on the fingers with the ladle, which made the coppers rattle.

No man could entertain a stricter sense of the proprieties of public and private worship than John Hastie, but often where least latitude is allowed most is taken. Family worship, that rallying-point of the worthy Presbyterian families of Scotland sixty years ago, was ever recurrent at Whinnyburn. The dinner-bell was never heard within that simple homestead, but at a given hour, night and morning, the gudewife came round the gable of the house, and said to the out-door workers, in a subdued tone, "Come awa' in to the readin'. "The ploughman dropped his curry-comb, and the cow-boy his barrow; and with unwashed hands, and thoughts called into immediate action, prostrated themselves on the clay floor before that God who, they were taught to believe, had no respect of persons. A man may wash himself with snow-water, he may deck his limbs in cloth of gold, but these seemly doings may cover a gangrene of pollution, and his untouched heart will render his worship a mockery and a fraud.

In these oft-repeated acts of family devotion, however, John Hastie had enough to do with his surroundings and not very placable temper. On one occasion, the servant-girl was on her knees near the window, when the pig, which had broken its fastenings, came romping round the front of the house. The poor girl endured the brute's proceedings until he stuck his nose into a bed of onions and tossed them into the air like drift, when she said, half-audibly, "Sou! sou! sou!" and ran to the door. Mrs. Hastie, not knowing what was wrong, also left, followed by her daughter, leaving John to himself, and when the pig was housed they returned to their places, finding nothing amiss, but only John a little farther on.

It was not in religious matters alone that John Hastie abhorred change, but in everything connected with his very primitive occupation. When "fanners" were first introduced he denounced them as King James did tobacco smoke, and called them "The devil's breath," point blank refusing to allow them on his premises. Late in life he got a new barn, and two doors were placed exactly opposite each other, that "the breath of heaven" might have free ingress and egress, and "dight his corn on the thrashing-floor." His horses were caparisoned according to the strict letter of the old school: straw braighams and halters made of the clippings of their own tails. His carts had wooden axles working in wooden naves. With these he would leave Whinnyburn at ten o'clock at night, and go rumbling away up the western slope of Gleneagles to Blairingone for coals. About noon next day he would return with his two loads, each weighing 24 stones, or a little more than 4 cwt. When his neighbour, James Neilson, ventured to bring 48 stones on one of his better appointed conveyances, John shook his head, and said, "Where is all this to end?" When the fame of Wilkie's iron plough and the drum-thrashing-machine reached him, he predicted "the vengeance of heaven" on their heads, saying wrathfully, "Takin' the wark out o' the poor folks' hands. 'God made man upright, but he has found out many inventions!' I want no iron about this toun but my horses' shoon and my plough muntin, my huik, and the teeth o' my rippling-kaim." Though thus generally carrying matters high, John occasionally met with sharp reprisal. At the Martinmas term he got home two new men-servants, a ploughman and a haflin. It was the custom at Whinnyburn for the master and men to take their meals together in the kitchen, and he made a point of impressing all new comers with a full sense of their very tenable position. The morning after the above arrival, the buffet-stool was set out garnished with three plates of porridge and one large bowl of sweet milk, into which each dipped on mid-journey. The girls were moving about; but when the gudeman laid aside his bonnet all was still. John expatiated at great length on the manifold duties of life, and did not stop until he thought he had sufficiently moulded the new comers to his purpose. When the end came the spoons were lifted in solemn silence, and the worthy farmer and his men felt subdued and contented. But the hungry ploughman, unconscious of the latent heat that slumbered under the smooth skin of the Whinnyburn porridge, stuck his spoon into the savoury morsel, and modestly avoiding the milk for the first round, plunged it into his mouth. He gave a convulsive start, and, dashing his spoon amongst the milk, met it half-way with this agonised apostrophe, "Follow, ye devil, or I'm a dead man." John saw his castle of cards demolished before it was well built, and he was left to feel how very short way sage counsel went in alleviating physical pain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOHN HASTIE, FARMER, WHINNYBURN.—*concluded.*

> "What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
> Sae hale and hearty every shank!
> Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank
> He let them taste;
> Frae Calvin's well aye clear they drank.
> O, sic a feast."
> ROBERT BURNS.

ONE of the neighbouring farms to Whinnyburn was occupied by James Neilson, also a Dissenter, but of a more liberal stamp. He had been educated with a view to the pulpit, but his father dying while James was young, his hopes were frustrated, and he settled down as a farmer on the paternal acres. Neilson was an intelligent, well-read man; he was held the best Bible scholar of his University—self-dependent and taciturn, yet of broad sympathies and susceptible of kindly companionship. He was no "steeve seceder," and barely tolerated the dogmatic formula of his theological *Alma Mater*. As a rule, he took Church matters with meekness and equanimity; but if interfered with in his own religious affairs, he was fierce as the lion in his den, and made those who once ventured to beard him feel that caution was their safeguard, and forbearance better than retaliation. Individually, he was equal to any ordinary emergency; but the circumstances I am about to narrate drove him to his wit's end, and he called in the counsel of his friend, Alexander Taylor, the Crieff schoolmaster, the two together proving more than a match for the Session of Kinkell.

The wet harvest, which I have already referred to, told heavily on Neilson, his farm being nearly surrounded by woods, and at the beginning of December he had a field of oats standing in the stook which had been cut in October. One Saturday afternoon, a strong wind arose from the north-west, and by ten o'clock on Sunday night the stooks were rattling dry. A sharp frost was setting in, which, in the unsettled state of the weather, was likely to generate more rain; and the moon being full and unclouded, Neilson felt a natural desire to have his crop secured. After family worship, he said to his men, that he would like them to start the "leading" as soon as the Sabbath-day was past. So far from objecting to it, they expressed their anxiety to be at it, one elderly retainer saying, "When I was in Monimail, the minister, ae weet hairst, skailt the kirk at twal o'clock to lat the folk to the leadin'."

If Neilson could have secured his crop himself, he would have proceeded to it at once without hesitation; but he felt the utmost delicacy in proposing it to his men. When he saw their humour, however, and felt strong in his own justification, he allowed them to take their way, and within fifteen minutes the carts were rattling across the causewayed court. These men wrought with a will, and before daylight on Monday morning three large stacks were put in. They were speedily thatched and roped; but when the beams of the winter sun began to struggle through the crisp atmosphere, the "rime took the air," and before James Neilson got the length of asking a blessing on his morning meal, the rain came down in torrents.

These proceedings of Neilson's were speedily blown about; the scandal became too violent for the ever-watchful Session, and he was peremptorily called before it. John Hastie, who had a small portion of crop still exposed, felt aggrieved by this successful escapade of his neighbour, and the minister felt himself superseded by Neilson thus cavalierly taking the Sabbath into his own hands, the feeling against the transgressor being both personal and official. The news of the impending encounter spread rapidly over the district, and both accusers and accused began to buckle on their armour. The Session knew well the weight of their opponent, which rendered the opportunity of putting him down, under such circumstances, more savoury than it would have been with a simpler delinquent. Neilson felt that he had committed a breach of the statute-law, but he had not scandalised his neighbours' feelings by doing it in the open day; and he flattered himself that before the ordinary courts his enemies would have difficulty in obtaining a conviction against him. With the ecclesiastical courts he was prepared to do battle; and with his quiver full of arrows, he attended the high behest of the august priest and his four august elders. Any ordinary offender would have been simply rebuked; but with Neilson it was thought necessary, first, to prove the law that had been violated; second, its violation; and third, to inflict the penalty.

Minister. "James Neilson, we presume that you do not deny having carted in some crop on the evening of Sabbath, the 4th instant?"

Neilson. "I allowed my men to do it."

Minister. "Do you mean to throw the blame on your men?"

Neilson. "I throw no blame on my men, neither do I take any to myself."

Minister. "So long as you recognise the authority of this Court, you are bound to respect its proceedings, and not to prejudge your own case."

Neilson. "I wish to show every deference to this Court, but I must stand upon my defence."

Minister. "You have been guilty of breaking the Sabbath by doing your ordinary work, without authority either from your Bible, or the church to which you profess to belong."

Neilson. "My Bible and my church tell me that I am to devote the Sabbath to the service of God, under certain exceptions, which my Catechism calls works of necessity and mercy."

Minister. "But you take upon yourself to judge of what are such works—a latitude that no religious community can, or will delegate to any individual."

Neilson. "I acted according to the best of my judgment in an emergency."

Matters were going on in this angular sort of way, when John Hastie thoughtlessly said, "You would have been better at your prayers than leading corn on the Sabbath night." Neilson rose to his feet, livid with excitement, and drawing a Bible from his pocket, he blew a blast that withered up the Session like as many autumn leaves:—"Reverend sir, I have prayed earnestly for the mercy of God in this trying season, but I have not attempted to do with my lips what I knew could only be done with my hands. My accusing neighbour has prayed, but he has done nothing more, and his corn is in the field, now unfit for man or beast. Remember, when the children of Israel had fixed their camp at Baal-Zephon, with the Red Sea before them, and Pharaoh's host behind, they importuned Moses, and 'cried unto the Lord;' and how did he answer their prayers? 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.' I believe in the vulgar proverb, that God helps them who help themselves."

Minister. "But what has all this to do with Sabbath desecration?"

Neilson. "Not much, certainly; but it has a great deal to do with the offensive and groundless charges you are bringing against me. Sabbath desecration applied to me is an abuse of the phrase. I respect and honour the Sabbath as much as any man, but this Court will never compel me to venerate the institutions of God and despise his mercies. Man's food is to him, while on earth, heaven's primary blessing, and he is bound to attempt its preservation under every possible circumstance. Moses had God's authority when he declared that sheltering the mercies of Providence is the first duty of man; keeping the Sabbath the sequel. He writes 'In the fifteenth day of the seventh month, *when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land,* ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath, and ye shall take branches of palm trees and willows of the brook, and rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.' Is this the spirit in which you act? No! You sit in your houses peevish and irritable, fretting at the ordinances of God, until the clock strikes twelve. You long impatiently for the end of the very day you profess to love and venerate, and covertly exclaim, in the language of Amos the prophet, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat.' While you are affecting to be in the service of God, you are longing after what you denounce in me as the service of Mammon. If a deed is in itself really good and merciful, its performance on Sunday cannot be a sin. If it is bad, delaying it two hours cannot make it virtuous. I think humbly, that I have shown you Scripture authority for what I did. The sanction of my minister could not change a really bad deed into its reverse; neither could the refusal of that sanction clear me of the sin who had desired it. I trust that, in the good providence of God, I shall never again be under the necessity of doing a deed about which you have raised such a clamour. For what is past, I know the end of your jurisdiction, and I bow to it."

Minister. "You have failed to show us that your proceedings were dictated by a desire to preserve the mercies of God, apart from your own aggrandisement."

Neilson. "I am not called upon to prove a negative. I will leave that to your reverence, and perhaps the injustice of the allegation may suggest to your mind that even a murderer, on his trial, is entitled to plead every extenuating circumstance."

Minister. "That is not language to apply to this Court, and unless you show it more deference, you may incur a penalty, the infliction of which will be painful to both accusers and accused."

Neilson. "If you had called me before you simply to receive your rebuke for what you considered an error, I would possibly have submitted: but not content with that, you endeavour to convict me out of my own mouth. No penalty you can inflict will extenuate real guilt: and as I do not recognise the justice of being three times punished for the same offence, I avoid the first by leaving your community. My opinion of the second I have already explained. As to the third, I may mention a case which I saw reported the other day in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal.* A baker was brought before the Dublin Police Court for selling a loaf on the Sabbath-day, and the Magistrate was about to fine him five shillings in terms of the statute of William and Mary, entitled 'The Lord's-Day Act.' when he protested, and produced in defence the Act of the 45th of the late King, which entails 'a penalty of 20s. on any baker who shall refuse to sell bread, at any time (without exemption), having it in his house.' True, I can produce no Act of Parliament in my defence; but I venture to assert that instead of blazing this matter abroad, it would have been better to imitate the Dublin Magistrate, who dismissed the baker, enjoining him 'not to propagate the dilemma to the prejudice of public morals.'" Neilson bowed and left.

John Hastie had long in his employ a ploughman of the name of Hugh Tennant, who came originally from the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire. A staid, canny man was Hugh. He lived like a true exotic, rarely mixing with his fellow-ploughmen. He contrived to have a sweetheart, however, and went a wooing occasionally as far as Muthill. One spring gloamin' he was preparing to take the road, when his master said—"Ye should na gang frae hame th' night, Hugh." "I maun keep my tryst." "Weel! weel! ye'll rue it the morn's morning" "I ken brawly I'll rue't the morn's morning, but I'll feel unco deseerous at ta time, though." Neighbour Neilson got round Hugh in some way, and he came to him from Whinnyburn. When he was going away, John Hastie ventured to give him a few words of advice, winding up by saying—"Dinna forget the auld Scotch proverb, 'A rowin' stane gathers nae fogg.'" "I mind it weel enough," said Hugh, "but I mind anither ane, 'A tethered ewe ne'er grows fat.'" The elder withdrew.

The Rev. James Imrie, of Kinkell, was a clever, well-educated man, but full of theological eccentricity, much of which he inherited from his predecessor, the Rev. Mr. Muckersie. The North Secession Church of Perth wanted a second minister, and a large majority were in favour of the Rev. Mr. Aitken; but, unfortunately, he was the son of a cottar, and the richer portion of the congregation rejected him. Being an excellent preacher, he simultaneously received a call to Kirriemuir. Mr. Muckersie, the father of the Presbytery, on being applied to for counsel, replied thus—"Reverend fathers, I think it would be more for the glory of God and the good of men's souls to send him to Kirriemuir, where Satan has his seat!" So poor Mr. Aitken was sent to the seat of war. So long as Mr. Imrie contented himself with simply preaching the Gospel and attending to the duties of his congregation, he was well esteemed, and had around him an attached people; but in his latter life he allowed himself to drift into the thorny path of a more relaxed creed, involving bitter oral discussion and incessant pamphleteering.

The consequence was dissension amongst his people, and a final breaking up of Kinkell congregation. The great strain to which his mind was subjected by these harassing matters brought on bodily distress, to which he succumbed before he had numbered the years his earlier life indicated. His patient elder adhered to the end, and when his own final struggle came the asperities of his nature were much softened. His children gathered from their distant homes to bid him farewell; and those of them who are still alive will, at this day, clench a disputed point by the oracular assertion, "My father said it!"

James Neilson,—notwithstanding many overtures made to him,—never afterwards re-joined the Kinkell congregation. At the termination of his lease he went to Glasgow where, in partnership with a younger brother, he began business as a victualler at the head of Maxwell Street. He prospered in business, his intelligence and education procuring for him a high position in one of the city Established Churches. I remember going with him to hear the Rev. Dr. Russell, of Muthill, preach in Dr. Love's chapel at Anderston. He was the son of the Rev. John Russell, of Kilmarnock, so mercilessly satirised by Robert Burns, and in some respects the father lost nothing in the son, but he was a serious and energetic preacher. For two hours and ten minutes, on the occasion referred to, he kept alive the interest of his hearers by incessant bursts of eloquent invective and pleadings of earnest remonstrance, never failing to excite, by his loud and sonorous voice, the feelings and sympathies, and by his ceaseless strain of argument, the convictions of all who lent him a willing ear. Dr. Russell was a dark-complexioned, resolute-looking man; he spoke with a burr, which, on acquaintance, was not disagreeable. His frequent habit was, on finishing a lengthened and awakening discourse, to announce and read, at the same pitch of voice, the first two verses of the 46th Psalm; and any one hearing him in youth would have had their recollections of home revived if, in after life, they heard:—

God is our-r r-refuge and our-r str-rength,
  In str-raits a pr-resent aid;
Ther-refor-re, although the ear-rth r-remove,
  We will not be afr-raid.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHARLES ROBERTSON, FARMER, BUTTERGASK.

"The greatest advantage of being thought a wit by the world is that it gives one the greater freedom in occasionally playing the fool."—Alexander Pope.

Charles Robertson, better known as "Gowfin' Charlie," was long one of the public characters of Perthshire. A political dinner, a curling or golfing match, or a public meeting, without his presence, would have been like an egg without salt; but the saliniferous particle was seldom wanting. Where mirthful enjoyment was to be had, or trials of skill in out-door amusements were going forward, he would invariably turn up. It does seem a singular destiny that a man should spend two-thirds of a long life in the more frivolous and least justifiable of its many avocations. He is entitled to a fair amount of amusement, and will take it—nay, he will indulge in it as his fancy guides him; but it makes a poor account at the end. Why are we endowed with so many faculties? Is the godlike reason of so little account, that it can be laid aside, and the mere animal tendencies allowed unlimited sway? If so, the man that is born to independence is the mere drone of life. But it is not so. The amount of work, both mental and physical, performed by the rich and powerful bears a large proportion to the whole national achievement; and it is impossible to conceive more antithetical phenomena than a rich man engaging himself in the useful and elevating business of life, and the man who is not rich continually running after those pleasures which gratify only the less dignified portion of his nature.

Charles Robertson received a classical education, and was a licentiate of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland; but after a few clerical efforts, which he thought not very successful, he abandoned the pulpit and took to the plough. With sufficient means and energy, he became a prosperous agriculturist, kept a good table, and had many friends. He was the life of a social gathering, and his after-dinner speeches, though lacking in polish, were generally racy and to the point. At curling re-unions he spoke of "winter with his throne at Spitzbergen, and his footstool in Lapland;" and at golf club merry-makings, of "the Dust-hole, the Cleek, and the Whins." On one occasion I saw him rise to make a speech in the County-Hall, in reply to the toast of "The Agricultural Interest." The table was rather low, and when he placed the points of his fat fingers on it, a waggish Perth friend of his cried across the table, "Man, Charlie, thae hands o' yours are just like twa pund o' new short-sixes." He rattled on, however, for about twenty minutes, ending thus:—"If any young friend of mine present is on the look-out for a farm, I will give him an advice that will save him many miles of travel. Have nothing to do with places named Cauldhame, or Blaewanders, or Hungrysides; but look out for the Carse, or the Haugh, or the Mains." The last name was scarcely uttered, when his facetious friend shouted, "Try Buttergask!" This raised such a laugh that Charles had to abandon his peroration.

Mr. Robertson possessed a great fund of dry sarcastic wit, and was a sharp observer of character; hence his stories were quiet and unostentatious, carrying an aspect of truth, although often verging on absurdity. I often tried to lead him on to tell me his famous pulpit story, but never succeeded. On inquiring in an earnest tone, "Why did you give up preaching?" he answered, "Man, I was afraid I might starve preaching about Ham, and get thin lecturing on Jehosh-a-phat." An esteemed friend of mine—a clever epigrammist—has put the famous story to which I refer, into a form which enables me to insert it here, prefaced by the usual *Honi soi:*—

> Golfing Charlie was preaching with fervour one day,
> When a drunkard rolled in, and turned sick in a pew;
> As they hustled him out, he was thus heard to say,
> "Yon sermon's enough to mak' ony man s—s—sick."

The following are fair specimens of Robertson's inexhaustible budget:—

"One very rainy summer afternoon I was riding home, very wet and very cross. Beyond Balbeggie, a little urchin, herding a cow on the roadside, looked up through the rain, and seeing my watch appendages, said confidently, 'What o' clock is't?' In my drenched state the thing was impossible, so I replied, 'I could not tell you just now.' The little scamp looked after me, and rejoined, 'Whan could ye tell me, d'ye think?'"

"After I had obtained license both to preach and to practice as a surgeon, the people round about thought that I surely could be a doctor, if I couldna be a minister, and I was occasionally asked to prescribe. A man came to my house one evening, and asked me to go and see Tammas Miller, who was thought dying. 'What can I do for him?' I inquired. 'You are a minister, and some folk say you are a doctor; surely you can do something for him in ane o' the twa ways.' After taking my tea, I hastened to see Tammas; but when I went in, I found his wife and another woman stretching him on the floor before the bed. I thought it would look rather indifferent if I were to come away at once, so I waited to offer my sympathies to the widow. After they had got Tammas laid out to their minds, the wife stood up, and placing her hands on her sides, said, in somewhat mournful tones, 'There he lies, and he was a jealous devil.' I left."

"Many years ago, while the Circuit Court was sitting at Perth, I went into the public-house at Balbeggie to wait an appointment. A canny, decent-looking, but way-worn man sat with a glass of beer before him. I called for a similar beverage, and as we were ourselves two, I said, in lifting the glass to my head, 'Here 's t' ye, honest man.' He looked at me suspiciously, and rejoined, 'Nane o' your dry remarks.' Before leaving the house, I ascertained that my boon companion was on his way home to Coupar-Angus, after being tried for theft, and discharged—'Not proven.'"

It was in the winter of 1834-5, ever-memorable for its severity, that Mr. Robertson delivered his famous after-dinner oration. I remember arriving at the Thane of Fife Inn, a minute too late for John Kidd's coach to Dundee, to which town I was going on a visit to Robert Nicoll, the poet. I did not put myself about, but walked down South Street, crossed the river on the ice, and intercepted the coach at the manse of Kinnoull. It was during the equally severe winter of 1837-8 that the Messrs. Graham gave their princely feast of a roasted ox on the Tay.

Mr. Robertson luxuriated in the social gatherings which seem the inevitable concomitants of the game of curling, or, as it was called in my early Perthshire days, "the leadstanes," and on the 10th of March, instead of following the plough, he was standing behind the "tee." A great dinner was arranged for in the George Inn, and he gave his brethren to understand that something in the form of a speech might be expected from him.

The party met, and after an inspiring portion of the good things of this life, liquid and solid, had been discussed, Charles rose to his feet, and placing the points of the two pounds of dipped sixes on the table, like a radiating group of flying buttresses, stood till the enthusiastic plaudits had reverberated from the street-door: then, turning to the chair, he said, "Mr. President, Croupiers, and Gentlemen, I am pretty well disgusted with the plan of drinking individuals' health in a company where every chield is better than his neighbour, but there is one gentleman present to-night for whom I claim an exception, partly on account of his personal merit and partly because it is not every night we have him. This company are unanimous in wishing him long life, although there are people out of doors who wish him at the bottom of the sea. But we all have our enemies as well as our friends. Though this gentleman imbibes no exciting stimulants, his strength is prodigious. He has been known to drink cold water, however, until he burst his jacket; and although some folk might call that being fou, yet he never falls himself, but is always ready to break the fall of his friend. If any lassie venture to gie him a kiss, she always complains that he bites; and if any one puts himself or herself in his way, they will inevitably have their noses pulled. But he has a wife of his own. When he married her she was a virgin unsullied, but she got the upper hand of him at first, and she keeps it. She has run away from him again and again, but she always returns and smothers him with her kindness; while he, poor soul, submits to her embrace, and consoles himself by the fact, that if she treats him coolly, he has shown little warmness to her. You must all remember when she paid us such an unwelcome visit last winter, how we chased her off the ice with our brooms. His name, gentlemen, has been at the point of my fingers all night, but I felt if I mentioned it too soon that your enthusiasm would prevent my giving you a sketch of his character. I now crave a full bumper to 'The health of John Frost, Esquire, of Kamschatka and Friesland,' with all the honours."

His lively temperament and jocular disposition rendered Mr. Robertson a welcome and frequent guest at his friends' tables, and he lacked in no degree the power of managing skilfully the talents with which he had been gifted. He could make a modicum of wit go as far as any man, spreading it out and refining on it, keeping his reins well together; but where the matter itself is trifling, it is difficult to make it marketable by treatment. It was in a quiet little under-current of humour that he excelled. One morning he came in to me with a message from the late Mr. Henderson, of Milton. That gentleman had reached a great age, and I inquired at Robertson how he was. He came forward, and whispered to me, by way of being confidential, "Man, he's fine. I went over to dine with him the other day; he saw me coming, and met me at the door, looking as fresh as he did thirty years ago. Holding out his hand, he said, 'I am glad to see you,' to which I replied, 'Man, when you came out, I could scarcely let myself believe that it was you. They have forgotten ye a' thegither. You'll never die; they'll just let you go through to the other side without putting you to the trouble!'"

The great golfer's politics were noisily Liberal; but although a devout believer in Mr. Fox Maule, and a nice discriminator between the virtue of a deed done by a Whig and the vice of the same deed done by a Tory, he had the good sense to shut his eyes to any taint that politics might impart to Mr. Turnbull's beef or Mr. Condie's claret; and he never made political bias a barrier or a passport to his own table.

As far back as the year 1838, while Charles and I were deep in a political discussion, the late Miss Wright of Lawton rolled into the shop. She took no notice of us, but calling the shop-boy, she said, "Run away, laddie, and see whatna terrible Whig-looking man yon is standing in Dewar, the bookseller's door." Off went the juvenile, proud of his commission, leaving us in a state of excited curiosity. Within a few minutes he came back, panting for breath, and turning up his twinkling eyes like a cock about to crow, he roared out, "It's Mr. Reid, the writer!" Robertson gave a shout of laughter, and rushed to the door past Miss Wright, she saying at him, "He's like his set." Miss Wright was an excellent woman, but a Tory every inch of her, and they were not few. I asked the lady how she came to know Mr. Reid's politics so well.

She replied, "I kent him by his upper lip." I rallied Mr. Reid on the story, but he did not seem to care for it, so it was dropped.

Mr. Robertson was asked to dine on a Friday afternoon at Bellwood, and while the invitation pended, Dr. Wolff, the author of "Travels into Bokhara," presented himself at Mr. Turnbull's place of business, announcing that he was making the tour of Scotland, with a view to publishing a book on its agriculture, manufactures and commerce. Mr. Turnbull asked him to dine at Bellwood, where he would meet an agriculturist. Both gentlemen appeared. But the doctor, like all foreign grandees, did not trouble them much with agriculture or commerce, but launched away into grandiloquent stories about himself and "de grand treatment of Scotland." While he was sipping Mr. Turnbull's honest sherry and port, and when dinner was about to be removed, he broke forth in loud praises of Lord Breadalbane. "Oh! he's so kind. Give de best de castel can afford. Champagne at dinner." "O Doctor, I am very sorry I forgot to offer you champagne. I beg your pardon," said the host. "Not too late yet, Mr. Turnbull, not too late yet," replied his accommodating guest. Charles Robertson spoke of this foreign gentleman in terms which were afterwards fully verified. "He was travelling on the credit of his first book, and eating on the credit of a second." But the second never came.

When besetting frailties began to warn the superannuated athlete that his hour was approaching, he retired to a little villa on the Perth and Coupar-Angus Road, where he spent his time in improving his garden, and dreaming over his competitive glories; and when any passing friend drew his attention to his more active curling days, he would be replied to thus, "Man, it's nae wonder that I was fond o' the ice, for I was born behind the *winter dykes*, and nursed on *Lap*land."

CHAPTER XXXV.

EBENEZER MACGREGOR, FARMER, MADDERTY.

"To be angry is to revenge the faults of others upon ourselves."—Alexander Pope.

Not many years ago, a little angular spot in the parish of Madderty, known as "The Craig," contained a number of houses, now all swept away. One range of cottages was called "The Parliament," and a little way from it stood a high-roofed, thatched house, in which William Duke of Cumberland held a council of war, and near it still remains a group of stones called "The Duke's chair." A few yards farther south, in the corner of a field, rose a gentle green knoll, which, on being subjected to the plough, was found to cover rude stone coffins containing human bones. Altogether, the place savoured of consequence; and when it is added, that it contained a market-place at which an annual fair was held, an alehouse, a smithy, a cartwright's shop, a shoemaker's, a tailor's, and a weaver's, besides being a Burgh of Barony, with privileges, its quondam importance will become obvious.

I have a natural veneration for this houseless burgh because I was born in it; and although the four winds of heaven now blow over the place without restraint, and I can trace no little footmarks, nor find a single *speal* of the many water-mills, and wind-mills, and dookits, and rabbit-houses, that my youthful hands formed there at the expense of a hundred cuts which they bear the marks of to this day; yet when tender feelings are excited, my mind bounds back to it, and every panelled bed, every chair and stool, and every weel-kent face, takes its place as it was when William Pitt was Prime Minister of England, and Thomas Hay Marshall, Lord Provost of Perth.

Amongst our neighbours, I had a grand-uncle in "The Parliament" who was a great Jacobite historian. He had heard Prince Charlie make a speech, and always shed tears when he sang "The Haughs o' Cromdale." Another burgher was a poet—of him I have written; and a third was a great traveller, not only by sea and land, but, amongst other singular excursions, he had gone into a whale's belly! His description of this novel journey was, at once unhesitating and vivid: "Just like a walk through the fleshmarkets of London." But our most formidable neighbour was Ebenezer Macgregor, a small farmer and a seceder elder. He was a devout, rather good-hearted, but cross-tempered and passionate man. We all stood in great awe of Ebby. A cold shiver came over us if we had to encroach on his premises in pursuit of a football or an escaped rabbit; he knew his supremacy, and, with a peculiar squirt of his mouth, he made us bound like grasshoppers.

During the fourteen years that I lived—child, boy, and young man—his immediate neighbour, I do not remember that he ever once took the very slightest notice of me. He was, intentionally, upright; but his piety was exceedingly gruff, and he was apt to be led away by sectarian feeling and impatient temper. His only son, Archibald, who learned the trade of a cartwright, and died young, was a man of the best type, a sincere friend, a gentleman, and an unfeigned Chistian. That day that I saw my father come home from laying him in his coffin has never passed from my memory. Although Ebby's temper would not allow him to take any notice of the youngsters about, he took great delight in playing tricks on them. If he fell on a stick calculated to make a good shinty, he would dress it carefully, and lay it down in some semi-sly corner where he felt certain we would see it, and then watch its abduction. He did not require to wait long as a rule. He had a copy of "The Gentle Shepherd,"—a fuzzy 12mo, in blue paper wrapper—which he wished to turn out after Archie's death, but he could not condescend to give it to any of us, so he deposited it in the usual way. It was quickly secured; but as there were two of us to the transaction, arrangements had to be made; a joint-stock mutual benefit company was established, but it went speedily into liquidation, and although there were no liabilities, a difficulty arose about dividing the assets. It was then agreed that we should have it week about, but the co-partnery did not last a day, and we proceeded to divide. An odd leaf at the end, and the title-page, puzzled us; but to obviate all difficulty I held the book over a stool and my partner cut it *across* with a hook. Poor Patie and Roger! Poor Allan Ramsay! I have had many book transactions since then, and have dealt sharply with some books, but that was an awful cutting up.

Ebby kept one horse, and when he had any heavy work to do he got one from my father. I remember one forenoon he went out with some corn in a wecht, as a decoy, to bring home his own horse and one of my father's from grass. His own was easily caught, but my father's treated him with contempt. After an hour's coaxing, he came home leading his own animal, and in desperate mood. "Why have ye no' brought 'Donald'? said my father. Ebby could not very well scold in the circumstances, but he said, bitterly, "Yours is a crafty deevil, and mine's a mahoofanat deevil."

The horse kept by Macgregor was a big lumbering brute, with such immense jaws that Archie had always great difficulty in getting on his braigham. The old man said prayers of such length that he sometimes fell asleep himself, and in that state persevered, although, sometimes, not quite orthodox. On one of these occasions my father was present, and on his knees beside Archie, when the old man, intending to say, "Enlarge our hearts," somnolently shouted, "Enlarge our horses!" "We 'll need a new braigham, then," whispered Archie to my father.

The summer of 1814 was very hot and dry, and water exceedingly scarce. At the extremity of my father's farm was a spring, called "the Summer Dams," which rarely went dry: and as the whole neighbourhood had to get water from it for cooking purposes, they mutually agreed that, in the meanwhile, there should be no clothes bleached on the adjoining green. Notwithstanding this agreement, one sultry morning, towards the end of July, a few clothes were laid out on the forbidden ground. When Ebenezer Macgregor observed them, he flew into a towering passion, and seizing a hatchet, bolted off to hack the innocent duds. The road lay straight north for about two hundred yards, and then turning at right angles, ran another four hundred west. I can well remember the old man's figure, as he hurried along this road, with his uplifted battle-axe. He was a strong, broad-shouldered man, six feet high, with big splay feet and long swinging arms. He wore a broad blue bonnet, rather raised in front; a home-made blue coat, with capacious tails, and buttons as big as Spanish dollars; blue breeches, blue rig-and-fur stockings, and shoes with brass buckles. When he sallied out on his

Quixotic journey the sky was much overcast, and before he reached the angle of the road, the rain came down in torrents. On he went notwithstanding, until he was within two hundred yards of the devoted integuments, when a perfect avalanche of lightning, thunder and rain burst about his ears. Pause he did not, but turning at once like a wheel on its axis, hurried with accelerated speed towards home, with the water pouring from his coat-tails, like a kirk-spout, and looking discomfited and ashamed.

The worthy man believed implicitly in the doctrine of special providence, but he had sometimes enough to do in squaring his feelings and conduct to that belief. He was one day binding corn, in a hurricane of wind, and when he had the band of a sheaf half turned, a swirl came and blew the other half of it from amongst his fingers. He grasped the two ends of the rope and hurled the remainder into the air, shouting, "Tak it a'; tak it a'!" The wind, nothing loth, carried it over the fence.

One of these ebullitions of temper, to which this seceder elder was so liable, resolved itself into the most perfect piece of dramatic self-control I ever beheld in any self-willed man. David Crawford, a wise but captious sawyer of wood, began a discussion with him about some knotty theological point raised by Mr. Imrie, of Kinkell. Crawford made a strong assertion adverse to a statement he had just made, which raised his temper to fever-heat. The poor man hesitated between giving Crawford a round of the guns and treating him with contempt. He wisely chose the latter, and giving him a look of perfect scorn, he stuck up the front of his broad bonnet, and rushing to the door, cried back over his shoulder, "Conter Crawford."

One spring morning, while Ebby was engaged tilling and tearing up a piece of turfy, long-rested land, in which he intended to plant potatoes, Mr. George Richmond, of Moneydie, drove past. Ebby did not lift his head, but went on cuffing the clods with the thin edge of a spade. "What sort of crop do you expect there?" he was asked. "We care nothing about the crap, if the roots be good," he replied. Every farmer knows that such land is most congenial to the growth of potatoes, and the result was a prodigious crop of "Perthshire reds." The old gentleman cogitated in his own mind how he could best demonstrate to the taunting querist the result of his labour and skill, and said exultingly, "I will bide my time." At the end of the season, when digging the crop, he came to a shaw at the end of a drill, with twenty-two large potatoes at it, which he cautiously preserved for his friend Mr. Richmond. He did not require to wait long; Mr. Richmond came riding past, accompanied by Mr. Caw, of Pitmurthly. Ebby spied them coming, and hurried into the barn for his diploma shaw. When he came to the two equestrians with a riddle nearly filled with potatoes and his face in an agony between exultation and pique, he cried, in a voice loud enough to be heard through a stack of peats, "Can you grow anything like that at Shochie-den?" Mr. Richmond forgot the origin of the matter altogether; and, although the crop was prodigious, he naturally thought the boast gratuitous, and to keep down Ebby's pride said, "You have steekit the half of them on," and rode away. Ebby could not swear, but he winced and gesticulated awfully, and throwing the potatoes from him, he shouted after the fast-retreating delinquents, "Set a tailor on a horse's back, and he'll ride to the de'il."

What little apparent equanimity he possessed arose more from inherent dogmatism than from quiet balance of mind. If a neighbour good-naturedly saluted him, "That's a fine day, Ebby," he would be answered, "They're a' fine days." Except in occasional outbursts, he managed to keep his mind to himself, brooding over what he found was the penalty of man's first transgression, a cursed earth and imperilled crops. During the terrible shake-wind of 1815 he became frenzied, and I am persuaded, from the intensely practical nature of his theology, that if he could have laid his hands on Adam and Eve, he would have punished them there and then. A neighbour farmer who, in dealing with the earth, ignored the theory of reimbursement, and blamed the weather for everything, passed the gruff philosopher one very dry, hot day in the summer of 1820, and shouted over the hedge, "When is the rain comin'?" "Rain! ye dementit fool," said Ebby, "muck would sair ye better, but ye would hae to pay for it. If ye had to pay for the rain ye wad mak' the dew sair ye."

This unpliable nature would under temptation sometimes open up into a joke, but the gravity never gave way. Trudging homeward through Crieff, in company with a friend, on one occasion, he observed a woman standing in a door, dressed in a black velvet gown, and, as he thought, making more of it than there was any occasion for. Ebby walked up to her, and looking narrowly at the coomy material, he inquired, with as much apparent solemnity as if he had been inviting her to a burial, "Whatna morclaith did ye tak that aff?" In all his movements this taciturn citizen of the world acted under the conviction that "Flattery is nauseous to the wise."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GEORGE PENNY.

"The life of the day labourer is enjoyment compared to that of the literary drudge who is engaged on a newspaper. In the former case the mind is at liberty, and ready to encourage the body; whereas, in the latter, body and mind and their combined spirit are all in active suffering."—LORD BROUGHAM.

IT would not readily have occurred to any man living in Perth, forty years ago, that he was destined to see the time when George Penny was not [remembered as one of its prominent citizens. Yet human life has hung together, and years have gone swiftly by, while the hearts of those who knew him have opened to new men, and he is forgotten.

"*De Trashmore,*" from the day on which it migrated from Coupar Angus to that in which it settled in the Kirk Close of Perth, had Penny for its recognised oracle. Gardiner, Tulloch, Grigor, Buist, and Sprunt became successively editors; but he went on his way as a portion of the establishment incapable of change. During the early years of the paper, when a scapegoat was wanted, Mr. Penny was always pushed forward. The shopkeeper blamed him for blundering his advertisement, the editor for mis-reporting, the compositor for short copy, the printer for being late, and the "devil" for a badly-inked page. When any one called at the office to complain, the invariable suggestion was, "You had better see Mr. Penny about it." Nothing daunted, however, he stood up for his paper, and chuckled over the discomfiture of the Tories.

The Perthshire Advertiser was first printed by John Taylor, at his office in the "King's Arms" Close; and during the writhings of the Reform Bill, and the great political changes which ensued, he struggled on with it to the end of his life. A relative of Taylor's invented a machine for printing the paper, the principle of which was good, and the work it made, very fair; but it had been, at first, imperfectly constructed, and was consequently continually breaking down. Hogarth has no better picture than could have been often seen in those days at the *Advertiser* office on publishing-day—Taylor covered with ink, struggling amidst a labyrinth of wheels, flaps, and threads, fretting, despairing, cursing, not loud but deep; and Penny, with a nose like an illuminated carbuncle, holding a dripping, heart-broken, tallow-candle away into the vortex of the tangled thicket. One of the proprietors, during a contested election, called it "Taylor's Infernal Machine."

Penny's normal position was to stand at the desk and answer eager applicants for "the paper," "No min, it's no' ready, but it is in the press," and when the press took the pet, he had to be ready with the broken-hearted tallow-candle. Another string tied, another wheel tightened up, and the business recommenced, Penny emerged from the interwoven skein, majestic as a spider who finds his web perfect, and handed out the accomplished fact, remarking apologetically, "Hoome 's foshen in a motion," or, "Ebrington has stopped the supplies," or some such news as he thought likely to soften the acerbities of the devouring politicians, who had been waiting for hours, and he had no objections whatever that you should, in your own mind, connect in some mysterious way the temporary stoppage of the paper with the stoppage of the supplies, or any other important movement within the walls of the reformed St. Stephen's.

In 1835, when Sir George Murray and Mr. Fox Maule contested the county, an incident occurred at the *Advertiser* office which went too far for the Whigs and stopped too short for the Tories. When the country papers were being despatched, Mr. George Gardiner rushed frantically into the office and shouted, "Stop the press! for Godsake stop the press!" Penny stood paralysed, thinking for the moment that William the Fourth had been assassinated, or the Houses of Parliament blown up. But the "sailor king" was safe, and it was only Penny himself that ran a risk of being blown up.

A county proprietor had two estates, one of them residential, the other, which was at a considerable distance, managed by a land steward whose name was Robert Bell. A rumour found its way into the columns of the *Constitutional* that certain underlings on the distant property had been interfering with the tenants, which the *Advertiser* denied. The proprietor's agent waited on him in order to have inquiry instituted; and not being able absolutely to contradict the report, they judged it best to announce a searching investigation, and to put, in strong terms, the personal annoyance the report had given the worthy laird. Accordingly, in next week's paper, a somewhat lengthy paragraph, explanatory of the gentleman's feelings, and the peremptory orders he had given his agent, appeared, which paragraph ought to have ended thus: "Go to Bell at once, and see if any one has been interfering with my tenants; and if you find it so, I shall go myself and clear the place forthwith." This was very well, and very spirited; but, unfortunately, the compositor, either by mistake or waggishly, inserted an *H* for a B at the beginning of Mr. Bell's name, which produced a reading without any parallel in election literature. The remainder of the edition was printed correctly, and the matter, so far as it was possible, discreetly stifled. It oozed out gently, however, and poor Penny was afterwards frequently saluted on the street—"Is —— come back yet? and how are his tenants thriving—are they ill for rain?"

The troubles of "literary and commercial factotum" lay heavy on Penny, and many a time and oft he vowed to shake them off, but he was too slow in action, and they shook him into his grave. He oiled the troubled waters until his horn ran dry, and the worst of it was, when his trouble ceased another's began.

In the beginning of 1834, George was sitting in his office pondering over the evils of life, and wondering what would be the next source of vexation that would arise to him. He had not long to wait, for the door was thrown open, and two gentlemen came in, bringing with them a man—all blood, and frightfully battered and torn—whom they had found sitting on the side of the Edinburgh Road, near the Cloven Craigs. The man's story was, that he had been attacked about a mile beyond the Bridge of Earn, dragged into a plantation by two drovers, robbed, and nearly strangled. The sub-editor inserted the story, heading it, "Brutal attack on a poor man by two villains," thinking that it might lead to the detection of the heartless perpetrator, which it quickly did, and the next week's paper contained the sub.'s explanation ;—

"On Friday last, a jolly, good-natured, country-looking man called at our office, with a copy of our last week's publication in his hand, and, pointing to the above-mentioned paragraph, challenged the correctness of the statement, briefly and bluntly saying, 'This is no' true, it maun be altered.' On being asked, 'How do you happen to know?' he replied, 'Naebody can ken better, for I'm the man.' 'You the man! you have got quickly better; you do not seem to be much injured about the head or face.' 'Oh! ye're in a mistak' I'm no' the man that was hurt; I'm the villain that did it; I'm the two villains; I'm the two drovers. But, ye see, I'll just tell ye the story :—

"'I'm the Auchtermuchty carrier; an' on last Friday I was ordered to bring a bun frae Perth for a gentleman, for the New-year times. Weel, I bought the bun, an' it cost me near twenty shillins. I was unco' carefu' o' the bun, and did na pack it in wi' the rest o' my gudes. I carried it mysel' when I walkit, an' it lay beside me when I sat on my cart. Just at the plantin' ye speak o' I cam' down to travel apiece to heat mysel', an' that time left the bun on the tap o' the cart. A mile farer on I stoppit the cart, an' whan I went up I missed the bun. Upon that, I left the cart in the charge o' a neebor, an' ran back lookin' baith sides o' the road; an' just at the plantin' I o'ertook a chiel' scourin' awa wi' the bun in his oxter. 'Stop, frien',' says I, 'ye've got something that's no' ye're ain, that's my bun, an' I maun hae 't.' He refused it, an' gaed aff the road into the plantin', squarin' wi' his stick, an' keepin' me at defiance; but I was determined to hae back the bun, if I could ava. So I seized upon him, but bein' out o' breath wi' rinnin', he gat the better o' me, an' lay aboon me for a good while. I lay as quietly below him as possible to get back my breath, defendin' mysel' as weel as I could. But when the chiel' got haud o' my nose an' tried to bite it aff, I was obleeged to gather a' my strength. When I threw him aff, and gat on the top o' him, I gae him twa-three gude dads, that I'll no' deny—troth I'm angry I had na time to gie him some mair o' the same kind. Howsomever, I brought awa my bun, an' left him there to cool. That's the short an' lang o' the story. Ye may mak' o' it what ye like, but the auld haver winna do, specially the two drovers. Ha! ha! ha!'"

Two ways of telling a story, have been man's damning sin since his first advent on earth; and like other sins, it brings its own reward. Without it the world would be an elysium for the blessed; no Chancery; no Queen's Bench; no Sir Cresswell Cresswell; no Outer or Inner House; no pleadings; no avizandum; no gnawings of the human heart at its own unmerited humiliation; no chill of horror arising from an opponent's false oath; no holding up of the right hand; ermine abolished; wigs defunct; the ever-stately parade of mantled wisdom that covers the floor of the Parliament House superseded; theft, robbery, and murder found by the "declaration" not to pay; and the multitudinous forensic dignities that oppress the land abolished for ever: no gallows; no jail; the Perth Penitentiary converted into a jute factory; and the slimy purlieus of Newgate and Horsemonger Lane washed in snow water. All that Scotland would require would be one man, placed at a desk in an inner apartment, dressed like a gentleman, and called "the assessor." Men have no occasion to pray, and predict, and allocate the thousand years when Satan is to be bound; for if they will return to truth-telling, his trade, like that of the thief and murderer, will be found not to pay.

A story of Penny's indicates this new régime. James Taylor, a canny old man, who acted as a sort of carrier between Perth and Trinity-Gask, kindly accommodated what he called a "man o' Madderty," with a ride on his way home. Passing the Crossgates, the road was so rough that the cart was coupit, and the "man o' Madderty," together with James's loose goods and chattels, thrown into the road-side ditch. After active labour, things were put to rights, and the pair reflected complacently on the dangerous nature of the accident. When James got excited in any way, his voice rose to a squeak; and when the "man o' Madderty" remarked, "We may be thankfu' that its nae waur," "O! aye," shrieked James, "We may een be that, but hoo dis my cod-fish come to be in your pouch? There's the mystery!" "Because I pat it there," said the "man o' Madderty." James said, in a lower key, "I thought it had maybe tumbled in wi' the coup."

On one occasion I became the innocent cause of some trouble to Mr. Penny. Travelling in search of news he had gone into a draper's shop in St. John Street. One of the young men desired him to write down an advertisement to his dictation, and to insert it in the Thursday paper. This he did exactly as instructed. The advertisement appeared, worded thus: "Notice is hereby given, that the drapers, hatters, and hosiers of Perth have agreed to shut their shops at seven o'clock evening on Monday, the 26th November current, until the first of April next." I saw the advertisement in the *Constitutional* of the following Wednesday, and drew the editor's attention to its absurdity. He set the heather on fire by a paragraph in next publication, headed "The Long Vacation." Penny was threatened with no end of damages. One learned scrivener wrote to him intimating that he had miscopied his instructions, and must make a public apology. The apology George made was, "If the advertisement complained of was not as dictated to me, why did the drapers, hatters, and hosiers insert it, *verbatim et literatim*, in the *Constitutional* a week afterwards?" This both aggravated and quashed the matter and entirely exonerated Penny.

One winter morning he came to my shop and handed me a bulky manuscript, saying it cost him some trouble. I found it to be headed, "Names from the First Perth Directory," and to contain many antithetical associations. Some few of the names are not now to be found in Perth, but old residenters will remember them all.

THE ARISTOCRACY.

Two Kings and one Queen,
Two Dukes and one Marquis,
One Earl and two Barons,
Two Nobles and two Knights,
Two Bishops and three Deans,
Three Chapels and six Chaplains,
Two Gentry and three Squires,
Three Baillies and four Justices,
Three Lairds and one Tennant,
Four Farmers and one Cottar,
Three Merchants and one Couper.

THE MOBOCRACY.

Two Banks and three Braes, Three Crows and five Keays,
Three Hills and one Glen, Four Mounts and one Plane,
Four Hoggs and three Herds, Two Lambs and three Kidds,
One Cross and three Dodds, Two Hares and five Todds,
Two Dowie and one Wann, Two Herons and one Swan,
Seven Youngs and three Aulds, Four Grays and two Balds,
Two Waters and three Fords, One Gunn and four Swords,

One Cant and one Will, One Drinkwater and one Gill,
One Maltman and four Brewsters, Thirty Taylors and three Shewsters,
Two Bowes and one Bandy, Three Dons and one Dandie,
Two Macleans and two Macfeats, One Cole and two Peats,
One Law and two Lynches, Four Myles and two Inches,
Two Condies and one Shore, A hundred Stewarts and one More,
One Bone and one Stone, One Adam, quite alone.

Mr. Penny's connection with the local press matured in him that love of political gossip which was born of the loom; and his daily meanderings amongst the wiseacres of a departing age led him to garner up a vast amount of traditionary lore, which he was counselled to publish; and in 1836, it appeared under the title of "Traditions of Perth." Though somewhat disjointed and raw in composition, they are carefully and truthfully written, and will be esteemed when more pretentious quotations about Perth, flatteringly called "histories," will have passed through the pastrycook's hands. Old citizens, Old customs, Years of dearth, Soldiering, "The Fly!" to Edinburgh in twelve hours, Whisky a penny the gill, Meal three-and-sixpence a peck, Crops cut amongst snow, The Tay frozen solid, are amongst Penny's traditions; and when another generation passes away they will be sought after by the "book hunter" with more eagerness than either "Chambers' Traditions of Edinburgh" or "Cleland's Annals of Glasgow," because it is not likely that they will ever be reprinted.

Those who knew George Penny will remember how he pushed his way from Stormont Street to the East Church on Sunday, with his wife hanging on his arm, but trailing a yard behind. He argued the case with her, asserting that, with a fair start, it was quite as easy for her to keep in a line with him as to follow a yard after him; but she refused to be convinced and dangled still. George went on, and although she kept fast hold of his arm, he seemed perfectly unconscious of her presence, and a casual observer would certainly conclude that she belonged to the next group. Mrs. Penny's name was Barbara, and her husband used to relate, with an intense glow of waggish recollection, how he was saluted by a street arab, as he went to church, the first Sunday after his marriage.

"As I was walking along George Street in big nuptial grandeur, with my light blue coat, velvet neck and rich basket buttons, my white trousers terminating in an arch over my spotless Wellingtons; my young bride hanging affectionately on my arm, and both of us proudly calculating, that we were bound to make an impression on the gay moving throng; when a little ragged urchin screamed from the croun o' the causeway, 'Eh! there goes Geordie Penny, wi' his Bawbee.' Yes!" said George, "and that's no the warst o't; for, a few years afterwards, when we were able to haul little Geordie between us, along the same street, the little ragged rascal, or another of the same sort, cried, 'Eh! there goes a penny-three-fardins.'"

A short time before his death Mr. Penny sent me several manuscripts, amongst others a "Guide to the County of Perth," drawn up by himself, giving minute details of the various routes formed by the old roads, interesting then, but now neglected; also a clever essay on "Adamson, the Perth Poet," in which the "Inventory of Sir George Ruthven's Closet" is held up as the model upon which Butler founded his more popular "Hudibras," and which characterises it as "full of sprightly imagination and exquisite humour, and altogether worthy of the correspondent of the refined and accomplished Drummond, whilst in chasteness of language it surpassed the other productions of his time."

When George was strong, "*De Trashmore*" was weak, and as it began in the lapse of years to gather strength, he began to decay. His steps shortened, his shoulders shrank, yet he shuffled about his old haunts and cracked his old jokes, when he was little equal to it; and the note of announcement that I have heard struck so often came booming up the street, "George Penny is dead." I thought he would be missed, and perhaps so he was in his own immediate circle; but the public, the great organised mass for which George had battled and suffered obloquy, paid no regard; and "*De Trashmore*" prospered notwithstanding. I remember coming into Perth some years ago in the same carriage with some Coupar Angus gentlemen, who were lamenting in lugubrious terms that Mr. George Harrison had left the Scottish Central Railway, and unhesitatingly predicting that the concern would collapse. I remonstrated by saying that Mr. Harrison was no doubt a first-rate officer, but that such a concern as the Scottish Central Railway was to sink because one employee had left, I thought preposterous. "Where will they get the like of him?" said one angrily. "That indeed," said another. The discussion grew hot, but an English gentleman sitting beside me,—

who had hitherto said nothing—snuffed it out at once, by saying emphatically, "I never knew, or heard of any man who died, or left his office, whether he was Lord Chancellor or Parish Beadle, that another man did not come after and do the work quite as well." "Aye and better," said his friend opposite. Perhaps this was the principle upon which the public acted, in so very soon forgetting George Penny.

The term "*De Trashmore*"—frequently used in this paper,—had its origin as follows. Joseph Alston, a black cook, kept an eating house at the south end of George Street, and being as he said himself "von great politicianer," came regularly to my shop on Thursday afternoon, and laying down a penny on the counter said curtly, "*De Trashmore*." The *Perthshire Advertiser* was best known by its second title, *The Strathmore Journal*, in those days.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THOMAS LUKE, GLOVER, PERTH.

"He that has no friend and no enemy is one of the vulgar, and without talents, powers, or energy."—LAVATER.

THE dignity of office was never better sustained than in the person of Thomas Luke, umquhile Glover, Auctioneer, Bailie and Police Superintendent of the City of Perth. The Lord Chancellor might, inadvertently, condescend to do or say things not quite fitted to the dignity of the woolsack; but Bailie Luke, on duty, never! He had his associates in moments of domestic citizenship, but in office he knew no man. He recognised the Provost *ex-officio*, but he did not know John Wright. In function he could not be bent. In figure he was about as flexible as a porter cask, five feet five inches in height, and precisely the same in girth, the terror of evil doers, the butt of wags, and the too active *Traileur* whom everybody gloried in superseding. The Bailie had just died when I became a citizen of Perth, but in my earlier days I had an adventure with him, eminently characteristic of the man.

Robert Hall was a cart and plough-wright in Newrow. His shop and house have just been removed to make way for the entrance to the new Perth Auction Mart. In 1815 Hall made a new farm cart for my father, and when it came home there was not a ticket on it, but a message was sent, saying, "The ticket will be put on when you come in to 'Little Dunning.'" My father and I came to do the marketing, and when the cart was unyoked opposite Gray the ironmonger's shop in George Street, he hied away to Robert Hall's about the ticket, leaving me in charge of the still packed cart. About half-past nine I observed a remarkably stout little gentleman and a policeman coming down the pavement examining every cart to see if there was any smell of light butter, or a ticket short. I saw I was in a mess, and when they came to our cart I kept aloof. The policeman went round the cart, then announced to his superior officer, "No ticket." "Look again," said the captain. "No, sir, no ticket." "Take away his rigwiddie," said his commander in a voice hollow as thunder. I saw the devoted tackle slung in the subaltern's hand and carried off with two or three others to the police office, but as the captors turned the east corner of George Street, Robert Hall came round the west, and before the pledges were lodged, the ticket was on the cart. As soon as my father learned this he moved towards the police office, but on the way he encountered David Burns, the writer, pushing his way to the Court, to whom he told the whole affair. Burns ordered him to keep out of the way, and I was sent on the sly to watch the proceedings.

The sitting Magistrate took his place, and the rigwiddies were brought forward. Burns claimed the new one as belonging to one of his clients.

Bailie Luke. "You are fined one-and-sixpence for not having a ticket on your cart."

Burns. "There must be some mistake, for there certainly is a ticket on the cart to which this new rigwiddie belongs."

Luke, indignantly, "Certainly there is not sir."

Magistrate. "Send two men to examine the cart."

Two men were sent, and of course found the cart ticketed. On their return, the business was resumed.

Magistrate, to deputants, "How did you find it?"

Policeman. "We find a new ticket on the cart."

Bailie Luke. "Was it there in the morning."

Policeman. "No!"

Magistrate. "Are you satisfied that it bears the name of the real owner?"

Policeman. "Yes!"

Bailie Luke. "The thing is a swindle."

Burns. "How dare you call it a swindle, sir? Suppose the whole police establishment were to swear that they did not see a ticket on that cart this morning, their evidence is not of a straw's value, against one man's, whom I am prepared to bring forward if necessary, and who is ready to depone that he saw a ticket on it this morning at thirty minutes past nine o'clock. But suppose for a moment that the ticket was really put on this morning, is this court prepared to punish a man because he brings a new cart into Perth in order to have a new ticket placed on it? The intention could not be to defeat the law, because the ticket could not be improvised. To fine my client would be to confirm the opinion held out of doors, that when the police authorities of Perth are pinched for money, they order a raid on the farmers' carts and butter baskets."

Bailie Luke. "He ought to be punished for contempt of Court."

Burns. "I do not speak in contempt of Court, but I cannot speak with too much contempt of the party in power who would press for a conviction in the present circumstances, and I urgently demand restitution of the property so unfairly carried off."

The clerk was referred to, and the police ordered to replace the rigwiddie. During the day the devoted vehicle afforded great fun to every one of the numerous visitors, except Bailie Luke, who, with a face like a carbuncle, delivered a lecture on "sleight of hand,"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JOHN KIPPEN, COOPER, METHVEN.

> "Some men are ready at invention,
> Sudden and quick of apprehension,
> And forward come with ready bet
> To execute their own conceit."

THE races of men to which these pages are more especially devoted appear to have died out. The rural poet, whose verses floated over ten parishes, has received his *quietus;* the blue bonneted seceder has become extinct; the local celebrity whose eccentricities were handed about the village, losing nothing in their circulation, has vanished. Where are the old soldiers, with their Peninsular medals, and their Waterloo medals, their tales of Abercrombie, of Moore, and of Wellington? All, all away! Now-a-days we have not even a decent "daft man." When I go to Crieff there is no "dummy." When I go to Edinburgh there is no "Spunk Kate," or "Daft Jamie." When I go to Glasgow I find King Street destitute—no "Blue Thooms," no Hawkie, no Major, and when I look round me in Perth I can neither see Pate Macdougal, nor Jamie Paton, nor Kissy Jock. I have inquired for them at the asylums and hospitals.—"Not known." These latter bereavements might be endured, but in Paisley there is no Robert Tannahill. Robert Burns is not to be found either in Ayr, Mauchline, or Dumfries. There is no Scott at Abbotsford, no Hogg at St. Mary's, no Beattie at Leetown, and no Nicoll at Perth. Perhaps the world is better without successors to these extremes of society, one and all. That is not my affair, only if anyone comes after me he will find his occupation, like my heroes, gone.

The illustrious cooper whose name stands at the head of this sketch was of the class of local celebrities. He was well known over Perthshire, and no doubt got the merit of many things, the report of which never reached him. Anything clever, daring, or athletic, was sure to gain credence if circulated in his name. He seemed ubiquitous. Stories of him came from Methven, from Monteith, and from Dunkeld, so rapidly in succession, that human activity was hardly equal to it. John was neither a fool nor a weakling, but he indulged his eccentricities with so little restraint that those who knew him best could not even make a safe guess at his character. He was obviously lithe of limb, ready in judgment, and not over-scrupulous as to results. One Friday morning, when the good people of Madderty were trudging down Hillyland brae—the shearers with their fee in their pockets, and the farmers' daughters with their baskets of butter and eggs—they were astonished to see, beyond the Boot of Balhousie, a man coming towards them, leaping, running, and kicking in a furious manner, and about one hundred yards behind him a body of soldiers, some without coats, and some with their kilts flying like bunting in a heavy breeze. "Charlie Græme, the tinker," cried one. "The thief o' Glenalmond," shouted another. "That's some deserter," suggested a third, and whichever it might be he seemed winning his spurs so spankingly that they all stood aside to give him a free way. On he came, but lo! it was none of the great heroes they anticipated, but only Johnnie Kippen o' Methven, with a football before him, and the depot of the Forty-second regiment hot at his heels. It turned out that during a match on the North Inch, between a portion of the gallant Forty-second and the youths of Perth and neighbourhood, Kippen had watched his opportunity and, getting the ball fairly under his command, he went off with it like a deer, over ditches and dykes towards the Crieff road. Hillyland brae sank the brave defenders of our country, and the next time the ball was seen it was reposing quietly on the sash of John Kippen's window in the good little village of Methven. In those days, the ball used was about three inches in diameter, made of worsted, and covered with leather, and, be it remembered that "A's fair at the ba' o' Scone." I remember, about the year 1812, a young shoemaker of the name of Macglashan, from Crieff, coming down time after time to Ladymarket, and carrying the ball until competitors dropped, one by one, on the sod behind him.

The heavy coach between Glasgow and Perth went, for many years by Crieff. William Paterson and Charles Duff were guards. Paterson was a great friend of John Kippen's, and gave him occasionally what the latter called "a hang-on." One summer morning the cooper o' Methven presented himself at the Tontine of Glasgow, and whispered to Paterson, "Any chance?" "Oh, no, John; no chance to-day; we are full to the neck, outside and in." John sped up theHigh Street, out the Garscube Road, over the Hill o' Tak'-me-doun, and when the coach drew up at Gibbs's Inn, in Stirling, John was standing at his ease, whispering, "Any chance?" "All full!" was the saucy answer. Off he went, up Causewayhead-brae, across "the Shirramuir, like five ell o' wind," and at Greenloaning again popped the same question, and received the same reply. Off, again, across the Moor of Orchill, over the Earn at Innerpeffray, through the wood of Abercairney like a hunted fox; and when William Paterson drove through Methven, his friend cried up to him, loud enough to be heard by all the passengers, "You are a slow coach!"

Any bad article of consumpt was at that time frequently characterised as "clean dirt," which queer term was said to have arisen from the following circumstances. Kippen's mother snuffed heavily, and the box becoming empty, when little Johnnie and she were engaged one day about Logiealmond, she gave him the box and twopence, saying, "Run, laddie, for I'm starvin'." Johnnie went away rather sulkily; and as he was trudging Methven-ward, he picked up some dry cow-droppings, which being of a dampish green below and grey-brown above, made, when well rubbed down, a very fair imitation of "Beggars' Brown." Johnnie was tired, and he risked the providential substitute, first smelling the box to ascertain if it had flavour enough to saturate the new stock: he thought it had, and said to himself, "It 'll do."

His mother did not take snuff daintily like Sir Roger de Coverley, but lavishly, like General Buonaparte; and when she saw relief coming so very quickly, her heart warmed to the young courier. "Come awa, Johnnie, my man; I'm glad ye're come."

"Here, mither, tak' a gude housle o' t."

To it she went, carrying a teaspoonful to her nose, pushing at the one end and drawing at the other. "Eh! eh! bless me, laddie, that's clean dirt. Whatna mixture 's that?"

"Deed is't, mither, and nae mixture aboot it,"

"Whaur did ye get it?"

"Out o' the nearest shop," quoth the incorrigible delinquent. During the afternoon the box was in frequent requisition, and its contents invariably denounced as "clean dirt." When they reached home, Johnnie was despatched to get the snuff exchanged. No sooner was he outside the door than the box was emptied and cleaned for a fresh investment. When he returned and ordered another *housle*, his mother smacked her lips and said, "Aye, laddie, that's something like snuff. What did he say?" "He said, 'Wha wad hae thought that the auld bodie wad hae kent the difference!'"

Kippen's powers of mimicry did not extend far, but he could imitate Lord Methven to the life. One night after the tenants had paid their Martinmas rents, and were standing in the area behind the castle, he stuck his head out of a window somewhere aloft, and imitating Lord Methven's voice, announced that the carriage coals were to be driven "on Thursday week." Nothing more passed at the time, but on the morning of "Thursday week," when the indwellers of the castle opened the front door, they were astonished to see a long range of carts standing on the carriage drive—double carts from Tippermallo, and wooden axles from Drumbauchly. When Lord Methven was told of it, he at once remarked, "Kippen again!"

On another occasion as he was travelling in the dark along the Busby road, he came upon the opposition cooper with a bundle of hazel branches on his back. John went on a bit, and leaning over one of the park dykes, said, in Lord Methven's accents, "What is that you have got?" The poor man said, with simplicity, "Oo, just twa-three bits o' wands for girds." "You come too often here for wood." "I'll no' come back any more." "Well, take what you have got there, and lay them down at John Kippen's door, and if ever you come back you will be thrown into the loch of Methven." "Will I gi'e him them a'?" "Every one!"

We now follow John into more serious matters. At the beginning of the present century, the sickle, as a hand-implement, had been in use upwards of three thousand three hundred years. Some less indifferent generations would have positively deified an article with which the world had been so very long familiar; but we, heathens as we are, stand up erect and exclaim,—pointing at it as Oliver Cromwell did at the authoritative mace—"Take away that bauble." Perhaps we are justified in this callous proceeding by the fact that we have reduced the seven weeks' harvest of ancient times to two: still, we should venerate the institutions of our contented forefathers.

About the year 1812 a sort of rivalry in the serrating or teething of hooks arose between a smith of the name of Morris, who lived on the estate of Gorthy, and another of the name of Barclay, who lived at Castleton, Fowlis Wester. Kippen espoused the cause of Morris, and perseveringly maintained the superiority of his implement, with a cunning view of bringing the matter to a personal issue. He had abundant confidence in his own prowess, and when he had got the matter sufficiently vexed, he offered for a bet to shear round any two men in the parish of Fowlis, provided they used Barclay's hook, and allowed him to use one of Morris's. The challenged parties thought of the hooks only, losing sight of the man altogether. The bet was accepted, and forthwith the belligerents met on George Kilgour's farm, at Bachilton, each party, by agreement, having a youth to make ropes, arrange the sheaves, and bind. Kippen took the *forewind*, treating with contempt the idea of being passed. He then went forward about thirty yards, and stuck a piece of wood into the middle of his own rigg and another in that of the enemy. Then pacing off seven yards of the latter, he stuck in a third stick, and returning, explained, "My bet is this: I go on with my rigg; and when I get to these sticks, I cut across yours, with the same breadth as the rigg before me; then I will have no difficulty in cutting back as you cut forward, and that will be shearing round about you." These cool proceedings formed a very important part of Kippen's tactics. A good many people were present, and they were amused at the proposal, but ere long their amusement gave way to amazement. John gave some instructions to his assistant, and spitting in the hollow of his hand, he said quietly, "Go on." Each of his opponents took his half-rigg, and went at it furiously, rising when he reached his extreme left, and dashing his handful into the rope, returned to his right-hand furrow or crown, and at it again. Kippen paused a second or two, and laughed at the noisy *modus operandi;* then, going to the right of his rigg, he stuck in his sickle, taking little in his hand at first, but rolling the adhering corn as he neared the middle, and dashing his hook in to the haft. By the time he had reached it he had a good sheaf before him, which, without raising his back, he threw into the rope, carefully placed at the centre. Then he went down the other side, where a rope was again laid for him. The onlookers thought this cleverly done, and began to waver in their opinion, which had been strongly in favour of the two hooks; but a single step more, and the betting rose to a hundred to one on Kippen. The nice calculators had made out that he would lose heavily by having to go back across the whole rigg while his opponents had only to go back a half, but they reckoned without their host, for he had no sooner emptied his grasp than he slid the hook into his left hand, and went back the same way as he came forward, thus cutting as much for the time as a man with a common scythe. Two or three rounds of this, and the two men threw down their hooks, amidst peals of laughter and clapping of hands, all admitting that a bet was never more fairly won.

Kippen next appears in a new character at Port of Monteith, where he had gone on a visit. It appears that a black fellow calling himself Molyneux and a terrible bruiser, had been prowling about, demanding that the district of Monteith *must* either find a man to fight him or pay him five pounds. The simple country people had been greatly annoyed by him. It occurred to the sagacious cooper of Methven that Mr. Molyneux was some impostor, and in all likelihood a coward with his face painted for effect. He managed to get a sight of the devourer, and forthwith a written placard is posted on the door of Gartmore smithy, that Billy Brobdignag, a descendant of Wallace, would fight the bully on the Green of Bucklyvie, on Saturday afternoon at seven o'clock. Kippen did not relish the fighting part of the business much, but gloried in his own design, feeling that the people would not allow him to be maltreated. He required a deal of stage property: three men, rather well dressed, as his second, his bottle-holder, and his doctor, besides three dragoons' swords and helmets, and a pedlar's pack. These were easily procured, and when the hour of cause arrived, the three great polished swords and helmets were stuck up on posts in a most formidable manner. A ring was formed, and Blackey leaped in, bold as a lion. Kippen leaped in, bold as another lion. Blackey threw off his coat, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves. Kippen threw off his coat, and rolled up his shirt-sleeves. Blackey indulged in certain rapid circular motions with his clenched fists, ending in a prodigious dig with his left hand at nothing. Kippen indulged in certain rapid circular motions with his clenched fists, ending in a prodigious dig at nothing. Blackey stepped forward; and Kippen stepped forward. At this stage of the business the three officials walked majestically into the ring, and Kippen said stoutly to his antagonist, "Now, sir! as one of us must certainly die in this contest, I think we will better say our prayers." "No!" said Molyneux. "Well!" said Kippen, "you will very soon be past praying for." The cooper began by saying to the crowd: "I take you all to witness that I do not seek this man's death; it has been forced on me." Molyneux was observed to look uneasy. Kippen went on: his prayer was somewhat histrionic, having frequent *asides* mixed with the text. "I pray that I may be forgiven for killing that terrible pedlar, Nichol Graham:—(*aside*) there is his pack, and his body is buried in Flanders moss:—and I pray most earnestly that I may be forgiven for slaying, in cold blood, these three mounted dragoons, between Doune and Dunblane:—(*aside*) There are their swords and helmets, and their bodies will be found in the Teith, at the back of the Castle of Doune." The crowd was so completely engrossed by Kippen's proceedings, that Molyneux was partially overlooked, until some one called out, "He's off!" The district was cleared of the nuisance for ever.

THE preface to these essays begins with a declaration that their primary object was to promote a just understanding between the various classes of society. My readers will now be able to judge what measure of success is likely to attend them. It may be thought presumptuous in me to say so, but it is true notwithstanding, that there is no better position for acquiring a knowledge of society than the back of a bookseller's counter. The following circumstances will illustrate most loyally one side of the case.

In the summer of 1843 I went to hear Dr. McLeod preach before the Queen in the church of Blair Athole. Her Majesty had very few attendants, and occasional glances rendered their faces familiar. Next morning, about nine o'clock, while I was standing outside my shop counter, with a volume of Boaden's "Life of Mrs. Siddons" in my hands, I observed a lady and gentleman, whom I at once recognised as being of the Royal party, coming towards the shop; but, it being a corner, I thought it likely they might pass. Not so. The door opened, and they walked in. I moved behind the counter, took off my hat and made a bow.

"Oh! keep on your hat," said my customer.

"O no, sir; it would not do for me to attend a lady and gentleman with my hat on."

"Will you allow me to take off mine also."

Remonstrance was too late, for his hat was at once placed on the counter. I felt amused and interested at this proceeding. It was so very novel; and satisfied, as I was, that these were people of rank, it made me somewhat unhappy. The gentleman was tall and of great presence; the lady little and very unassuming. We went deep into the books. He took up a French copy of "Gil Blas," in one imperial octavo, a magnificent volume, crowded with woodcuts, and remarked, "This is a book I sought all London for the other day, but could not find. My bookseller has ordered it from Galignani." The gentleman and I carried on a long conversation about books and literary men, while the lady kept laying out occasional volumes for purchase. He opened the work I had been reading, and said, "I prefer Campbell's book to this." I answered, "It is much better written; but Boaden has studied the Kemble family deeply, and is certainly more conversant with their versatile character than Campbell." "Have you read the life of John Kemble?" I was asked. "Yes, sir, I have read it." "My family figures there." This was dreadful. I could not move a step. I saw the lady smiling, but all went for nothing. The books were paid for, and after tying up the parcel, I laid it before him, with pen and ink for his address, but he took up the pen and laid it down again, then sat down on a chair and asked the lady, "Have you got what you want, my dear?" "Yes," he was answered. He then took the pen, and I felt a chill pass over me, as I saw him write, "Prudhoe." As they were bidding me good morning, I said, "My Lord, I know very well what you refer to in the life of John Kemble." He smiled and walked away. Some captious reader may think this a long story with little in it, but let him be reminded that this was Algernon Percy, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, whose four houses covered ten imperial acres; and when he comes to be a duke himself, it will serve him for a rehearsal.

SECTION SECOND.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

PERTHSHIRE POETS.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS
OF
PERTHSHIRE POETS.

PROLOGUE.

"When back we look on happier years,
  How oft the musing eye
Is quench'd in swoll'n and bitter tears,
  Shed o'er their memory.
For scenes remote will still appear
  Than present scenes more bright,
As only distant landscapes wear
  The robe of azure light.
Thus Memory's sweet and soothing power
  Recalls each season flown,
And many a bright, departed hour,
  Becomes again our own."
DAVID MALCOLM, LL.D.

THE following essays on the poets of Perthshire were originally contributed to a local newspaper, which fact will account for their peculiar phraseology and chronological allusion. If they are thought desultory, it ought to be remembered that the materials were widely scattered, and many of the biographical portions gathered from crude oral recitations. The reader will, no doubt, colour them as suits his own fancy. Let there be no mistake, however. The writer claims nothing except having participated slightly in the humanising influences of literature and art, added to a certain weird enthusiasm in everything connected with an age over which the grave has now long been closed. This latter feeling will be best illustrated by the fact, that he once travelled sixty-three miles to see the grave of Andrew Sharpe; and that he seldom goes along the Midland Railway without looking earnestly at the Kirk Shot o' Cargill, where David Drummond met his sad fate, and at the haugh of Ballathie, where James Sim alleges that he met the *De'il*, and addressed him thus—

"Auld lad," quo' I, "ye are na blate,
To pitch your tent on our estate."

Allan Cunningham never passed through the glen of Enterkin but he imagined that he saw the ghost of a Covenanter; and the man is little worthy of respect who would walk up the Glen of Moness without thinking of the "Birks of Aberfeldy." Life without its associations would be like a barren desert. There is a charm in the very words, "The Braes of Auchtertyre," "Tall as the oak on the lofty Benvoirlich," "On the banks of Allan water," "'Mang the birks of Endermay;" and who that knows and loves the ballad literature of his country can pass the great ruined walls of the old Castle of Ruthven without in imagination hearing the very birds singing,—

Huntingtower is mine, Jeanie.

William Howitt cherished a theory, that "certain localities are favourable to the production of certain classes of men," and in pursuit of evidence he visited the birthplaces of all the great Englishmen, from the home of Sir Isaac Newton to that of poet Close. Had he come to the Scottish counties of Fife and Perth, he would have found localities favourable to the production of every class of eminent men,—philosophers, astronomers, divines, churchmen, judges, poets, painters, geologists, travellers, mechanics, and politicians; even their duellists have taken deadly aim. It sounds like climax and anti-climax. Adam Smith was born in the lang toun o' Kirkcaldy; the great Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, at Pittenweem; Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Tennant at Anster; Sir David Wilkie at Cults; and John Campbell, Lord Chancellor of England, at Springfield, in Stratheden. The Admirable Crichton was born at Cluny, near Dunkeld; Adam Ferguson at Logierait; and David Mallet on the moor of Curryour.

Towards the close of the last century, Robert Burns had inaugurated a passion for Scottish versification, which did not die with him; but, being first dropped like a stone in smooth water, eddied and surged to the extremest corner of

Scotland, and when the great poet himself died it began to culminate inwards, until at the end of fifty years every tiny wavelet had disappeared. I am not here to bemoan this fact, because all such fashions pass away, but to inquire whether within an area of fifty square miles the deposit so left may not contain some drops of pure gold, and whether the veriest outcasts of song do not exercise an influence over their own immediate generation greater than we give them credit for; albeit that in our day, not only the Nine Muses but Mount Parnassus itself is absolutely swallowed up in corn, iron, and calico.

When this latter age of political economy and gold passes away, its memory will be fraught with many striking recollections. Its men of science have encircled the globe with a web of iron. Its millions have flitted across the earth like the spirits of former generations—here to-day, in Paris to-morrow. They have answered in the affirmative the purposely overwhelming question put to Job, for they have sent "lightnings that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" They have as much wealth reposing at the slimy bottom of the deep as would upset the Bank of England. They have built up fortunes of colossal magnitude. They have seven times the gold of any former generation; yet they have hunger, and poverty, and pauperism, because by an inevitable law of our financial economy, riches will crust themselves round one man while another is torn to pieces by wild horses.

On the late afternoon of the 7th of August, 1822, an open carriage stood at the door of Oman's Hotel, on Waterloo Bridge, Edinburgh; inside were two gentlemen, and on either side stood other three, besides a host of onlookers. The waiter somewhat garrulously asked a young man standing near him if he would like to know who they were. He was answered, "I know three of them very well, but would like much to know who the others are." "There is Sir Walter Scott, John Gibson Lockhart, Dr Chalmers, Professor Wilson, Sir David Wilkie, J. M. W. Turner, William Collins, and James Hogg." This is fifty years ago; yet these names are familiar at this moment as household words, and will remain so for many times fifty years to come,—one reason being that there are no others to take their places. The millionaire is the present god of our idolatry. He fills many places; he could buy them all, root and branch. This proves a terrible damper to literary exertion, and diverts the current of thought into more profitable channels; but when the lull of the loom comes round, perhaps the nation will bring up her literary arrear. In the meantime, we must make the most of what we have got, be it ever so homely, seeing we cannot always read Shakespeare, or look at Titian; so I am off to the diggings, fortified by the knowledge that I go to a country where gold is to be found in profusion, if I can show myself possessed of the necessary faculty to pick it up.

CHAPTER I.

ANDREW SHARPE.

> "Who loves not woman, wine, and song,
> Remains a fool his whole life long."
> JOHN CALVIN.

SOCIAL companionship is one of the most attractive features of man's journey through life; but the journey of death admits of no companionship. Our personal identity is so rigid that we must go alone, at once too, and that for ever, taking nothing with us and leaving nothing behind. Family affections, an all-important future, a retrospective past, are finally dashed away by the impatient hand, and all is peace. Then the little tendrils that have been long winding themselves round the heart begin to lose their hold, and the living man stands up erect as ever; while over him that is gone the earth is hermetically sealed, and all above is mere shadow; the tender hand, the fond loving heart, the beaming intellectual eye, are "in the deep bosom of the ocean buried." Tombs, monuments, mausoleums, and cenotaphs commemorate the great, but they cannot be erected to the less; the earth would not hold them, neither is it possible, as a rule, for busy, self-supporting man to retain long the remembrance of his quondam associates; but when the grey-haired noble looks back over a long vista of days and years, through courtly groups and assemblies, both grave and gay, certain figures *will* ever take their places, like the ghost of Banquo, while all besides is a mere chaos of coronets, ermine, and lawn; so with the humble plebeian, as he spins his last threads of life some weel kent face will, ever and anon, crop up among the inevitable lumber of threescore years and ten.

Fifty-five years ago there lived in Bridgend of Kinnoull, a poor shoemaker, who, amidst the most chilling poverty, raised his head from his lapstone, and with his horny hand wrote an ode, an English ode, exquisite in pathos, sublime in its melancholy, and touching in its story. This poor shoemaker was an accomplished man. He played the German flute and taught it, painted landscapes and taught drawing, composed love songs and sang them. His landscapes were exquisite little bits, full of tenderness and feeling. His flute notes were heard in the summer gloamin' from his open window like pellets dropping in water; and when he sang his own verses few could listen without being moved. Along with this proficiency came a waywardness, a painful neglect of opportune moments, and the wolf arrived at the door. The bee sips honey from every flower, but the winter comes and the flowers go away, and if the blossoming time is not taken advantage of, there is a sequel of starvation. True, there is a marvellous charm in music and art and song; but long before this poor shoemaker received the call to surrender, he arrived at the conclusion that he would have lived better and died happier if he had remained in ignorance of all the three.

The chain of unfortunate circumstances which suggested to the mind of Andrew Sharpe the composition of the ode I have referred to, was shortly this. In the year 1808, William Herdman, a handsome and well-conducted young tradesman, lived in a land of houses facing the river, which has been lately removed to make way for Tay Street, and on the opposite side dwelt Ellen Rankine, whose father was gardener at Bellwood. Frequently passing and repassing across the river, the two formed a fond mutual attachment, which was about to resolve itself into their becoming man and wife, when a misunderstanding of a very trivial nature arose between Herdman and Ellen's father, which became aggravated into a quarrel, and the young man, being too proud to submit, took revenge on all by enlisting in the 92nd Regiment, then under orders for foreign service.

Within a few months he was carrying a musket and knapsack across the trodden and hungry orange groves of Old Castile, and under Sir David Baird eventually joined Sir John Moore's retreat upon Corunna. The same evening, the 16th of January, 1809, that they buried Sir John Moore in the centre of the battery at Corunna, they buried William Herdman under the green turf on the outside of the battery walls, and within a few feet of the ebbing and flowing waters of the Bay of Biscay.

The first news William Herdman's father and mother heard of him, after his enlistment, were the news of his death—terribly distracting news to them, accompanied as they were with full details of his last moments on the field of battle.

Andrew Sharpe had observed that, since Herdman's departure, Ellen Rankine was greatly changed. Her passionate blue eyes had begun to fade, and her luxuriant brown hair, the pride of better days, to get tangled and dry; but when the news of his death came she sank into helpless idiocy, and, despite the careful watchings of her distressed parents, she stole from them in a luckless moment, and taking the back of the hill, went crooning and singing for a whole week away through the howe of Strathmore, the burden of her song, taken no doubt from Sharpe—

Oh! Corunna's lone shore.

The interest taken in the beautiful but crazed maiden, and the kindness shown to her wherever she went, have been the theme of many a story. She has been described by those who had seen her, as walking at a rapid pace, bareheaded and bare-footed, waving a red handkerchief in her right hand, and under her white, naked left arm carrying her masses of brown hair tied up in an inextricable bundle.

CORUNNA'S LONE SHORE.

Do you weep for the woes of poor wandering Nelly?
  I love you for that, but of love now no more,
All I had long ago lies entomb'd with my Billy,
  Whose grave rises green on Corunna's lone shore.
Oh! they tell me my Billy look'd noble when dying,
That round him the boldest in battle stood crying,
While from his deep wound life's red floods were drying,
  At evening's pale close on Corunna's lone shore.

That night Billy died as I lay on my pillow,
  I thrice was alarmed by a knock at my door,
Thrice my name it was call'd in a voice soft and mellow,
  And thrice did I dream of Corunna's lone shore.
Methought Billy stood on the beach, where the billow,
Boom'd over his head, breaking loud, long, and hollow.
In his hand he held waving a flag of green willow,
  "Save me, God!" he exclaim'd on Corunna's lone shore.

And now when I mind on't, my dear Billy told me,
  While tears wet his eyes, but those tears are no more,
At our parting, he never again would behold me,
  'Twas strange, then I thought on Corunna's lone shore.
But shall I ne'er see him when drowsy eyed night falls,
When through the dark arch Luna's tremulous light falls,
As o'er his new grave slow the glow worm of night crawls,
  And ghosts of the slain trip Corunna's lone shore.

Yes, yes, on this spot shall these arms enfold him,
  For here hath he kissed me a thousand times o'er,
How bewildered's my brain, now methinks I behold him,
  All bloody and pale on Corunna's lone shore.
Come away, my sweetheart, come in haste my dear Billy,
On the wind's wafting wing to thy languishing Nelly,
I've got kisses in store, I've got secrets to tell thee,
  Come ghost of my Bill from Corunna's lone shore.

Oh, I'm told that my blue eyes have lost all their splendour,
  That my locks once so yellow now wave thin and hoar,
'Tis, they tell me, because I'm so restless to wander,
  And from thinking so much on Corunna's lone shore.
But, God help me, where shall I go to forget him,
If to father's, at home in each corner I meet him,
The arbour, alas! where he used aye to seat him,
  Says, "Think, Nelly, think on Corunna's lone shore."

And here as I travel all tatter'd and torn,
  By bramble and briar, over mountain and moor,
Ne'er a bird bounds aloft to salute the new morn,
  But warbles aloud "O, Corunna's lone shore."
It is heard in the blast when the tempest is blowing,
It is heard on the white broken water-fall flowing,
It is heard in the songs of the reaping and mowing,
  Oh, my poor bleeding heart! Oh, Corunna's lone shore.

These are deeply saddening lines, and when taken in connection with the mournful story which gave rise to them, they must come home to every feeling heart. The reasoning of the poor maniac in the last two stanzas is an extraordinary specimen of poetic vehemence. She admits being warned not to think so much on her lover's burial-place, but what is she to do? At home it is an everlasting echo, and when she runs away "over mountain and moor" it clings to her like her own shadow until she exclaims in utter despair, "Oh! my poor bleeding heart." The whole ode rings like a piece of martial music, slowly and tenderly at first, but gathering strength and intensifying as it gets towards the close, mounts louder and louder, until, in the last verse, it ends in a perfect whirlwind of bugles, trumpets, and drums!

In those days, there was no home provided for the insane and imbecile. The farm-barn, and sometimes the sheltering hedgerow, were their only protection during night, and by day they went about, looking poor and dejected, but seldom soliciting alms. Ellen Rankine became eventually—in spite of all the care of her relations—one of the wandering nymphs of which Sterne's Maria is the perfect type; Ophelia, Madge Wildfire, and Desdemona's Barbara variations. Each had her love madrigal. Ophelia sings—

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a green grass turf,
And at his heels a stone.

Madge Wildfire—

Cauld is my bed, Lord Archibald,
And sad my sleep o' sorrow,
But thine shall be as sad and cauld,
My fause "true love," to-morrow.

Desdemona's Barbara—

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Willow, willow, willow,
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve,
Willow, willow, willow.

Ellen Rankine—

Come away my sweet heart, come in haste, my dear Billy,
On the wind's wafting wing to thy languishing Nelly,
I've got kisses in store, I've got secrets to tell thee,
Come ghost of my Bill from Corunna's lone shore.

In 1820, Robert Morison published a number of Sharpe's productions, "for the benefit of the widow," very incorrectly printed, and carelessly edited. The preface contains this hackneyed piece of affectation:—

"The author entered on his design from the sole impulse of unguided genius."

If so, how did he come to give close imitations of Dibdin, Shenstone, Lowe, Macneil, and Burns? This genius must be an arrant burglar. The fact is, Sharpe studied these song-writers deeply, and eventually formed a style peculiarly his own. "Corunna's lone shore" has a rhythm of marked singularity and force; and, instead of "unguided genius," it shows unequivocal evidence of careful, heartfelt study, and from no other source could such a performance come.

Although naturally rather taciturn, Andrew had joyous moments, when he gave way to the most hilarious, but generally innocent, enjoyment. On one occasion, he met accidentally with James Duff, a brother poet, then gardener at Gaskhill; John Robertson, tailor in Perth, also a poet to the extent of having versified M'Pherson's "Ossian": and Isaac M'Vicar, weaver, in Scone. The four adjourned to the "Cross Keys," where a lengthened and merry night was spent. M'Vicar was a weaver, an amateur butcher, a professed freethinker, and a devout worshipper of Bacchus. In the course of the evening, he urged, rather sneeringly, that one or other of "the poets" should make a song on him. Little attention was paid to his vapouring, but eventually he got rude, and called them "snob rhymesters." Sharpe, thus provoked, asked half-an-hour's retirement, which being granted, and an immunity from all trouble agreed to by those present, he left, and within the stipulated time returned, and handed to Duff the following lines, which he read aloud with due emphasis:—

SONG—IVER M'IVER.

Tune—"Jenny dang the Weaver."

Chorus—Iver Mackiver,
He was a gallant weaver,
But then a limb o' Lucifer,
A horrid unbeliever.

He leugh at a' thing, wadna pray,
Sang naething but "The Grinder,"
And a' the lee-lang Sabbath-day
Read wicked Peter Pindar.
Iver Mackiver, &c., &c.

New oaths he coined, invented lies,
Made faces at the clergy,
Could bolt a pound o' English cheese,
And rushed to ilka dairgy.
Iver Mackiver, &c., &c.

Hale moons he sleepit, fuddled weeks,
  Killed swine, and d——d like thunder,
Sware aye "by Aaron's leather breeks,"
  And toasted "Mause o' Endor."
    Iver Mackiver, &c., &c.

Baith civil and religious laws,
  He twisted and disjointed;
To wha did richt, he terror was,
  And praise to Nick's anointed.
    Iver Mackiver, &c., &c.

Now mark his melancholy end,
  And by the same take warning;
Auld *Mizzled-shins* was seen descend,
  Wi' him ae misty morning!
    Iver Mackiver,
      He was a gallant weaver,
    But then a limb of Lucifer,
      A horrid unbeliever.

Sharpe composed altogether upwards of forty songs, in the various styles popular during his time, besides essaying almost every other species of English composition.

The "Song of a Drunken Soldier," after the manner of Dibdin, is quite equal to anything which I have seen of that popular author's. It was written in 1810, when Napoleon was a second time threatening invasion. The following clever dialogue between Buonaparte and John Bull is introduced:—

Said Buonaparte to Johnny Bull,
  Come, strike along with me, sir;
We'll conquer every power, and part,
  Between us land and sea, sir,
Make France and England to be one,
  And live in friendship true, sir."
Quoth John, "be friends with whom I will,
  It shall not be with you, sir."
        Bow, wow, &c.

The Corsican, enraged to find
  His friendship thus rejected,
Pulled up his breeches, cocked his hat,
  And all his pride collected.
Then cried, "by the immortal gods,
  Though formerly I shamm'd, sir,
I'll instantly invasion send."
  Quoth Johnny, "you be d——d, sir."
        Bow, wow, &c.

The following verses are from the song,

BENEATH THE GREEN SOD.

Behold yonder wretch worn hoary with years,
While his drenched cheeks confess he hath shed many tears;
Yet how boldly he marches o'er Life's rugged road,
'Tis because all his wealth lies beyond the green sod.

Now, see Fortune's son high exalted careers,
Like a kite on the wind; hark! how madly he swears;
Ha! but mark how he shakes, if you mention his God,
And with terror starts back when you point to the sod.

'Tis a sting to the rich; to the poor and oppressed,
'Tis their hope and their home, 'tis their palace of rest;
Weary wandering through woes, by misfortune down trod,
They look for relief from the green smiling sod.

Rejoice, then, my friend, for the day is at hand.
When thou'lt take thy last leave of this sorrowful land,
Again in soft slumbers to mix with the clod,
And the blue-bell shall bloom on thy summer-green sod.

Nor doubt though this body must moulder to dust,
And be scattered by winds, that one grain will be lost;
He who moulded it first, can again, by his nod,
Rear the fabric from wind, fire, the sea, and the sod.

"The Song of the Maniac" must have been suggested to Sharpe's mind by the story of Ellen Rankine. It was a favourite of Sinclair's, who sang it with much subdued feeling and naïve simplicity:—

My Sandy was handsome, good-natured, and gay,
  And my Sandy would never gainsay me;
And down in St. Johnstone, ae braw market-day,
  A bonny red ribbon he gae me.

Nane looked like my Sandy sae mild and sae meek,
  And nane could sae winsome array me;
But death came and withered the rose on his cheek
  That was red as the ribbon he gae me.

Now lanely I wander o'er mountain and moss,
  Or where wild fancy wishes to stray me,
And tell wi' a tear of my sorrowfu' loss,
  To the bonny red ribbon he gae me.

But shortly some evening amang the saft dew,
  Low down on his grave will I lay me;
Syne bid a' the sorrows I suffer adieu!
  And the bonny red ribbon he gae me.

The pinchings of poverty, together with the consciousness that he was spending his life in an unprofitable manner, made our poet a melancholy man. He writes:

No bride ever longed for the day,
  That was destined to make her a wife,
More than I for the moment to lay,
  Ever silent the motions of life.

My soul, like the winter is sad:
  My heart like that season, is cold;
Nor shall Hope ever make my heart glad,
  Though her wings were of ermine and gold.

Amidst all this cobbling, and flute-playing, and painting, and poetry, and song-singing, the angel who had been so thoughtlessly invoked began to trim his wings; and Andrew, who, in a desponding moment, had written, "Shall I call on death in vain," felt through all his frame that the inexorable fiat had gone forth, and he quailed before it like a child. In all his times of trouble he had a "knack of hoping." His wish for death was only a half wish; so, when his prayer was heard, he shrank at the contemplation of it, and sank on his bed in an agony of spirit. On the 5th day of February, 1817, in his thirty-fifth year, he was taken from this scene of struggling life to that land where "the weary are at rest."

On the sunny side of the old church of Kinnoull stands an upright slab, in the west side of which is indented the inscription portion of the little stone which was placed at his head in 1817. The quaint but expressive epitaph, so very characteristic of the man, was written by him some years before his death:

Halt for a moment, passenger, and read,
Here ANDREW doses in his daisied bed,
Silent his flute, and torn off the key;
His pencils scattered, and the Muse set free.

Many years after Sharpe's death, his wife supplemented the monumental inscription thus:

An affectionate husband, a faithful friend, and an HONEST MAN.

In one of his love-songs, Sharpe implores Cynthia to shine on the Tay:

For I'm to meet wi' my dear lass,
  Upon its flowery border.

Then comes a chorus, the last line of which is not surpassed by anything within the whole range of our national minstrelsy, "the combined essence of a thousand love-tales"

> Loup high, my heart, the hour is near,
> When kings I'll think below me,
> When what is dark will light appear;
> O WOMAN! MUCH I OWE THEE!

CHAPTER II.

THE REV. DAVID MALCOLM, LL.D.

> "I've seen Tweed's silver stream,
> Sparkling in the sunny beam,
> Grow drumly and dark as he rolled on his way."
> MRS. COCKBURN.

THE alternations of day and night in the physical world have their counterparts in the incessant vibrations of gladness and sorrow which ever accompany the intellectual. While these vibrations are kept up, they fairly enough represent the varied hues of life. But while the planetary movements bring day and night in unvarying succession, the gladness and sorrow of many intellectual men merge into perpetual twilight, and not unfrequently into utter darkness. It has sometimes occurred to me that it would be better to leave the story of Dr. Malcolm's life to the recording angel, that he might blot it out for ever. But there were so many noble points in his character, and so little could be said against him as a citizen of the world, that I think it best to face the difficulty, and to deal gently with the fact, that the great Creator who formed his spirit thought proper, in his wisdom, so to dash it in pieces that, like Job, he sat down among the ashes. I shall try at the same time, to establish an equilibrium between the two sides of his character, and endeavour to show a preponderance of good in the points which more especially concern his fellow-men, touching with a tender hand what does not properly belong to my assumed vocation.

David Malcolm was born in the house attached to the school-house of Madderty, in the year 1763. His father, a man of high respectability, had long held the offices of parochial school-master and session-clerk of that parish, and prospered so well that he was not only able to give his only son a first-rate education, but to leave him means sufficient to afford him a fair start in the world. The more elementary part of his education he got from his father, and the higher branches at the College of Edinburgh, where he obtained distinguished academical honours. One of the leading characteristics of his entire life was a simple-hearted desire to gain esteem from his fellow-men, whether by excellence as a scholar or by gentlemanly behaviour as a man. He was, by his own desire as well as by his father's consent, designed for the Church; and by the time he had gone through his curriculum, he became so great a proficient in languages, that before he was thirty years of age, he, at the urgent request of his friends, applied for the Chair of Oriental Languages at Oxford. In this he was unsuccessful, although he held certificates of the highest order. I have in my possession specimens of his writing, in English, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, the mere caligraphy of which is of the first order, and could only have been acquired by unwearied practice. In person, Malcolm was rather above the middle height, well-proportioned, with reddish fair hair, and a remarkably winning expression of countenance. When he began to assist his father in the school, he was a universal favourite, and when he appeared in the pulpit he was sure of a large and gratified congregation.

After Mr. Malcolm had been some time licensed as a preacher, and no presentation offered to him, and more especially after his father's death, he seemed to take more kindly to teaching, and early in the century he built the three large houses still standing at the east end of the town of Crieff for the purpose of establishing an academy. But after the houses were finished, the project was abandoned, and they were all let as dwelling-houses. The first tenant I remember in the centre house was Dr. Macleay, the father of the two talented Academicians, Kenneth and Macneil Macleay.

Before proceeding to treat of Dr. Malcolm as a poet and author, I shall relate a few of my experiences as his scholar. They may assist in bringing him more vividly before my readers.

He was not a strict disciplinarian, but had a due sense of the dignity which belonged to his office, although his good nature often prevented him acting on it. Among the boarders was a certain John Tinket, a dashing young Creole, very rich and very reckless. Dr. Malcolm tried every method to reduce him to subordination, but he had a very small measure of success. One afternoon he lectured him severely for neglecting his lessons; and next morning, when he stood up to say his Catechism, the Doctor said, "Which is the Tenth commandment!" Jack answered promptly, "I never heard *off* it!" When it came to "The proofs," Tinket was in constant trouble. He struggled on to the quotation, from the third chapter of Genesis, "Verse 24th: 'So he drove out the man:'" and ever after, when he fell short of a proof, he would look in Dr. Malcolm's face with the most innocent perturbation, and cry out, "Verse 24th, 'So he drove out the man.'" At that time the neighbouring farm of Newrow was possessed by Robert Gardner, a clever, but remarkably impulsive man. The farmhouse being very much dilapidated, one day, when the rain came down in torrents, and the wind blew great guns, he resolved to have a new house; and within an hour the foundation was begun. But Robert *cooled* as the summer came in, and it was only in hours of exasperation that the house got a hitch. Dr. Malcolm, in the course of a Bible examination, asked Tinket, "How long was Noah's ark in building?" "I do not remember." "No! you ought to remember, sir!" said the Doctor; "it forms a very important portion of Old Testament history. Well, remember in future that it was one hundred and twenty years." "That was worse than Bob Gardner's house yet," quoth Tinket, with the most perfect *nonchalance*. On these occasions Dr. Malcolm had to summon up all the dominie within him to keep his face square, and the other scholars, in order to keep quiet, were in danger of being thrown into convulsions. I remember asking Tinket what he meant by the answer about the Tenth Commandment; and he answered, "Tut! I thought there was plenty without it."

After the family troubles began, poor old Mrs. Malcolm got regardless of everything, and the boarders were absolutely driven away by the filthy state in which the house was kept. Charles Penley, the last of his race, called one day at William Oswald's, and being treated to a piece of bread and butter, unfortunately let it fall, but picking it up smartly, he exclaimed, "What! the buttered side up? If it had been in our ain dirty hole, it was down as sure as death!"

Among the "day-scholars," contemporaries of my own, was a pompous "Bellycloner," who was generally as far down in his class as the wall would let him, but who had by some rare chance for once found his way to the top. Jealous of the high honour, he very properly commenced a careful rehearsal of the verses which would fall to his share in the afternoon lesson, until he had learned "by heart" every twelfth verse of the first chapter of the First Book of Chronicles. No kickba' for him in the middle of the day; but echoes from the hedges of "Canaan, Zidon, Heth,"—"Eber, Peleg, Reu." By two o'clock he had the old gentlemen so completely recorded in his memory that he thought, although they were all to be present, they would inevitably answer to their names. But "there's many a slip 'tween the cup and the lip," for that horrid long-legged letter A, which comes down like a *couple* over two lines of the ordinary text at the beginning of the chapter, had entirely escaped his notice. Up he stood, flushed with importance, disdaining to look at his Bible, but fixing his eyes on the ceiling, and drawing a long breath, shouted—"DAM Sheth, Enosh!" It was impossible to check the roar of laughter which followed this. Dr. Malcolm did not laugh certainly, but to enable him to maintain his gravity he quietly ejaculated, "Most egregious!" "stupid idiot!" "most egregious!" "most egregious!"

Dr. Malcolm first crept into authorship by writing the "Genealogical History of the House of Drummond,"—a work of considerable research, and acknowledged by Mr. Henry Drummond, the London banker, who published the elaborate and costly series of family histories which bears his name, to be the most authentic book of the kind which had come into his hands. It was succeeded by "The Sorrows of Love," a poem on which rests his claim to rank among the devotees of the sacred nine. In this he fell into the very common error of supposing that a highly-finished education must necessarily fit a man for becoming a poet, losing sight of the fact, that there is an abstract faculty in every man which entirely over-rides education, and which no amount of education can over-ride. It is absurd to pay less deference to the mental faculties than we do to the merely physical, yet we know that a blind man could not be educated into a painter, nor a deaf man into a musician, nor a dumb man into a preacher. Education will polish the diamond, but it will not create it. It will excite the latent spark, but the fire must be pre-existent. There must be a mental adaptation, or excellence will never come. The neglect of this sovereign law has filled the world with indifferent poets, indifferent painters, and indifferent preachers. I do not, by any means, say that Dr. Malcolm was an indifferent poet. I leave my readers to judge for themselves. "The Sorrows of Love" they will find faultless in construction, most scholastically finished, and breathing every amiable quality, and spurning all that is unchaste or inconstant. At the same time they will have to keep in mind that the effusions of the unlettered poet are generally judged as such, while the standard for educated excellence may be pitched too high. I once heard Dr. Chalmers say, "I would rather have the opinion of one simple confiding spirit, than that of twenty who come to sit in judgment."

The following passage, although throughout somewhat inflated, is a very fair specimen of Dr. Malcolm's poetry. It is from the introductory canto of "The Sorrows of Love," and, in the aspirations after learning, very characteristic of himself, if poets can, with fairness, be judged as writing in the first person:—

Far from the tow'ring haunts of purpled state,
And all the cares which glitt'ring pomp await,
Here he enjoy'd the charms of rural ease,
The sweets of Friendship and the joys of Peace.
By Wisdom's lore, and Learning's page refin'd,
To mend his heart and grace his glowing mind.
With pleas'd delight, he rang'd the Muses' seats,
Unlock'd their stores, and cropp'd their flowery sweets.
Oft would he wander through the Grecian shades,
And woo, enamour'd, the Aonian maids.
Glad would he listen to Rome's tuneful train;
And charm'd with Asia's sweetly flowering strain,
Enchanted range Arabia's balmy flowers
And raptur'd sport in Persia's rosy bowers.
But ah! how mean did every lay resound,
Before the Hebrew lyre's celestial sound!

The poet's grand passion is love. It is the inspiring theme of all he does. It sweetens every song, and gilds every tale. A poet without a mistress would be like *Hamlet*, without Hamlet. In some of his most classic tales, Lord Lytton avoids it to a great extent; but when he adopts it as the ground-work of his story, no man, either living or dead, has done more to illustrate the insuperable workings of the human heart under the impulses of that power supreme. Sir Walter Scott's love stories are quiet, thoughtful, and captivating, as in the case of Catherine Seaton; Lytton's, impassioned and overwhelming, as in that of Lucilla Voltkman. Love smouldered and slept in the bosom of Charles Wolfe, but in Robert Burns it blazed like a volcano. Woman, weak, yet all-powerful woman, could at any time lay the great poet prostrate at her feet; and in this he was by no means singular.

David Malcolm, when he had been some time at Edinburgh University, wrote home to his mother:—"I am quite a buck with my new clothes, and rather a favourite with the ladies." Proud was the old lady of her only son, for in all matters parents are pleased to hear of their children being popular. His father was so much taken up with his business, and being naturally somewhat litigious, the son's affairs were left to the mother. It was said that Malcolm, like Charles Wolfe, had, while young, been disappointed in love, which was the blight of his after life. But while the latter gained immortality by writing thirty-six lines, and dropping into an early grave, the former pined and struggled in vain to build himself a name by warning others to avoid the shrine before which he had been so hopelessly immolated.

In early life he was fond of gaiety. His flower-garden was the admiration of all who visited the family. He kept company with the best of the land. In 1787, I find, from a receipt in my possession, he acted as amateur-factor to John Menzies, of Fernton; and, after his patron's death, he collected the widow's rents. His receipts were amusingly concise, the very antipodes of a lawyer's:—

> FERNTON, 13th June, 1788.—John Drummond's relict paid her rent for crop M.D.C.C. and eighty-seven, in full.
>
> DAVID MALCOLM,
> for Mrs. Menzies.

He also collected Miss Preston's rents for a considerable time after the estate fell to her, and before she was married to Sir David Baird. I do not know whether or not he profited by these transactions, but by the time his own affairs came to be wound up, his whole estate in possession yielded £10 11s.! I am afraid no amount of Good Templarism, or teetotalism, or any other 'ism, will insure prosperity, for Dr. Malcolm was all his life a perfect model of sobriety.

The following affair shows the simple-minded, confiding man in a light most conducive to a knowledge of his character, although in its details somewhat ridiculous.

The first edition of "The Sorrows of Love" was intended to be printed in Stirling in 1801; and the Doctor, not feeling himself equal to the journey on foot, went to Crieff and hired a carter to carry him and his manuscript to the press. The charioteer came east to Madderty, and having shipped his cargo, they set off on their tedious journey. When they had struggled through the rough road as far as the top of the Moor of Orchill, Jehu ran the wheels into a slough and upset the cart, pitching the Doctor, with "The Sorrows of Love" into the road. None of the parties suffered much, however, so they speedily gathered themselves up and went on their way. But during the rest of the journey the doctor showed great depression of spirit, and frequently threatened to abandon his publication altogether. "For," said he, "we cannot expect to succeed in the face of such an unlucky omen as the *couping* of the cart!"

The book was printed, however, and commanded a fair sale. A new edition was published in 1814 by Constable, of Edinburgh. This edition was accompained by Elegies, Epithalamiums, and Epitaphs on the Drummonds, the Moiras, the Bedfords, and the Nelsons, besides abundant notices of the "First Gentleman in Europe," and a dedication to his ill-starred Princess.

Dr. Malcolm had evidently imbibed deeply the chalybeate of "The Leasowes." I remember well how he riveted attention when he read in his fine sonorous voice the elegy beginning—

Ye shepherds! give ear to my lay,
  And take no more heed of my sheep;
They have nothing to do but to stray,
  I have nothing to do but to weep.

Yet do not my folly reprove:
  She was fair, and my passion begun;
She smiled—and I could not but love;
  She is faithless, and I am undone.

But although "The Sorrows of Love" contains many beauties, I think it would have been better if its author had not stuck quite so closely to his text. He makes "love like a dizziness," and paints it perhaps a little too lovely, and its sorrows perhaps a little too sorrowful. It is difficult to make the matter-of-fact people of these degenerate days believe that any man or woman ever died of love.

Dr. Malcolm's poem is a perfect maze of unrequited passion and broken vows; but it must be remembered that it was written in the Arcadian age, after Shenstone, and Somerville, and Aikenside had tried to turn our poor cold country into the very home of Virgil and Ovid, and when a marshy bog with a saugh in it was called "a grove!" a group of stunted hazels, "a bower!" and a hollow by a burn-side, "a vale!"

The hero, Leander, falls deep into Lucy's toils, and they are betrothed; but before final arrangements, he has to leave the spot, where—

Deep in a grove this rural seat was placed,

perhaps to go into town to pay some bills, but that is not mentioned. On his return a considerable while after, he is just in time to see her married to another.

I give the poet's narrative in detached morsels:—

While with full speed Leander sought the bower,
Ah! little thought he of the changeful hour
That love's fond hopes that day would overthrow,
End all his joys, and propagate his woe.
In charms refulgent Lucy moves along,
With nymphs surrounded, and a sparkling throng.
With customed joy, he hails the much-loved fair,
And ardent longs her gracious smiles to share.
With looks confused she sees the swain advance,
And deigns to hail him, but with eyes askance.

* * * * *

A festive crowd far distant bright appears,
And shouts of mirth assail his wondering ears,
When, lo! a swain before him glittering stands,
Who grasps her hand, and all her care commands.

* * * * *

He saw her lean enamoured on his arm,
Breathe tender love, and spread each smiling charm.

* * * * *

Of past delight the once-loved haunt he leaves,
Withdraws in silence, and unpitied, grieves.

Thus cast off, Leander bemoans his fate with great pathos, and in the language of true poetry:—

The thoughts of past joys so divine
  Shall soothe while they raise my sad moan;
The wilds shall their horrors resign,
  As I muse on the days that are gone.
The flowers which I reared for my love,—
  The violet, carnation, and rose,—
The bowers and the sweet-breathing grove,
  As they bloom, shall diminish my woes.

'Twas but lately I stray'd o'er the lawn,
  And Nature in beauty was crown'd;
The linnets saluted the dawn,
  And peace, love, and joy shone around.
Now all is with sadness o'erspread,
  And horror environs the plain.
Sweet pleasures: oh, where are you fled?
  Ye days of delight roll again!

In vain Spring renews her fair blooms:
  Can she love's faded pleasures repair?
His sweets in vain Summer resumes:
  He cheers not the gloom of despair.
Though his fruits smiling Autumn wave round,
  Can they gladden my woe-worn breast?
Though Winter's loud tempests resound,
  Can they lull my sad sorrows to rest?

Spread, ye deserts, your desolate waste;
  Ye wilds, all your horrors disclose:
To your dreary recesses I haste,
  In silence to weep my sad woes!
Ye nymphs, and ye swains, now adieu!
  Farewell, all ye joys that alarm!
For its sweets Love no more shall renew—
  Its sorrows no comfort can charm.

In 1814, Dr. Malcolm had reached the culminating point in his life: the second edition of "The Sorrows of Love" had been published, and the press had recognised him as a poet. He had received the degree of LL.D. from his College,—he held the appointment of chaplain to the Prince Regent,—his school was prosperous,—boarders numerous, and to all appearance, the fondly-indulged Crieff scheme was soon to be realised. In the pulpit he had taken his place as an eloquent and powerful preacher, and had reasonable hopes of preferment, and in society he held an enviable position. Fortunate had it been for him, had he at that epoch been able to adopt the mode of life so much extolled in his own beautiful lines:—

Happy the man who leaves the world betimes,
Resigns its pleasures, and forsakes its crimes:
Who far from cities, courts, and vice refined,
Improves the heart, and cultivates the mind;
Each thought exalted, every wish subdued,
Exerts, alone, his powers of doing good;
Who, raised above the world, its cares, and wiles,
Defies its frowns, and scorns its tempting smiles:
Who looks beyond it to a bright abode,
Prepares for Heaven, and walks on earth with God.

A recent traveller says that the sun does not set at Leghorn, but "tumbles into the Mediterranean before you have time to look for your hat." It was not so with Dr. Malcolm; his ascent of the pyramid of life was gradual, slow, and hard struggled for, and when he reached the apex, he did not remain long; neither did he tumble at once to the base on the other side; but he went down in a protracted twilight, deeper and deeper, until he reached a headland where the gulf of death lay before him, and on either side poverty and degradation. In 1816, the last year I was his scholar, he had begun his downward journey. The powdered hair began to get dishevelled,—the fine, firm expressive countenance to get flaccid and sinewless,—and instead of walking in the school with the air and gait of a bishop, he came into it slowly and stealthily, apparently absorbed in some overwhelming consideration, over which external circumstances exercised no control. Out of doors everything was rapidly falling into decay. The old house, with its whitewashed walls, which in my boyish vision appeared second only to Abercairney, began to look faded and yellow, and the harling to drop off, like a huge case of small-pox. The great boxwood borders, three feet high, got blanky and shapeless, the much-cherished honeysuckle and climbing rosebushes flourished into inextricable labyrinths, and the gravelled walks became weedy and foul. Everything grew that was not wanted, and that which was wanted declined.

Inside the house, matters were going the same way. The boarders had dropped off one by one, and old Mrs. Malcolm, who for many long years presided at the family dinners, in the snug east-end parlour, well dressed and stately as a duchess, began to fade both in her person and dress,—the property in Crieff had been alienated,—and the session books had fallen into arrear; yet for seventeen years did the poor decayed scholar struggle on, bending under a poverty infinitely worse than pauperism, because it discarded relief, and having recourse to means for subsistence, which his better nature loathed, but his common nature rendered imperative. The most intellectual man must have bread, and he shrinks at dying alone ; yet no helping hand was held forth to this lone sufferer. It was immeasureably mean in the families whose escutcheons he had decorated with all the proud metaphors in the language, whose children he had eulogised in song, and whose epitaphs he had written, to allow him to die in the arms of a passing tramp, and to be laid in his grave without the common tribute of a tear.

Dr. Malcolm died on the 25th of May, 1833, and was buried in the churchyard at Madderty. No stone marks the last resting-place of a man round whose youthful brow so many graces had centred. But he has gained the consummation for which he longed, and whatever we lose, in the lapsing of his memory, he loses nothing.

In hope I look to distant, brighter climes,
  Where nobler scenes and purer joys abound ;
Where pains shall cease, and toils, and hateful crimes,
  And passion spreads no sorrowing cares around.

Farewell ! ye scenes of time—ye vain desires !
  Dreams of delight which waked the constant sigh,
To nobler scenes my panting soul aspires—
  On higher joys I bend my longing eye.

Adieu ! ye woods, ye snow-clad hills, adieu !
  Adieu ! ye vales, sweet scenes of happier days.
Adieu ! ye groves, ye bowers that charm the view—
  Farewell ! false man. Farewell ! my mournful lays !

CHAPTER III.

JAMES BEATTIE.

> "Nature from the storm
> Shines out afresh, and through the lighten'd air
> A higher lustre and a clearer calm
> Diffusive tremble."
>
> THOMSON.

How small, how very small, is the point on which a great matter sometimes turns? Had it not been for that affair with Sir Thomas Lucy's game, William Shakespeare might have remained all his days a wool-comber at Stratford-on-Avon, and the fire then pent and smouldering within him would have been thereby extinguished, instead of blazing throughout the civilized world, then, now, and in all time coming. Had the poor lame boy, Scott, while he was hirpling about Sandyknowe, been crushed, as he greatly dreaded, by his grandfather's frantic servant, or toppled into the Tweed, where would Scotland—literary, far-famed, much-sought-after Scotland — have been? Physically here, but mentally nowhere, for our current light literature is a mere faint echo of Scott. This is the affirmative, but the negative is not so easily ascertained.

What's done we partly can compute,
But ken na what's resisted.

Some equally unimportant matter may have diverted from its proper current the germ of a greatness equal to either of these, and that at our very door. The speculation is utterly vain, however, obvious as the theory may be.

During the latter part of the year 1835 I had repeated visits, at my place of business, from a homely-looking man, of rather stalwart figure, who introduced himself as James Beattie, stone-mason in Errol, sometimes known as "The Leetown Poet." My hands were full of Robert Nicoll at the time, and poetry was not in the ascendant; besides, I certainly did not expect much from James, and rather suffered his visits than encouraged them. On Midsummer Day of the following year, however, while I was pushing my way through one of the crowded streets, I met Beattie, and, without uttering a word, he put a piece of folded paper into my hands, and went on his way. I never saw him afterwards, which has been matter of sincere regret to me, not that I dreamed of wanting him thirty-seven years afterwards, but because I found that I had mistaken my man.

The paper handed to me by Beattie contained the following extraordinary lines written in his own hand, and, while denying entirely what is vulgarly called the action of "unguided genius," I confess my inability to explain how or by what influence a man in Beattie's position should have attempted such a very lofty theme, and attained it so well. The genius must not only have had a guide, but an accomplished one. Beattie must have read and studied when his companions were asleep:—

LINES ON THE GREAT SOLAR ECLIPSE OF MAY 15TH, 1836.

All Nature wore a pausing, earthquake hue,
The wee birds ceased their song in bush and bower;
'Twas neither light nor dark, yet stars looked through;
As from the arches of some old war-tower,
Dim spectral ages, with oppressive power,
Look'd icy on you with their orbless eyes.
'Twas not the passing gloom or thunder-shower,
But on the crystal outworks of the skies,
Light's sentinels were changing for an hour,
And the evil angel, thinking they were gone,
Hung his black sceptre over earth and sea;
Biting his chain and groping for his throne.
But soon the fountain-head of light was free,
Then, as 'twere second morn, the skylarks rose,
And sweeter hymn'd their songs till evening's close.

If I except the last three nights of the comet of 1858, I remember no celestial phenomenon so startling as the total eclipse of the sun in 1836. The lurid, death-like aspect of the earth and all its contents during two hours at mid-day in summer, and while the weather was otherwise clear, gave rise to feelings to which men are generally strangers, and of which many generations know nothing.

Who looks, after having gone to the place by himself, at the huge serrated walls and barred window recesses of Tantallon Castle, without feeling "dim spectral ages" looking on him "with oppressive power," and grim, scarred faces peering through the rusty stanchions? The figure is grand as applied to the hazy, bewildered look which the stars had at noon-day, on that 15th of May. Sentinels are placed to guard the fountains of light,—and where? Not on the hard-paved "lonely round," but "on the crystal outworks of the skies!" They are changing, and a weak point ensues, like the turning of the crank in mechanics: and the evil angel, thinking a catastrophe has come, flourishes his black ensign rather prematurely, for he, in anger, has to grope through the darkness for his throne. The birds of the air, too, have been deceived by the great atmospheric change, and how exquisitely the return of light is figured by the skylark's rise. Nature bounds back to her normal condition, and, being relieved of an oppressive load, she becomes exultant, and hymns her universal song. How beautifully Sir Alexander Boswell describes a similar scene:—

When tim'rous nature veils her form,
And rolling thunder spreads alarm,
Then ah! how sweet, when lull'd the storm,
The sun shines forth at even'.

Beattie's object is to show the effect which such novel phenomena have upon the human eye and mind, and how the evil angel is ever ready to take advantage of an apparent emergency. The stone-mason has dared much, but he had Milton's daring example before him, and the world's hearty approval of it: and, with reverence be it spoken, our humble poet's two sentinels take their stand upon "the crystal outworks of the skies" with as much firmness as many of the great poet's roving potentates do on the hem of earth, or, as he himself expresses it, "bare convex of the world's utmost orb."

In beginning life, the poet may flatter himself with visions of greatness which, at some remote period may be realised; but if he expects to sleep at night on a bed of roses, and by day under the shelter of osiers, and to be coaxed and flattered by his fellow-men, he will not only find that he has erred, but will be astounded by the fact that, as a preliminary step, he will have to die; and however little he may regard what occurs on earth after he has undergone that final ordeal, he will see enough before it ensues to convince him that, even then, the great public will be circumspectly slow to acknowledge him, and ever ready to undervalue his merits and to herald his weaknesses. Not but that there is a portion of society always ready and willing to encourage and patronise merit, but the "noes" are numerically too strong, and much too clever for the "ayes."

While this essay is in progress, a kind Carse gentleman has sent me James Beattie's poems, and I rush back upon him like a remorseful digger, who finds he has left a nugget among the sand. I am amazed at the stone-mason of Leetown, the grand simplicity of the man, his passionate love of nature and of his children—no smothered lampoon, not a line of scandal, no sharpened epigram, but the ebbings and flowings of a gentle and somewhat stricken heart.

Beattie's book is a tiny 12mo, of 64 pages, printed by John Taylor, of Perth, but bears no date. At the end of a tasteful introductory note is the following quotation from Coleridge: "The study of poetry has been to me its own exceeding great reward; it has soothed my afflictions and endeared solitude." It is said that he consumed and shortened his life by studying Coleridge and Byron, instead of taking that all-absorbing sleep so imperatively necessary to the existence of the working man.

The following verses on "Little Jamie" are picturesque to the last degree, although simple as the childhood to which they apply. Few parents who have a little son, but will sometimes take a fond look at him, and say, mentally, "Will he live to be an old man? If he does, I hope he will not pine in trouble. Will he speak of me with sadness when I am dead? Will he heave a sigh, or shed a tear over the place where my ashes lie? and when he is dead, will they lay his head with mine that we may rest upon our mother's breast together?" What a charming little fellow Jamie is! fresh as the breath of morning, rollicking, climbing, thudding about, riding through the broom on his father's walking-stick, holding on by the tassel and striking behind, like a miniature Newmarket jockey, "chasing, crying after Mary."

LITTLE JAMIE.

Jamie hath a look o' joy
More than many little boy.
Joy and love his bosom fill,
Like the lark above the hill,
Ever sporting in his glee,
Like a linty on a tree.

All his little hopes and fears
Seldom yet have cost him tears;
Hardly reaching till to-morrow,
Never do they bring him sorrow;
And the centre o' his bless
Shines alone in presentness.

Well he loves a summer day,
Out of doors to sport and play.
Swinging high upon a tree,
Half he thinks that he could flee.
"O," says he, "that wings were given,
I would fly away to heaven."

Jamie seeks the beds o' flow'rs;
Threads the bramble-twisted bow'rs,
Like a fairy spirit glides,
Like a fish beneath the tides—
Through the waving sea of broom,
Yellow ocean of perfume.

Jamie he will sometimes sigh
To be a man, and six feet high;
For what reason? 'tis to reach
That green bough above his stretch;
And to step the burn, when big,
Instead of going by the brig.

Jamie loves the skies of June—
When he wonders for the moon.
Well he loves the sunny hour,
Chasing bees from flow'r to flow'r;
Dear to him their music humming,
Twenty going, twenty coming.

Sawest thou a little fairy,
Chasing, crying, after Mary;
When the morning dew is sheen,
O'er the burn, and up the green?
That is Jamie—life a bee,
Frolicsome, and wild, and free.

While the rainbow strides the glen,
He is out a chasing then;
Chasing, laughing, all the while,
Up hill he will run a mile.
Home he comes through shining show'r,
In his breast a mountain flow'r.

When the Autumn winds have blown,
And the acorns rattle down,
When the hyps are red as blood,
Jamie's joy is in the wood.
When the bramble-berry's black,
Then he seeks the tangled glack.

Hills, and woods, and waters, give
Thoughts that with him aye shall live.
And the blazing thunder-storm,
Hath its share his mind to form.
Bonny June, and black December,
Blow to flame Life's little ember.

Days will come, and days will pass,
Time will turn the magic glass.
Talking, then, of childish things,
Will he speak of him who sings,
Shed a tear, or heave a sigh,
Where my lowly ashes lie?

If he live to gray old age,
Joy to his long pilgrimage;
Less of troubles than were mine,
More of spirit not to pine;
Until upon our mother's breast,
He lays his head with mine, to rest.

In his later life, James Beattie fell into irregular habits, and murmurs came from his cottage. His children, erewhile rosy and full of sprightliness, began to wear dejected looks. Despairing of any happiness to come, he composed the following elegiac fragment:—

RETROSPECTION.

I sat me down, an hour, alone,
  Beneath a spreading tree,
To think upon the days byegone,
  And days that coming be.

To think upon my hopes and fears,
  That have been great and vast;
In vain to count the weary tears,
  And sorrows of the past.

To look upon the landscape green,
  And all its flow'rs of joy,
Oh! could I be, as I have been,
  A summer-hearted boy.

But, ah! my winter of decay,
  In cloud is coming fast;
Yet still I bless the sweet delay,
  And live upon the past.

My home, as through the mist of years,
  With sorrow I behold,
For there is none within, with tears
  To welcome as of old.

There through the trees, the shining brook
Is wimpling gaily still,
By broomy brae, and fairy nook,
Down to the ancient mill.

Among the broad-leaved sycamores
I hear the humming-bees ;
And still the skylark sings, and soars
Above the lofty trees.

Though every tree, and bird, and bee,
In beauty still rejoice,
Strange are the looks that kythe to me,
And stranger every voice.

Within the kirkyard's holy shade,
Repose my ancient friends ;
But, ah ! among the silent dead,
The joy of friendship ends.

The woods wi' them I wandered through,
The sunny hill, the rocky glen ;
Receive a yearning thought anew,
Of what will ne'er come back again.

Far in a gloomy ocean grave,
Some sleep beside the coral stem ;
Their epitaph the rolling wave.
Whose thunders ne'er shall waken them.

Their voices yet I think I hear,
Their faces yet I think I see,
And many a smile and word o' cheer,
They seem to ha'e in store for me.

I'm lanely on the market street—
I'm lanely at the kirk or fair—
For a' I see, and a' I meet,
Nae weel-kent face is ever there.

Now though I wander up the glen,
Or by the pebbly shore,
Sweet recollections come again,
But hope returns no more.

There I'm alone, all, all alone,
A stranger and astray,
I only live on days byegone,
On time long past away.

On time long past, so let it pass,
While memory can retain
The lustre of her looking-glass,
I'll look and love again.

And though the faces I have seen,
No more again I see,
I'll lay me down with them at e'en,
Beneath the dark yew tree.

CHAPTER IV.

JAMES BEATTIE.—*Continued.*

> "Fearing, trembling, striving, praying,
> Onward like you rolling river!
> Man's delaying proves decaying;
> Soul immortal resteth never."
> Rev. Dr. ANDERSON.

THE Carse of Gowrie, well known in song, forms a tract of champaign land, stretching from the rock of Kinfauns on the west to Invergowrie on the east, with its beautiful fringe of hills on the north, and on the south the sluggish, solemn Tay on its way to the ocean, which it reaches beyond the stormy bar, and where the Inchcape tower has for fifty years kept its "shoulder so well to the wind." This lovely district of country, dotted over with mansions and homesteads, is much more famous for the production of crops than for sheltering or worshipping the muses. The soil is so good and so self-willed that it refuses positively to produce anything but fine crops of wheat, and as an indispensable corollary, only tolerates those men whom it designs as its own cultivators, either as proprietors, or lessees of broad acres, or simple tillers of the ground, spurning from its surface, as of no practical use, all the votaries of imagination, who are content with plodding, after their own fashion, away amongst the thorns and briars of life, in search of an imaginary good, instead of settling down amidst the luxuriant and profitable aroma of beans and red clover.

On this apparently uncongenial soil, James Beattie was born in the year 1796,—that year when every intellectual Scotchman was mourning the death of Robert Burns, the era of the Ettrick Shepherd and Robert Tannahill not having yet dawned. Beattie's father was a mason to trade, and, following the too common practice, he took his son as his apprentice, thus consigning him to the mortar-tub, where he remained to the end. Young Beattie had a taste for drawing, and at the instigation of some friends he commenced business as an architect and contractor; but, not succeeding, he went back to the hammer, and when he published his little volume of poems he designed himself "journeyman mason," wishing, no doubt, to keep down public expectation respecting it. His style, formed on some of the best models, is substantially English, tinctured purposely with a slight vernacular, that he might be able to maintain with surer purpose that simplicity which was his dearest aim. Had the "tide in the affairs of men" flowed when it ebbed in the life of young Beattie, and had the latent powers of his mind been even acknowledged, not to say nursed, by those who knew him, no one looking at what he has written could set limits to what he might have attained.

Beattie's mind, although of a pathetic turn, was vigorous; and, from his habits of reading and study, it became cultivated and refined. The following ode is full of chastened sentiment and poetic thought—

THE SPRING LARK.

In the purple of Heaven, on the pinions of light,
The spring lark ascends, and her bosom is bright;
With glory and joy, from the sun's burning brim,
Lo! she sings and she soars like the young cherubim.
Far, far from her nest, and the dwellings of man,
Will she ever revisit the green earth again?
She ascends and she sings, in the blue fields of ether,
Leaving danger and death in the low world beneath her;
Rejoicing in fulness, and freeness of spirit,
That the ocean of air is her own to inherit.
On the amber-edged clouds she is resting her wings;
In a shrine of magnificent glory she sings;
The gush of her praises, like incense ascends,
Refreshing men's hearts to the earth's utmost ends.
Thou seemest a link of the chain yet unriven,
Might draw a stray sheep to the pasture of Heaven.
Thou art welcome, for ever, to sing in our skies,
If thou bring with thee flowers in their manifold dyes;
If thou bring with thee sunshine, and summer perfumes,
And all the rich radiance of ripe living blooms:
O welcome to sing in the regions above,
And cherish our hearts with an anthem of love.
But winter will come, and thy music will cease,
And the tempest will roar in the desolate place;
The flow'rs that o'ershadow'd thy nest shall be gone,
And thou shalt be houseless, and weary, and lone.
The blue skies of beautiful summer are fled,
And the rose of the wilderness leafless and dead;
Yet the days of reviving in vision are come,
The spring of refreshing in beauty and bloom.

Oh! then shall the place where the tempest hath swept,
In the gold and the amber of morning, be dipt;
Lo! the bright bow of mercy shall bend o'er the glen,
And the flow'rs shall look up fair and lovely again.
Ye have sung o'er the living, sweet bird of the morn;
And ye sing o'er the dead in your daily sojourn;
O, yes, ye will sing, when we all shall be gone,
When the green grass grows o'er us, and moss on our stone;
Thou wilt bathe thy grey breast in the day's crystal urn,
Ere it shines on the dew-drops that spangle the thorn.
O'er the deep shady glens of the North, as ye soar,
The hymns of the morning, how sweetly ye pour;
On the day that is holy, thy notes are the sweetest;
On the day that is lovely, thy wings are the fleetest;
And thy soul-stiring song, more rich and more sweet,
While you spurn the wide earth, as it were, from your feet.
Most refreshing to him who is up and abroad,
And rejoiceth, like thee, in the light of his God.
He hears thee, on high in the far upper air,
And thinks on the time he will follow thee there;
He thinks on the hour when, his spirit set free,
He shall soar up rejoicing and gladsome as thee.
No frosts of the winter, no cold dropping rain,
No trouble, no toil, shall molest him again.

I am, no doubt, laying myself open to the charge of bold adventure in attempting to criticise this brilliant piece of metrical composition: but who would not dare on James Beattie's account, and dare again? At the period of his life when this ode was written, his mind must have been deeply imbued with devotional feeling. It appears that during his chequered career he had seasons of doubt and misgiving. The reason is obvious. His reading was incessant and desultory, and when he had imbibed the latent venom, he had no world of fellow-men to go into, that his unknown gods might be mercilessly demolished; so they rankled in his breast, and sank deep into his heart. It is somewhat remarkable, however, that there is not a single glimpse of any such feeling in his book. It is full of reverential love and aspirations after the "better land." All good is of heaven above; all evil of the earth beneath. The soarings of the early lark carry his sensitive mind away into those upper and unknown regions, where man in tacit faith has fixed the final celestial paradise; but he is not forgetful of the dead; the mools that repose in the churchyard hard by he never loses sight of, because they identify to his mind the spirits that are aloft with the more sentient part that he has seen consigned to the narrow house.

Ye have sung o'er the living, sweet bird of the morn,
And ye sing o'er the dead in your daily sojourn.

* * * * *

He hears thee on high in the far upper air,
And thinks on the time he will follow thee there,
He thinks on the hour when, his spirit set free,
He shall soar up rejoicing and gladsome as thee.

Everything which formed a link between the terrestrial and celestial worlds became the theme of Beattie's song. The song of the lark away out of sight carries him up, and he lingers to tell of

THE RAINBOW.

We stood within a green alcove,
  And saw the bow of heaven,
Bending most gloriously above
  The golden gates of even;
Then fell a soft and quiet shower,
Feeding, with beauty, leaf, and flower.

A glorious spirit dwells on high,
  That lovely arch he threw;
He spreads the clouds along the sky,
  He sends the rain and dew;
And from the rainbow's purple crown,
He sheds the ancient promise down.

Green earth, and all her flow'rs look up
  And smile to heaven again;
Red life is in the rose's cup,
  The spirit of the rain.
Heaven hath her rainbow and her showers,
And earth her beauty and her flowers.

Hope shines as fair, and builds as high,
  As ever rainbows were,
How can the splendid vision die
  That promiseth so fair?
All earthly hopes must fade away,
With man, the tenant of a day;
Yet shall he, like yon star, arise,
His heaven-born hope to realise.

The second of the above verses tells the biblical history of the rainbow, both physical and celestial. The glorious spirit spreads the clouds along the sky, or, consistently with the laws of nature, there could be no rainbow; but when formed,

From the rainbow's purple crown,
He sheds the ancient promise down!

The rain which accompanies the rainbow in summer, has a very refreshing influence, and stimulates the earth and its flowers, which have been shrinking before the mid-day sun. This effect is described in the first four lines of the third stanza. Four lines! Away encomium! Go on, recorder of merit! Place your hands on waggons of gold, on rocks of carbon, on volumes that dazzle the senses, and after all that is accomplished, come back and read these four lines again.

The beautiful rural imagery and joyous description in the following lines on the daisy, present a great contrast to the mournful verses of Burns. In the one case the crimson-tipped flower was buried to the intense regret of the man whose hand had done it; in the other, it was only danced upon by younkers' merry feet, which seems the end for which it was designed:—

THE DAISY.

The daisy is the fairest flower,
  In all the earth below;
The jewel on the mountains,
The glory of the fountains,
  The summer's living snow.

Fair are the flowers in other lands,
  We never can behold;
But here are pearls far whiter,
With yellow bosoms brighter,
  Than amethyst or gold.

Around, the merry maidens sing,
  In sunny nights o' June,
Here the younkers foot it merrily,
And many a heart beats cheerily,
  Beneath the harvest moon.

The true poet does not go in search of exciting subjects for his muse. He chooses Nature in her simplest aspect. Hence the "Lake Poets." James Beattie, while he had the whole great world around him, selected a green lane with a goldfinch's nest in it. If he had lived till now he would have had occasion to lament the entire banishment of that prince of Scotland's feathered tribes. I have seen them in hundreds on an early summer morning, about the Abbey of Inchaffray, with their beautiful plumage sparkling through the hedges and down among the red clover, the seed of which is said to be their food; but they are all gone.

THE GOLDFINCH'S NEST.

Far in the west, there is a nest,
Wrought like a pearly shell;
The burn below, runs clear and slow,
Pure as a mountain well.

The wee bird sits and sings, by fits,
A bless'd and bonny tune;
The eggs are there, like blobs of air;
From blue, blue heaven aboon.

Oh! in this nest, by Nature dress'd,
Love's banners are unfurled;
True joy and peace are in this place,
If they're in all the world.

On that green bough there's music now—
The ancient chestnut tree;
That wee bird sings, with fluttering wings,
Like birds beyond the sea.

Through leafy boughs, the sun-light glows—
The setting sun of gold;
And shadows still the waters fill,
Deep, deep, and manifold.

* * * *

Oh! pilgrim come to this sweet home,
At morning, noon, or even,
For here are wings and holy things,
That tell of earthly heaven.

The only attempt at humour in Beattie's book is "Eppy Ha', the Tapstress." He designs by it to contrast the beer-drinking of our forefathers' day with the whisky-drinking of ours. Curiously enough, this poem was written and published in the same year as Robert Nicoll's "Janet Macbean," to which it bears a striking resemblance. I can only insert the last four stanzas.

EPPY HA', THE TAPSTRESS.

Now years rollin' on, not a trace can ye see
O' that house o' good cheer, o' that temple o' glee;
The bink, and the clear butter-plates are awa,
The awmry, the cups, and the bickers an a';
The caller-like faces, aye laughin' and glad,
Langsyne in the mools they are sleepin' and sad.

Generations to come, aye shall rev'rence the spot,
Where our forefathers met, when life's cares they forgot;
When birds cease to sing on the dull winter eve,
Full many in passing, a deep sigh will heave,
As thinkin' on times that are now far awa,
And the guid reamin' nappy of auld Eppy Ha'.

The ploughshare has been where our forefathers laugh'd,
The corn's grown green where the nappy they quaff'd;
For Eppy's good cheer, ye may say what ye can,
Was the heart o' relief to the way-faring man.
Here the poor and the weary, asleep o'er their drappy,
Might dream o' their drinkin' again, and be happy.

* * * * *

See, yonder white house, wi' a sign on the wa',
There's no ane within like our auld Eppy Ha';
They are glaiket and glied, takin' a' body in,
Wi' their little wee stoups o' delusion and sin.
Their ale is like whey, and their cheese, nane e'er saw:
So here's to the memory of auld Eppy Ha'.

The noble lines on the eclipse of 1836, which led to this exhumation of Beattie and his poems, and the four elaborate verses on "The Destruction of Pompeii" in the volume before me, are in the style of Wordsworth's sonnets. The revelling madness of the doomed citizens is described with vivid power.

THE DESTRUCTION OF POMPEII.

But ha! the crowds are reeling! Is't the wine?
No, for the temple of their god is falling,
And piercing shrieks in vain for help are calling
From out the ruins of the tumbling shrine.
And hark! a roar, as if the earth had reft
Her rugged bosom, and from out the cleft
Belch flame and ashes. The round moon is gone,
And a dim lurid darkness covers up
The heavens; and, shadowing from the mountain top,
Comes hurling down, in awful terror thrown.
While wailing run, or prostrate on the ground,
The helpless crowd; while down with fury pours
The fiery flood; and like a tempest roars
The suffocating gust,—death spreading all around.

I have visited the home and haunts of James Beattie, the place of his death and sepulture. His surviving daughter has told me of his poverty and manful efforts, his books, his occasional waywardness, his love of the fields, and the ready sympathy he always had with any of his family or friends in their hour of trial or death. Thus, until he was forty-two years of age, did this humble son of song manage to hold his own in the battle of life, and to leave behind him verses well calculated to carry his memory into future generations. But his doom was written, and his life became more fevered. The pulses were not weakened, but danced with more impetuous boundings. Men generally go down to death, but James Beattie went up. He unconsciously exalted all the powers that lay within him of ignominiously ending what his Maker had begun so well. He put between his lips the narcotic draught that sent him reeling to his grave, without the power of throwing out that cherished anchor of hope, which man, in the full possession of his senses, clings to as his guide and support in the most momentous event of life—its end. He did not drink laudanum because it was poison, but because it soothed his excited nature; and the cure, in his unskilful hands, became worse than the disease. He drank death in its least disguised form—the very lava of perdition,—the blackest of all the angels of darkness,—the vicegerent to opprobrious hell,—the decoying, enslaving, treacherous, self-administered dose, which, by quicker or slower degrees, brings on the inevitable end. Whisky, of which he acquired an utter abhorrence, was not half so much his natural enemy as that accursed drug which he substituted. We see hard drinkers live long lives; but the opium-eater, while he has one foot on the enchanted earth, has another in the half-opened grave.

On the top of that gentle rising ground which gives a little picturesque character to the level land of the Carse of Gowrie, stands the claybuilt clachan of Leetown. There, in the winter of 1838, while the snow was on the ground, and at the mid hour of night, when the active life of a thousand working men had been hushed in the silence of sleep, and the only stirring things were the lowing winter winds, the hollow murmurings of the distant Tay, the occasional tramp of some belated traveller on the near public road, and the breathings of an imperilled but unconscious household, the released spirit of the second James Beattie went away on its trackless journey, leaving a home to be filled with sorrow and insanity, and a corpse that had stiffened unseen, to be carried to St. Madoes churchyard.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLES SPENCE.

> "The annals of the human race,
> Their ruin since the world began,
> Of him afford no other trace
> Than this—there lived a man!"
> JAMES MONTGOMERY.

OUR Scottish language abounds in diminutives, and Scotch people are exceedingly prone to the use of them. The name at the top of this article was little known in Perth, or on the Braes of the Carse, but that of "Charlie Spence" was a household word. This contemptuous way of speaking of him led me, as well as many others, to look upon Spence as a mere scribbler, from whom nothing could be learned; but my astonishment was great, when I met him at the house of the late Mr. Porter, of Moneydie, to find him an intelligent man, and no mean poet. Mr. Porter sang a song of Spence's with rapturous glee and oceans of laughter-tears. It was a history and imitation of a hive of bees. I remember only the first verse:—

Twa bumbees sat on a twig,
Twig a leerie, bum bizz,
Says, "Whaur will we gang our byke to big?"
Twig a leerie, bum bizz.

Spence was often urged to publish his poems in a collected form, but he persistently declined, and left many in manuscript behind him.

Perthshire men may be proud of the author of the following song,—it is quite equal to Tannahill;—would that it had fallen into the hands of R. A. Smith. The local allusions are beautifully managed, which is no easy matter, they so readily lead to mock heroics. The arrangement of rhymes is original, and sustained with a graceful flow which carries the reader along; and, although it is winter, Nature, in its stormy aspect, becomes charming and attractive from its summer associations .—

THE FAITHFUL SWAIN.

Keen blaws the blast on the high hill o' Gaston;
And thick through the Shandy wood drives the cauld snaw.
Yon boughs bending heavy, wi' bonny green ivy,
The pitiless tempest is tearing awa'.
The shepherds, affrighted, their flocks leave benighted;
All hungry and heartless they lag on the lea.
But caulder the blast shall blaw,
Thicker shall drive the snaw,
Ere it keep me awa',
Nanny, frae thee.

The broad moon arising the eastlands illuming.
The west was in saft starry beauty arrayed,
When we parted in tears where the heather was blooming,
And the craik's thrilling note sounded far o'er the mead.
My first love was true love. I'll ne'er cherish new love,
Though richer and fairer than her I may see.
And caulder the blast shall blaw,
Thicker shall drive the snaw,
Ere it keep me awa',
Nanny, frae thee.

By Annat's young wood, where the beech tree now withers,
Beneath the green pines where the wild birds repose,
And round the Raith-hill where the sunny wreath gathers,
Wi' her I ha'e pu'd the sweet gowan and rose.
Day-light is departing, my speed o' foot thwarting,
Far wrang I may wander while drift blinds my e'e;
But caulder the blast shall blaw,
Thicker shall drive the snaw,
Ere it keep me awa',
Nanny, frae thee.

Jacobitism and song seem to follow one another like cause and effect. The simple name of Charles Stuart excited for many years in Scotland the tendency to numbers; and it could not be expected that Charles Spence, who spent his life in the atmosphere of Fingask Castle,—where the so-called "Pretender" rested his weary head under the chivalrous protection of the devoted family,—could avoid being tinctured with a spirit which they—right or wrong—considered the very essence of loyalty and king-worship. The following song is in all respects a worthy contribution to the Jacobite Minstrelsy of the country; and, certainly, if the author had allowed it to find its way into print thirty years ago, it would have been set to music, and thus arrested the attention of the numerous lovers of these last echoes of the exiled Stuarts. So capricious is the public taste, that between 1830 and 1850 the love of Jacobite song was greater than it had been at any former period, owing no doubt in some degree to the fact that the fate of Chevalier's family had become a thing of memory, and in a degree somewhat greater to the singing of John Wilson.

THE PURSUIT OF PRINCE CHARLIE.

Bird of the budding bush,
  Sing soft and sparely,
See how the redcoats rush,
  Hunting Prince Charlie,
Beating the broomy fells
  Over and over,
Shaking the heather bells,
  Scaring the plover.

See by yon lonely cave,
  Wistfully weeping,
Over our Prince, the brave
  Flora watch keeping!
Lichen and liver grass,
  And the moss willow,
Curtain the narrow pass
  And her stone pillow.

Bird of the budding spray,
  Sing not so clearly,
Lest your shrill notes betray
  Him we lo'e dearly.
Sing not so late at night,
  Sing not so early,
Till they have ta'en their flight,
  Flora and Charlie.

The ballad of "The Hopeless Lover" is understood to be founded on circumstances, in real life, precisely corresponding with those detailed in the ballad, the hero being the much-esteemed retainer of a noble lord, and the heroine his lordship's daughter. The enslaved youth tells his tale, provides for his last obsequies, and squares his accounts with mournful precision :—

THE HOPELESS LOVER.

A lump o' gowd and a diamond bright
  Hang in my lady's hair;
But though they were mine I wad gie them a'
  For a kiss o' her cheek sae fair.
Her necklace is o' pearls white,
  And o' a silvery sheen;
But though they were mine I would gie them a'
  For a blink o' her bonny een.

My lady has twined a lonely bower
  Adown in yon green shaw;
But I manna gang near that lonely bower
  Till my lady be far awa.
I saw her pu' a bonny blue-bell,
  And place it in her breast;
And aye sinsyne the bonnie blue-bell
  Is the flower that I lo'e best.

She gifted me a piece o' gowd
  When the baron paid my fee;
And I will keep that piece o' gowd
  'Twill buy a coffin to me.
She gifted me a neckcloth, white
  As the bloom on the cherry tree;
It will swathe my head when I am dead,
  And mix in the mools wi' me.

It manna be said that I look up,
  In hope that she'll look down;
As soon a wight o' nae degree
  Might hope to win a crown.
But they may say my day o' life
  By love was closed at noon,
When I am laid in the cauld kirkyard,
  And the green grass grows aboon.

A small but rather well-engraved picture of Spence and his Jean, by Alexander Carse, is introduced, though for what reason I know not, at page 49 of "Knox's Topography of the Tay." It reminds me forcibly of the man. The loving pair are represented contemplating the beautiful little waterfall, "Linne Magray," and the following motto by Spence is written below :—

Up the heights of Baron Hill
  I've led my Jean with right goodwill,
And sat and seen the foamy spray
  Lash the dark rocks of Linne Magray.

There is much similarity of character between James Beattie and Charles Spence. They were neighbours and coevals. Both were masons to trade, and poets by practice—or inspiration if you will. Both tried the art of sculpture, and both lived the same wayward life, but there the parallel ends. Poetry of the highest class has been produced from the loom, from the plough, and from the hammer; because, being a matter of head, the hands are little engaged in it. But in the sister art of sculpture, it is impossible for any man, however talented, to succeed without immense manipulative practice. Hence, both Beattie and Spence failed entirely. The fact of being able to chip and dress stones for building a wall gives no evidence of faculty to practice in sculpture any more than painting a wall demonstrates ability to paint a landscape. Thom of Ayr, Greenshields of Lanark, Sinclair of Dumfries, and Anderson of Perth, were all clever men, but their sculptures are little calculated to gain on public opinion. Were I to put in a plea for any of their works, it would be in favour of Sinclair's "Old Mortality." The celebrity which accompanies their names arises principally from their being heralded as "self-taught geniuses." But the sculptor's art must not be treated so lightly. The faculty of giving to marble the grand, living, delicate outline,—the semblance of the soft, fleshy contour,—the swelling bosom,—the proudly knit limb,—the arm which would hold like a vice,—is the result of talent, combined with a careful study of the human organisation and a highly cultivated taste, and does not belong to the vocation of the self-taught genius.

If these stone images were destined to be as short-lived as the productions of the mediocre poets, there would be little to regret, but they will carry us into future generations as an unartistic age. One hundred years hence, no one will be able to compare James Duff with Lord Byron, but they may institute a comparison between William Thom and Gibson or Thorvalsden.

The subterranean story of the piper of Musselburgh is full of quaint absurdity. It illustrates very well the penalty of drunken bravado. The Edinburgh authorities ought to have found the piper when digging for foundation to the new law courts, for they must have dug "deep, deep doun" before they ventured to build so high, high up:—

THE LEGEND OF THE LOST PIPER.

From Musselburgh Sands to Edinboro' toun,
There's an eerie vault,—it is deep, deep doun,—
And a hunder years and more are flown
Since ane through that eerie vault has gone.

The drucken, daft laird o' Musselburgh toun,
Sent out for the bellman, and gae him a croun:
A hunder pun Scots I'll gie to the loun
Wha will gae through our vault to Edinboro' toun.

Then up spak a piper, a piper sae bauld,—
His courage was stout, though his body was auld,—
If a hunder pun Scots to me you pay doun,
I'll gae through your vault to Edinboro' toun.

But up spak the piper's carline so free,
"And wha will ye get, man, to gang wi' thee?"
"Ne'er a ane," quo the piper, "shall gang wi' me,
But my pipes and a pint of gude usquebagh."

They opened the vault, and the piper stept in;
He screwed up his pipes, and he made sic a din,
They were heard when he was far, far frae the toun;
They were heard when he was deep, deep doun.

But the vault winded east, and the vault winded wast,
And the hum o' his drone died awa' at last;
And the vault winded up, and the vault winded doun,
It was mony a mile to Edinboro' toun.

Thrice set the sun, and thrice he arose,
And another day began to close,
"O, weary fa' me," quo' the piper's wife,
"For a lonely widow I'll be a' my life."

But they heard him the Castle Hill below,
And they heard him down at the Netherbow;
And aye he played as they traced his route,
"I doubt, I doubt, I will ne'er get out."

"Dig down, dig down," quo' the piper's wife,
"And save my 'wildered husband's life;
He has lost the latch, the wayward lout,
I doubt, and I doubt, he will ne'er win out."

They digged deep down through mud and peat,
And they digged deep down through clay and slate,
And they digged deep down through moss and sand.
But the weary piper they never faund.

Yet an' a' be true that I hear folk say,
This piper ilk Yule night is heard to play,
And aye he plays as they trace his route,
"I doubt, and I doubt, I will ne'er win out!"

Men in the rural districts live more in communities than they do in populous towns, these communities being generally presided over by the lord of the manor; and it is impossible to conceive a happier state of rural society than that, in which tenant and laird go on together. Many of my readers will at once recognize the laird referred to in the following rent-day song, and be ready to concede every possible encomium that can be passed on him; but that does not derogate from its general application:—

SONG—OUR AIN LAIRD.

I'm happy, friends, with those to be,
Who's presence brings good company,
But happier far this night to see,
The tenant wi' his ain laird.

What fools to think in ages past
That wealth with lordly pride was cast;
The proper time has come at last,
When thus we meet our ain laird.

With other lairds we find nae faut,
Here's to them a' in reamin' swat;
They're very kind, but passing that,
The kindest is our ain laird.

And here's to our good worthy knight,
My choicest blessings on him light;
He always sought the poor man's right,
So doth his son, our ain laird.

Now, brethren, lest ye think me rude,
Nae mair I'll on your time intrude,
But this I crave ere I conclude,
Three full cheers for our ain laird.

May every one that yokes a plough,
On meadow, vale, or mountain's brow,
Have cause to sing, as we sing now,
"There's nae laird like our ain laird."

"Hip, hip, hurra! hurra! hurra!
Away all dool and care away;
And may we lang have cause to say,
"There's nae laird like our ain laird."

The following festive song is worthy of Robert Burns. Although written in direct opposition to "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," it partakes of the same spirit. Spence intimates his wish to "gang awa'," but he excuses himself by expressing his ardent desire to meet again, and the pain he feels at separation. How very true the apothegm, "Each thing is in its season bless'd":—

SONG.

It is the peaceful hour of rest,
  When sleep on weary mortals fa';
Each thing is in its season bless'd,
  And prudence bids us gang awa'.
Gude night upon the table stands,
  Come, fill it up to friendship's ca'.
True friendship now no more demands.
  Gude night, and joy be wi' ye a'.

Should fate my fondest wish deny,
  I ne'er again shall see ye a';
But never may the sacred tie,
  That binds this bosom brak in twa.
True hearts are few, and seldom meet,
  On this revolving earthly fa';
With tears the parting glass I greet.
  Good night, and joy be wi' ye a'.

Spence indulged in an imaginary night with the poets; and, after disposing of the greater portion of them, he thus describes the style in which Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott leave the party, and places them in contrast with his own humble departure. But first let us see how he despatches the Ettrick Shepherd :—

Your flocks, brother Hogg, are traversing the loan;
There's a purple-eyed cloud in the east;
Come! drain off your glass, and let us begone,
For enough is as good as a feast.

* * *

A carriage with valets stands dight at the door,
Great bard of Abydos, for thee;
For our bold Border minstrel the dapple greys wait,
But there's nobody waiting for me.
Alone I must hie to my home by the brake,
When the chilly wind sings at each pore,
But my Nannie will smile in her sleep and awake,
When I tirl at the latch of my door.

Like all other poets, Spence took a close view of current matters as well as matters of history. He has celebrated in song many touching incidents in the life of Prince Charles, and of course, could not overlook the retreat from Culloden, which has excited more genuine pathos from the sunken hearts of the Jacobites than any other portion of his moving story :—

CLOSE OF ALLAN'S LIFE AFTER CULLODEN.

He didna tear his thin grey hair,
Nor wait like other downcast mourner,
But held his peace, and hid his face,
And sought the shieling's benmost corner,
He turned his pale face to the wall,
His brow against the cauld stanes leaning,
And sat there till the dewy daw.
Nor friend, nor foe heard him complaining.

The morning beam shone on the grass,
And lit ilk rill, and lake, and river,
But Allan never sighed, "Alas!
Farewell, fair beam and world, for ever."
The barb of Death was on his heart,
His ear wi' inward noises twinkled,
A vital stream burst from his wounds,
And from his quivering lips it trinkled.

His day was gone, his night was come,
The long dark night that kens nae breaking—
His een were closed in silent sleep,
The sleep of death that kens nae waking.

They rowed him in his tartan plaid,
And bore him canny o'er the common,
And round the grave where he was laid,
They sat and sang his dirge till gloamin'.

Charles Spence, as a tradesman, enjoyed sufficient patronage in his own district to ensure his success in life, but poets are generally so erratic that they require the bridle to be more in action than the spur, and parties attempting to use the former often get trouble where they look for gratitude. Spence's case formed no exception to the rule; but whatever led to his rather unsettled life, it certainly was not want of heart, for it is impossible for any man to write such verses as he has left behind him, without having first felt them; and, however short-lived his memory may be, he was a true poet, and there are thousands of gilded volumes encumbering the bookshelves of the talented collector and the wealthy virtuoso, which do not contain a tithe of the merit that is lost in the scattered manuscripts of Charles Spence.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES SPENCE—*continued.*

> "There is a concert in the trees,
> There is a concert on the hill,
> There's melody in every breeze,
> And music in the murmuring rill."
> JOHN BETHUNE, OF NEWBURGH.

CHARLES SPENCE was born at Cockerhall, under the southern shoulder of Glendoick Hill, in the year 1779, when Robert Burns was in his twentieth year, and ten years before his voice was heard beyond the chime of the Kilmarnock bells; when Robert Fergusson had lain four years in his little-known grave in the Canongate Churchyard, and his poems had not journeyed so far north as the Wicks o' Baiglie; when Robert Hogg had just been *roupit* out of the farm of Ettrick Hall, and his son James had been fee'd for a whole year to Mr. Bryden, of Crosslea, to herd his cows, for the munificent reward of a ewe lamb and a pair of shoes; when Thomas Campbell, the bard of Hope, was being rocked in his little cradle at "The Bell o' the Brae," and within a hundred yards of that ancient college of which he was destined to be three times Lord Rector; when, a little farther down the street, Reid the baker's little boy Willie, was beginning to toddle about by the help of chairs and stools, he who was destined to become the literary ornament of his native city, and to hob-nob with Burns, and Lockhart, and Tannahill, and Motherwell, and to write the popular songs, "The Lea-rig," and "The Lass of Gowrie," and the most popular portion of "John Anderson, my Jo;" and when away up the valley of the Earn a few miles Carolina Oliphant was verging into that womanhood which was to be devoted to the refining of our national lyrics.

Previous to that year, so full of promise, there was not a Perthshire song worthy of naming except "The Birks of Invermay," by David Mallet, and "The Battle of Sheriffmuir," by the Rev. John Barclay, both Perthshire men. When Charles Spence became a young man he made a pilgrimage across the Tay to the top of Moredun Hill, that he might see "The Birks of Invermay," "The Sheriffmuir," and "The Mill of Dron," where lived the redoubted Hugh. Had he gone to the same place thirty years later, he could have seen twenty spots of Nature by that time celebrated in song.

The following romantic tale was related to me as if Spence had been the principal actor in it, but I was told long afterwards that, although Spence wrote the verses, the real hero was a young poetical friend of his. I prefer, however, giving the story as it was originally told to me, especially as no evil can arise to anyone by my adopting that course.

At Hansel Monday, 1802, Spence paid a visit to a relative who rented a farm at the north margin of the estate of Keillour, in the parish of Methven. He remained there a few days, and one evening there was a party of young people, eating, drinking, and dancing. Among others there was a handsome and very pretty girl, whose father was a farmer in the parish of Fowlis-Wester. Her dancing and conduct altogether, ensnared the young poet, although she was only sixteen years of age. During the day on which the party fell, it had snowed rather heavily, and at the hour of breaking up, being far into the morning, the ground was covered to a considerable depth. The poet's young friend had to walk home, a distance of rather more than two miles, and he readily volunteered to see her over the moor. When they left, the snow was still falling; but, bold in the buoyancy of youth and fresh mutual respect the two sallied forth on their midnight journey. Shortly after they had left the farm, the snow began to fall very heavily, accompained by a strong wind from the north-west, which blew in their faces in bitter gusts, driving them away from the scarcely discernible road. Before reaching the rough cart-way that led across the moor to Middlethird, they had to pass through the Moss of Tulchan; but the young lady, confident in her knowledge of the way, led on, until they landed in a perfect labyrinth of peat-forrets, with perpendicular breasts eight or ten feet high, and great black pools of stagnant water at the bottom of them. For a while they managed to wind through these dangerous pits; but the snowfall still increasing, they began to get seriously alarmed, more especially as they had lost all sense of the direction in which they ought to move, whether in going on, or finding their way back. In the midst of this terrible dilemma, they came upon the stump of an old moss oak, from the top of which the wind had blown the snow. Spence set down his fellow-traveller on the tree, and going forward a little to examine the *ground*, he found they were surrounded with these peat-hags, and was twice in imminent danger of tumbling into one of them. His young companion, by this time much alarmed, kept calling his name lest he might miss her. The night was not so dark but that he could see his danger by the contrast of the snow with the moss; but by the time he found his way back to the tree, the storm had become terrific, and the snow rose in immense wreaths, where it was interrupted in its furious course by the unequal surface of the moss. The poor girl clung to her guide in utter despair; and he saw they could not remain long in the position they were in, without being drifted up, so they shouted and halooed with all their power; but, instead of being heard, they could scarcely hear one another, so dense was the snowfall. In the midst of this dreadful trouble, and while death was staring them in the face, a thought ocurred to Spence, the sagacity of which reflects infinite credit on his name, as there can be no doubt that that thought saved the two young lives. He peered into the blast to see where the wind was keeping the snow thinnest, and, moving slowly forward about twelve yards, he stuck his stick into the snow, and, returning to the lady, took off his great-coat and wrapped it round her, buttoning the handle of her umbrella inside of it, as she had not strength to maintain it against the blast, saying—" Now, sit you still there, my dear girl, and do not despair, but keep up your heart for a great effort." Running out to his stick, he went round it, then back again, and round the tree, and on again to the stick, struggling heavily, and sometimes falling at first; but by-and-bye, his track began to appear; then he took the girl by the hand, and led her alongside of him, for the double purpose of keeping down the snow, and preventing her from succumbing to the cold, setting her down after a few journeys, to recover strength. For five hours did the poor distressed pair traverse that, now hard-beaten track, and at a moment when the young man felt "my last journey is at hand," in turning the tree, an object sprung up which he had not seen before in the shape of a saugh bush within a few yards of him. "Hurrah! hurrah! daylight!" cried he, and seizing his companion in his arms like a child, he carried her several times along his track, and then both sat down on the tree in a state of utter prostration. After a little rest, Spence scrambled to the saugh bush, and hoisted the umbrella; and, it being now clear and the snow abated, the signal was noticed at once, and the pair rescued and taken back to the farm. How they found their way into the spot where they were recovered, without meeting destruction, was looked upon at the time as nothing short of a miracle.

The poet naturally expected that this adventure would, if properly dealt with, hand his name, and that of his fair young friend, down to posterity; and he predicted it with confidence in the following fragment. But it appears the parents of the heroine were not disposed to laud his efforts, in saving their daughter, sufficiently to meet his expectations; and as she shortly afterwards left her father's house to live with her brother at Manchester, the snow adventure was forgotten.—

Dear lassie, we must part!
  That might our ruin prove,
Let others whisper in thy ear
  The tender tale of love.

Could I my thoughts command,
  I'd think no more of thee,
For doubly dear bought were our loves,
  If love dear bought can be.

Yet still I'll think of thee,
  And of the slow-winged hour,
When first we talked our hopeless love
  Beneath the snowy bower,
So full my bosom glows,
  Enraptured of thy name,
That thus I dream my rustic hand
  Can sweep the lyre of time.

Yes! I will sing of thee,
  So dear to me's the theme,
And distant years shall hear the lay,
  By mountain, vale, and stream,
Fair Scotia's nymphs and swains
  Shall sing thy every charm,
And woo each other with the strains
  That still my bosom warm.

The tree is not yet sown
  Whose seed shall plant the groves,
That, listening to our tender tale,
  Shall echo back our loves;
The acorn is not formed
  That yet shall grow a tree,
Whose branch shall lull to rest the babe
  That oft shall sing of thee.

Spence's father was a damask weaver by trade, but not in circumstances to give his son anything but a very common education—the mere elements of "the three R's." Charles was sent early in life to the mason trade, in which he became highly proficient; but the love of poetry was so predominant in his nature, that his trade was often left to occupy a very secondary position in his arduous life struggle. He fell deep in love with Jeanie Bruce (the Jeanie of Linn Magray), a young woman who lived at Evelick; but her mother forbade the banns. "What!" said she, "would you marry a poet?" Spence retaliated thus:—

Wow, Jeanie, wow, what ails ye now?
  To lightly me, an' a' that,
Although I choose to court the muse,
  Am I the worse for a' that?

Poor Jeanie died, and Spence eventually married Anne Bisset, cousin to George Porter, late Schoolmaster of Moneydie, which led to long years of intimacy between two genial and kindly spirits.

The manuscript of the following piece of clever proverbial philosophy I have found in the possession of a friend of the poet's, living at Rait. Another gentleman, living at the same place, tells me that, if Spence had been working away to the eastward, he often came running in to his house on his way home, asking him, in breathless haste, to take a note of some lines, lest they might escape him before he reached his own house:—

Turn thee, Jessie, hither turn,
Treat my love no more with scorn.
In this honeysuckle grove,
Let us sit and sing of love.
Let the rich make wealth their theme,
And their titled honours claim,
I nor wealth nor titles bring;
But I love, and love I sing.

Love can smile when Fortune frowns,—
Love the peasant's wishes crowns,—
Love is free to high and low,—
Few the pleasures that are so,
If love would come at riches' call,
Then the rich would have it all;
Love is more than wealth can buy,
Love is free to you and I.

Doats the miser on his treasure,
Can we envy him his pleasure?
Which the world's galling cares,
Hallows in his sordid ears.
Let the hero trump his fame,
Glory in a hostile name,
Wave his banners o'er the field.
Love has greater joys to yield.

Though thy friend in Eden were,
Would thy friend be happy there?
No; love whispers, wanting thee,
It no Eden were to me.
Turn ye, Jessie, hither turn,
Treat my love no more with scorn.
In this honeysuckle grove,
Let us sit and sing of love.

Away up in one of the gorges of the Sidlaw Hills, the little village of Rait nestles in the sun, and under the shelter of the woods of Fingask and Annat. It contains about fifty houses, and has a fine summer exposure. A silvery rivulet, rushing from the hills, zigzags down through the village, and away across the Carse of Gowrie to the Tay. This wonderfully privileged little place has a ruined church, a burying-ground, a poet's house, an hotel, a mill, a school, and a grocer's shop. For more than fifty years Charles Spence kept the place alive with his pen and his hammer. Like all men who lead an excited life, he never did anything by halves. During the Reform Bill agitation, he devoted himself to the cause of the "sovereign people," and gloried loudly in the triumph of Lord Ebrington; and when the Auld Kirk of Scotland fell into her convulsive throes, Charles was vomited out. He took a very different view of his own case himself, however, for he shook the dust off his feet, and denounced his old place of worship as "Babylon," and his colleagues for fifty years as "Black Erastians." Poetical squibs, oceans of Evangelism, came from Charles' pen, and his very "catchie" hammer smelt of non-intrusion.

These circumstances did not tend to forward what he was best fitted for—the cultivation of sentimental and lyric poetry. They had rather a tendency to idle gossiping and the nursing of a false pride—of all things the most destructive to that sentiment of universal sympathy which is the poet's sole reward. Hence we have to look to his earlier life for those efforts of his muse upon which his character as a poet has to be sustained.

Jeanie Bruce, them aid of "Linn Magray," is no doubt the heroine of the following beautiful song. Spence had been discarded by the young woman's mother, because he was a poet; and he was slow to believe that such an objection would be persevered in, which caused him to watch all her movements with painful jealousy:—

LOVE AND BEAUTY.

The night comes on wi' wind and rain,
  The burn roars loud and hollow;
Far to the west my Jeanie's gane,
  And fainly would I follow.
Should she another heart enslave,
  O, may nae tongue avow it;
And should she love for others have,
  O may I never trow it.

There's no' a flower like beauty's flower,
  The aid o' artists scorning;
There's no' a flower like beauty's flower,
  Salutes the fair-eyed morning.
There's no' a tie sae tight as love,
  Nae mortal can untie it;
There's no' a load so light can prove,
  Nor gold so heavy's buy it.

When fourscore years began to tell their tale on our poet's health, he felt the effects of an exhausted spirit. His constitution was excellent, but the wearing out of that physical and mental strength, so unsparingly drained during his long life, had soured his disposition, and he looked like a dying man long before the change came. The following lines indicate his too prophetic anticipations:—

Where is the strength that felled the oak,
  And pruned the mountain pine,
That broke the glebe, and turned the yoke,
  The strength of langsyne?

Our beards are silvered o'er wi' grey,
  Our eyes their lustre tyne;
Wi' feeble pace we plod the way
  We leapt along langsyne.

Must soft-eyed pity still deplore,
  And Hope her hold resign?
Will no revolving year restore
  The joys of langsyne?

The shades of eve descend, no morn
  Again for me shall shine;
Nor to this bosom can return
  The joys of langsyne.

Man's attachment to localities gains strength with his years, and when all his other sources of enjoyment are fled for ever, he creeps about the home of his early days with a love that never weakens. David, the prince of songsters, says:—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, ... if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." William Cowper's love for Olney in Bucks, became the ruling passion of his life. Joseph Turner, when he was eighty years of age, positively worshipped the River Thames, and built a tower on the top of his house at Chelsea, whence he could contemplate it morning, noon, and night. When the sun struck over the Solway into the Manse of Ruthwell, and Miss Craig rose to lower the window-blinds, Robert Burns, who was her visitor, said,—"Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention; but, oh, let him shine; he will not shine long for me!" Michael Bruce had his pillow raised, that he might see Loch Leven to the last day of his life. Charles Spence, who was then in his eighty-sixth year, and whose love was broad enough to encompass all that had passed before him during his prolonged life, felt with acuteness the announcement that he must leave his long-cherished home, and go to end his days amongst strangers. To bid a final adieu to the village, and the woods, and waterfalls about which he had said and sung so much, was to him a great trial.

I have now done with Charles Spence. The reason I have dwelt so long upon him is, that he is undoubtedly the best of the *unedited* poets who have passed through my hands; and, in parting with him, it affords me unequivocal pleasure to be able to state that, only yesterday, I met a gentleman who knew him well, and on whose opinion the most perfect confidence may be placed, and he says of him:—"He was a clever, warm-hearted man; and I invariably found him sober, obliging, and well-conducted." Charles Spence died in his son's house at Manchester, and the following memorial card was sent to his friends in Scotland:—

IN MEMORY OF
CHARLES SPENCE,
WHO DIED DECEMBER 14TH, 1869,
AGED 90 YEARS,
AND WAS THIS DAY INTERRED IN
SALFORD CEMETERY,
Manchester, Dec. 18th, 1869.

CHAPTER VII.

CAROLINA OLIPHANT, BARONESS NAIRNE.

> "A damsel with a dulcimer,
> In a vision once I saw;
> It was an Abyssinian maid,
> And on her dulcimer she played,
> Singing of Mount Abora."
> S. T. Coleridge.

There was a time when every movement within the walls of the old house of Gask was a protest against the reigning family of England. "The old laird," when he went to his prayers, spoke of the "King over the water." The very rooks were Jacobites, and the miles of straight fir trees that lined both sides of "The Street" looked like the spears of encountering hosts. The mind became intensely depressed when wandering in the summer gloamin' away down through that wood of great, gaunt, old fir trees, mouldy with age, and branchless for many feet, with the ever-busy crows away up in their summits, cawing and flitting about like so many evil spirits, the distant melancholy cooing of the wood-pigeon, and the still more distant hush of the noble Earn, as it glided through the valley. How startling was the sound of a human voice! The soft trippings of a poor timid hare springing past, thickened the breath, and you were made painfully conscious of your own littleness by occasional glimpses of the far, far away blue firmament, with thin, fleecy, white clouds careering across it, while all around were endless groups of vertical wooden pillars, with the light twinkling through them, and their diminishing forms leading the eye away into vistas of interminable depth. How much was the gloom of all this increased when, in your wanderings, you stumbled on an old roofless church, rotting away below dripping trees, and surrounded by tenantless graves, with here and there a moss-covered stone carved in cross-bones, and skulls grinning at you with their "orbless eyes," and the never-absent *memento mori;* the feelings of the living expressed "in loving remembrance," which are much more of verity than unmeasured extolling of the dead.

Emerging from this woody labyrinth, and crossing the Cairney Burn, the hoary old house of Gask presented itself, nestling on the top of a gentle eminence, and surrounded by groups and avenues of oak, elm, sweet chesnut, and yew. The mansion was very old and irregularly built, having been added to, from time to time, as the circumstances and taste of successive occupants dictated. Angles, crow-steps, pinnacled staircases, and long chimneys, were its prevailing characteristics. It had a beautiful southern exposure, which imparted a degree of cheerfulness to its otherwise sombre aspect; while away in front lay the valley of the Earn, with its long tract of champaign country, bordered by Craigrossie and the sunless Ecclesiamagirdle.

Here, in 1744, lived Laurence Oliphant; while away ten miles northward, Lord William Murray, brother to the Duke of Athole, lived in the grand mansion of Nairne, on the banks of the little River Orde. Oliphant and Murray had fought side by side, at Sheriffmuir; and after peace was restored, and Murray was confirmed in the possession of the titles and estates of Nairne, in virtue of his wife, he gave his daughter Amelia in marriage to his friend, Oliphant of Gask, and her younger sisters to Viscount Strathallan and Duncan Robertson of Strowan, and they became respectively known as Lady Gask, Lady Strathallan, and Lady Strowan. In 1745, when Charles Stuart arrived at Nairne House on his way to the south, Oliphant the younger, Lord Nairne's nephew, was amongst his retainers; while his father was governor of Perth, the rallying-place of Stuart's army. Lord Nairne's son and both the Oliphants were at Culloden; and after that disastrous defeat they were all driven into exile. Wandering over the Continent for ten years, the three proscribed families met at Versailles, where, in 1755, Laurence Oliphant the younger married his cousin, the amiable and beautiful daughter of Duncan Robertson of Strowan; and eight years afterwards the Oliphants, father and son, were allowed to return to Gask, the confiscated estate having been purchased for them from the Government by their friends at home. The father and son set themselves to the improvement of their now dilapidated home, and the re-forming of their scattered connection,—adhering to the cause of the exiled Stuarts with a tenacity which no cajoling could slacken, and from which neither swerved for an hour, to the last day of his life. Amidst all this Jacobitism and family discomfiture, when the 16th day of August, 1766, arrived, Mrs. Oliphant presented the young laird with a daughter, the illustrious lady whose name graces the head of this page. Then began a career which, in its long duration, was unrestrainedly devoted to the cause of humanity, and to the cultivation of all the gentler faculties which adorn the female character.

As a fresh recognition of Prince Charles, she was baptised Carolina, which, by her brothers and sisters, was often diminished to Carlie; and during her infant years she imbibed, amidst the society and scenery I have been describing, that love of nature and of song which became so much the business of her maturer years. Fit nursery for the young Parnassian! Fit temple of the Muses! Fit surroundings for developing a nature that was destined to blaze in the literary horizon as a star of the first magnitude! Nay, more! Fit *Alma Mater* to a young student, who, in the battle of life, had to meet and soothe, a greater number of death-bed scenes than generally fall to the lot of our common humanity.

Mrs. Oliphant, after much suffering from delicate health, died when Carolina was in her eighth year; but her father and grandmother attended well to her education, and she became an apt scholar. When opportunity occurred, she disappeared among the trees with her book; and when the evening concerts were held in grandmother's room, Carolina was the Coryphea. So handsome was she, so lithe of limb, so buoyant of heart, that she danced like Terpsichore. That joyous art she claimed as the cherished privilege of all poetesses. Being at a party where lady-partners were in deficiency, she drove home, took her sister from her bed, and after dressing her, carried her off to the dance. She was not however quite so enthusiastic as the talented, charming Susan Blamire, who meeting an itinerant piper while riding by herself, in a lane in Cumberland, and, desiring him to "play a spring," could not control the irrepressible nature, but, leaping from the saddle, danced for a quarter of an hour, "in pure blytheness, because the world was fair, and she was young," and this was *la grande passion.*

In one of her published letters, Carolina Oliphant says: "I do think fine music engrosses all the senses, and leaves not one faculty of the mind unemployed;" and the parents, in former times, while ransacking the Peninsula in search of health, write home, "We hope you keep the bairnies in mind of their little song after dinner, when they get their glass. Few here know anything about Scotch reels." Then the grandmother writes back: "The three girls come on bravely. I saw them perform at their dancing yesterday really very well; Carolina like a fine lady in miniature." Niel Gow approved of Carolina's dancing; and when the great fiddler afterwards saw her on the floor at the county balls, he says, "He *drew* his bow."

Happy, jubilant youth forbids the restriction of innocent enjoyment. No gipsy of Old Spain was ever more attached to her grotesque "Fandango" than these two maidens were to their "Shantruse," their "Hulachan," and "Highland Fling." They rejoiced in them, not only on their own pleasure-giving account, but as the attendants of social re-union, and the prologue to many gallant passages-of-arms in the arena of love. Miss Oliphant writes, spiritedly:—

> Ah! weel dune now! there's auld Sir John,
> Who aye maun lead the dancin' on.

Susan Blamire put no value on the dandelions and harebells that grew on the roadside; she tripped over them, and they kissed the soles of her feet, whispering, "And ye shall walk in silk attire," and "When silent Time, wi' lightly foot." That queen of dancers, Maggie Lauder, made no difficulty about the rough road to Fife; she was light of foot and well willed. "Weel dune," quoth he! "Play up!" quo' she! Susan Blamire let her pony take its way; she was engaged; and the Strathearn poetess, in the exuberance of her spirits, says:—

> But ne'er ye fash, gang through the reel—
> The country dance, ye dance sae weel;
> An' ne'er let waltz or dull quadrille,
> Spoil our county meeting.

Carolina Oliphant was Nature's own songstress. Not that she was born into the world carrying her full budget of songs ready for utterance; but she had the faculty of mind fitted for courting the muse, and did not shrink from the lesson that there is no royal road to fame, and that the lofty aspirant who soars away from what he has seen and felt will have no success until he comes back to Nature, pure and simple—a severe and often much-protracted ordeal, but one through which every true poet has to come. It is very easy to speak big; but it takes a deal of education to be able to "sing sma'." Robert Lloyd says:—

> With easy verse most bards are smitten,
> Because they think it's easy written;
> Whereas the easier it appears,
> The greater marks of care it wears.

The era of Scottish Jacobitism dates from the abdication of the seventh James, but its literature progressed slowly until the arrival of Prince Charles. His handsome face, gallant bearing, and unfortunate career, excited the national sympathies; and songs, of a tendency to encourage the young adventurer in his hazardous enterprise, began to well up from the hearts of the people in every corner of the land. They were for many years only wafted from mouth to mouth, however; and although "The Lass of Albany," by Robert Burns, was written in 1787, it was not published amongst his collected works till 1840. The whole of Carolina Oliphant's (fourteen) Jacobite songs were written and sung with enthusiasm many years before they found their way into print. It was during the reign of George the Fourth, and after he had extended the right hand of forgiveness to the attainted nobles, while resident at Holyrood House, that their unrestrained publication began, and then a perfect flood of them came from the press, hers among the rest. To Miss Oliphant belongs the merit of inaugurating what is emphatically called "The Jacobite Minstrelsy of Scotland," and it is difficult to conceive a more enviable position than that of being at the head of a literature that has evoked so much feeling from the whole national heart. Of her three songs announcing the Prince's arrival, I insert the least known one:—

CHARLIE'S LANDING.

Air—"*Wae's me for Prince Charlie.*"

There cam' a wee boatie owre the sea,
  Wi' the winds an' waves it strove sairlie;
But oh! it brought great joy to me,
  For wha was there but Prince Charlie.

The wind was hie, and unco' chill,
  An' a' things luiket barely;
But oh! we cam' wi' right good-will,
  To welcome bonnie Charlie.

Wae's me, puir lad, ye're thinly clad,
  The waves yere fair hair weeting;
We'll row ye in a tartan plaid,
  An' gie ye Scotland's greeting.

Tho' wild an' bleak the prospect round,
  We'll cheer yere heart, dear Charlie;
Ye're landed now on Scottish ground,
  Wi' them wha lo'e ye dearly.

O, lang we've prayed to see this day;
  True hearts they maist were breaking;
Now clouds an' storms will flee away,
  Young Hope again is waking.

We'll sound the gathering lang an' loud,
  Yere friends will greet ye fairlie
Tho' now they're few, their hearts are true;
  They'll live or die for Charlie.

The finest of her residential songs refers to the Prince's stay at Auchenbowie, during the siege of Stirling, both of which places, in relation to Gask, are "owre the hills ayont Dunblane:"—

HE'S OWRE THE HILLS THAT I LO'E WEEL.

He's owre the hills that I lo'e weel,
He's owre the hills we daurna name;
He's owre the hills ayont Dunblane,
Wha soon will get his welcome hame.

My faither's gane to fecht for him,
My brithers winna bide at hame;
My mither greets an' prays for them,
An' 'deed she thinks they're no' to blame.
He's owre the hills, &c.

The Whigs may scoff, the Whigs may jeer,
But ah! that love maun be sincere,
Which still keeps true whate'er betide,
An' for his sake leaves a' beside.
He's owre the hills, &c.

His right these hills, his right these plains;
O'er Hieland hearts he reigns secure,
What lads e'er did our lads will do;
Were I a lad I'd follow him too.
He's owre the hills, &c.

Sae noble a look, sae princely an air,
Sae gallant and bold, sae young and sae fair;
Oh! did ye but see him, ye'd do as we've done;
Hear him but ance to his standard you'll run.
He's owre the hills, &c.

And now, that the much-esteemed hero is away, she reiterates:—

WILL YE NO' COME BACK AGAIN?

Bonnie Charlie's now awa',
Safely owre the friendly main;
Mony a heart will break in twa
Should he ne'er come back again.
Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no' come back again.

Ye trusted in your Hieland men,
They trusted you, dear Charlie;
They kent you hiding in the glen,
Your cleadin' was but barely.
Will ye no', &c.

English bribes were a' in vain,
An e'en tho' puirer we may be;
Siller canna buy the heart
That beats aye for thine and thee.
Will ye no', &c.

We watched thee in the gloamin' hour,
We watched thee in the morning grey;
Tho' thirty thousand pounds they'd gi'e,
Oh! there was nane that would betray.
Will ye no', &c.

Sweet's the laverock's note and lang,
Lilting wildly up the glen;
But aye to me he sings ae sang,—
Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Will ye no' come back again?
Better lo'ed ye canna be,
Will ye no' come back again?

It would be somewhat hard to say which of the many mournful songs written on Prince Charles' wanderings and final departure, is the most pathetic. It undoubtedly lies with this last of Miss Oliphant's, or Hogg's "Far over yon hills of the heather so green," or William Glen's "Wae's me for Prince Charlie." Miss Oliphant's having been written thirty years before either of the other two, is an argument in its favour. The three latest of the Hanoverian monarchs have, in their turn, given testimony to the healthful pathos of those national lyrics:—George the Fourth, to Nathaniel Gow, at Edinburgh; William the Fourth, to John Wilson, in London; and Victoria the First, to the same gentleman, at Taymouth Castle. No doubt the family are now so firmly seated on the throne that nothing need disturb them. Besides, these Jacobite songs are full of loyalty, only giving it a wrong destination, and wide as the poles from the songs which would be sung by the extreme politicians of the present time, if they could sing. All Carolina Oliphant's surroundings were so thoroughly loyal to him whom her family deemed their "rightfu', lawfu' King," that it was quite impossible for her to give vent to her poetical aspirations, so long as she lived in her father's house, without deploring the course of events which led to the immolation of the Stuarts.

In 1790 the *roof-tree* of the old house of Gask began to tremble under a forecast of approaching evil—a fresh access of trouble was impending. The poetess, now a blooming young woman, had for fourteen years nursed and solaced her remaining parent, and toward the end her solicitude became extreme. Her father, who for many years had suffered from the effects of his exhausting early life, began to show symptoms that that end was near at hand. She who had chanted the requiem of her grandfather, "The auld laird." saw too conclusive evidence that the time was not far away when she would be called upon to tune her harp for consecrating the manes of a nearer and, naturally, more cherished generation. The mood was beginning to change,—the first dancing days were nearly over,—the troubles of life began to thicken,—the sensitive heart began to take impression from the prospect of family change,—and the woods of Gask and the Cairney Burn were left to sing their own song. The "King over the water" had been dead for two years, and now the "Jacobite of the Jacobites" was about to follow. The believer in the Stuarts,—he who had sacrificed his home and his health for them, and braved the caprice of his lawful sovereign that they, even in his own feelings—for the allegiance was gone,—might undergo no depreciation of rank at his hand or in his day,—took to his bed, and, on the first day of January, 1792, bade adieu to a world where he had seen and suffered much, leaving his mark on "Prestonpans," on "Falkirk," and on "Culloden," and trusting that the devotion which had been so little felt in his own home-land might be more fully recognised in the Land o' the Leal.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAROLINA OLIPHANT, BARONESS NAIRNE—*continued.*

"Oh, woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light, quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"
Sir Walter Scott.

The Jacobite literature of Scotland consists mainly of a series of bewailings over the discomfiture of an individual, a flood of tears shed over the history and memory of an unfortunate Prince. Its first effort was to touch the heart. Had the feeling which engendered it been in any degree akin to that which engendered the French Revolution, it would have made itself known in tales of massacre and historical recrimination. But its leading characteristics are sorrow and regret; it seldom condescends to call in question the prudence of the steps taken by the existing authorities. "Charlie is my darling," was the simple shibboleth of the mountains and glens of Scotland, and its justification in the human heart was not far to seek.

But I have done with Miss Oliphant as a Jacobite song-writer, and now turn to her character as a Scottish poetess.

When she merged into womanhood her beauty and accomplishments were much spoken of, and she was occasionally termed "The White Rose of Gask," in allusion no doubt to her Jacobite tendencies; but eventually she was known as "The Flower of Strathearn." I am not able to speak of her in her youth, but in middle life she was an elegant and highly-refined woman, conscious of her blue blood, lofty yet condescending. She had lustrous eyes, a nose slightly aquiline, lips firm in texture and highly expressive. Altogether, she had a look of great culture, but somewhat sad in later life. During the early years of the century shew as understood, in Middle Strathearn, to be a poetess, notwithstanding the anxious care she took to conceal the fact; but it was no more dreamed that she had composed "The Land o' the Leal" than that she had written the "Letters of Junius." It must have been about the year 1787 that she first began seriously to cultivate the art of poetry. A singular year that in Perthshire! It seemed under the action of an atmospheric charm; for, while our own poetess was tripping through the woods of Gask, chanting the first framework of "The Laird o' Cockpen," Robert Burns was living with Mr. Ramsay at Ochtertyre, a few miles west, and composing the song on Jenny Cruikshanks, "A rosebud by my early walk;" while a few miles farther west still, Susan Blamire was living with her sister, Mrs. Graham of Duchray, and composing the exquisite ballad, "What ails this heart o' mine?" It was this year that Carolina Oliphant induced her brother to subscribe to Creech's edition of Burns' works. In the subscription list he is styled "Laurence Oliphant, jun., of Gask, Esq."

The Rev. Wm. Erskine, Episcopal minister of Muthill, had a son, William, and a daughter, Mary Anne, who lived on terms of intimacy with Laurence Oliphant of Gask and his sister Carolina. William Erskine studied for the bar, and when he had been admitted, his sister Mary Anne went to Edinburgh to keep house with him. Close brotherhood arose between Erskine and two young advocates, Walter Scott and Archibald Colquhoun, both of whom became suitors for his sister's hand. The latter gentleman won the fair lady, but the disappointment to the former did not mar the intimacy; it endured for life. Mr. Colquhoun became afterwards Sheriff of Perthshire, and eventually Lord Advocate and Lord-Clerk-Register, Walter Scott became Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and author of "Marmion" and "Waverley." William Erskine was elevated to the bench, under the title of Lord Kinnedder. His end was very melahcholy, but as I do not remember ever seeing his story in print, I forbear narrating it here, though many people will remember it. When Mrs. Colquhoun had been a year married she gave birth to a daughter, who did not live quite twelve months. Miss Oliphant, who was then living with her brother's family at Durham, sent a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Colquhoun, enclosing "The Land o' the Leal." There is no evidence to show that the song was written to suit the circumstances of the lady to whom it was first sent; indeed, the authoress states in after life, "I wrote it merely because I liked the air so much, and I put these words to it, never fearing questions as to the authorship." It had been taken from the repositories of the authoress, and sent to Mrs. Colquhoun as a hymn of condolence, with strict injunctions of secrecy respecting its origin.

Thus slipped into the world one of the most pathetic and popular lyrics of modern times, and within four years it had found its way into every corner of Scotland. It would not hide, and the changing of the name from John to Jean naturally arose from its merely oral circulation, and the want of authorities respecting it. Unauthorised copies were printed about the year 1800, when it was generally attributed to Robert Burns.

In the summer of 1805, Miss Oliphant, while riding from Gask to Inchbrakie, unwittingly trotted into the midst of Craigmuir market. Tents, sweetie-stands, lads and lasses, mothers and bairns, cattle and horses, all were there. Meg Bruce, who drove a large trade as a confectioner and bookseller, curtsied very low to "my lady's" footman, and sued for a transaction. Meg's stock consisted of a basket of sweeties, gingerbread, and blacksugar, temptingly arranged; and another of current literature, in the bottom of which were nicely laid out "Loudon Tam," "John Cheap, the Chapman," "Paddy from Cork," "The Merry and Diverting Exploits of George Buchanan, commonly called the King's Fool"; while over the sides were hung the ballad of "The Duke of Gordon's Three Daughters," "Chevy Chase," "Edom O'Gordon," and other less innocent broadsides, all printed on whitey-brown paper by Peter Johnston, of Falkirk. Miss Oliphant made a small investment in Meg's literature; and we are told, on high authority, that this suggested to her susceptible mind the refining of our home minstrelsy—a process which became one of the leading occupations of her after life.

So matchless was the self-denial of this generous lady, that she passed through villages and entered cottages in her own immediate neighbourhood, where the homely inmates were singing with enthusiasm "The Land o' the Leal" with the terminal "Jean," without in one known case attempting to put them right. They, not unreasonably, concluded that from Robert Burns only could so much divine pathos come, little conceiving that they could at any time sing the song to its author. I have heard it sung many a time and oft within a few hundred yards of the place where it was composed, and within ten years of the date of its composition, yet I never heard "John" as the terminal word until after the authorised publication of "Lady Nairne's Songs." No doubt, besides her innate modesty, the fact that she was herself altering and amending the popular songs of other authors may have weighed with her in claiming for her own no exclusive right of absolute dictation. Besides, she may have felt that her grand secret was in jeopardy; for before she left Gask in 1807, Christian Gray, the blind poetess of Aberdalgie, had composed and published an answer to "The Land o' the Leal," which shows that, although the secret may have remained inviolate, the popularity of the song became suspiciously intense at the authoress's very door.

"The Ploughman" was well understood to have emanated from the house of Gask, because, when the laird first sang it at a feast to his tenants and retainers, he announced that he had "got it from the author." It was afterwards sung over all the neighbourhood, more especially about Gask. I remember having heard it sung in the year 1812, by Miss Annie Stobie, whose father, James Stobie, possessed the farm of Drumend, on the estate of Gask, and she freely told me it was written by Miss Oliphant. In some of the printed copies the spelling of the word "ploughman" is, with consummate absurdity, altered to "pleughman." If the penultimate syllables throughout the song were similar to the Scotch word, "heugh," the necessity would be obvious; but where they are "do," "few," "new," and "renew," the error must be equally obvious. Moreover, at no time during Lady Nairne's residence in Strathearn was the term "ploughman" pronounced "pleughman," but "ploughman," as at present.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

There's high and low, there's rich and poor,
There's trades and crafts enow, man;
But east and west his trade's the best,
That kens to guide the plough, man.

Then come, weel speed the ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman;
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman.

His dreams are sweet upon his bed,
His cares are light and few, man;
His mother's blessing's on his head;
That tents her weel, the ploughman.
Then come, weel speed, &c.

The lark sae sweet, that starts to meet
The morning fresh and new, man;
Blithe tho' she be, as blithe is he,
That sings as sweet, the ploughman.
Then come, weel speed, &c.

Then fresh and gay at dawn of day,
Their labours they renew, man;
Heaven bless the seed and bless the soil,
And Heaven bless the ploughman.
Then come, weel speed, &c.

The ode to Cairney Burn is a heartfelt flow of retrospective feeling. It contains no poetical imagery, but the simple narrative of early childhood's doings, clothed in the language of poetry. The young lady had not far to go for the idea which Alfred Tennyson has set in gold; she had only to step down a little bank, and there she saw the brook "go on for ever." And in the second half-verse she expresses it in terms little inferior to those of the great Laureate :—

Oh, Cairney Burn, sweet Cairney Burn,
Thou makest many a winding turn;
How sweet thy murmurings to hear,
Like plaintive music to mine ear!
Though things sair changed we mourn to see,
Yet, burnie, there's nae change in thee;
Still, still thy waters clear rin on,
'Mang woody brae and mossy stone.

Oh, Cairney Burn, sweet Cairney Burn,
Half-blithe, half-wae, to thee I turn;
But where are they wha sat wi' me!
Sae pleased aneath thy shady tree?
Oh! where are they whase wee bit feet
Wad wade delighted through the weet?
Scrambling up 'mang thorns and beech,
The nits and brambles a' to reach.

* * * *

Oh, Cairney Burn, sweet Cairney Burn,
Still, still to thee my heart doth turn,
Wider, deeper streams I see,

But nane sae sweet, sae dear to me,
Here first we heard the cuckoo sing,
With all the melody of Spring;
Here our footsteps first were seen,
Strewing flowers upon the green.

Carolina Oliphant resembled William Cowper in the extreme flights of her muse. She is pathetic and humorous by turns. The authoress of the "only perfect Scottish hymn," "The Land o' the Leal," is also the authoress of the doings of that terrible Border priest, "John Tod," whose very name sent the bairns to their beds in a hurry; and her versatility is copiously illustrated in the quaint story of "The Twa Doos," and the inimitable "County Meeting":—

THE TWA DOOS.

There were twa doos sat in a dookit,
Twa wise-like birds, and round they luiket;
An' says the ane unto the ither,
"What do ye see, my gude brither?"

"I see some pickles o' gude strae,
An' wheat, some fule has thrown away;
For a rainy day they should be boukit,"
Sae down they flew frae aff their dookit.

The snaw will come and cour the grund,
Nae grains o' wheat will then be fund;
They pickt a' up, an' a' were boukit,
Then round an' round again they luiket.

O, lang he thocht an' lang he luiket,
An' aye his wise-like head he shook it;
"I see, I see what ne'er should be,
I see what's seen by mair than me,

"Waes me, there's thochtless lang Tam Grey,
Aye spendin' what he's no to pay;
In wedlock to a taupie hookit,
He's ta'en a doo, but has nae dookit.

"When we were young, it was nae sae;
Nae rummulgumshion folk now ha'e;
What good for them can e'er be luiket
When folk tak' doos that hae nae dookit?"

These two worldly-wise pigeons seem to have been comfortable enough themselves, and are quite in a position to sneer at the alleged improvidence of their fellow-pigeons. They take great merit for their prudence in boukin' the grains o' wheat, claiming them for their own special use at the same time.

Miss Oliphant had been long under a matrimonial engagement to her cousin, Major Nairne, but his circumstances in life did not warrant the fulfilment of that engagement by marriage until the summer of 1806, when he was appointed Inspector of Barracks in Scotland, with the rank of Brevet-Major. The marriage took place on the 2nd of June, and the exigencies of the new appointment required Major Nairne's permanent residence in Edinburgh.

The thought of leaving Gask sank deeply into the heart of the fair poetess. She must have felt how much her life there had been affected by the beauty of the surrounding country, and how her character had received its first impressions from the many cherished associates she was now about to leave behind her. No more thoughtful studyings of the green Ochils, with their crags and glens! no more glimpses of the blue Lomonds, with their hazy outlines! no more of the wimpling Cairney Burn, or the roaring Earn! Farewell to all the family retainers, with their ever-ready smile and proffered services! Farewell to the home and the burial-place of her forefathers! Woods, lawn, and valley, farewell!

ADIEU TO STRATHEARN.

Strathearn! oh, how shall I quit thy sweet groves?
  How bid thee a long, oh, an endless adieu?
Sad memory over such happiness roves
  As not Hope's own magic can ever renew.

Sweet scene of my childhood, delight of my youth,
  Thy far-winding waters no more I must see;
Thy high-waving bowers, thy gay woodland flowers,
  They wave now, they bloom now, no longer for me.

CHAPTER IX.

CAROLINA OLIPHANT, BARONESS NAIRNE.—*continued.*

> "Calm on the bosom of thy God,
> Fair spirit! rest thee now!
> Even while with us thy footsteps trode,
> His seal was on thy brow.
> Dust to its narrow house beneath!
> Soul to its place on high!
> They that have seen thy look in death,
> No more may fear to die."
> FELICIA HEMANS.

DURING the last four centuries, the influence and inherent tyranny of Rome have acted banefully on the government and history of Scotland; first, by her own direct cruelties; and second, by the bloodshed involved in casting off her allegiance. All the attainders of nobles, all the rooting out of families, all the tearing down of castles, the skulking in glens and caves of the mountains, can be traced to the authority Rome had usurped over a portion of her too credulous community. Yet so unbending was the loyalty of the Oliphants and the Nairnes, that the question of creed exercised little influence over it. The Protestant Jacobites themselves were no strangers to the avowed dislike Charles Stuart had to everything calculated to weaken the Roman power in Scotland. Still they adhered to their infatuation; and, sinking all other differences, sacrificed their health and their homes to promote the reinstatement of a dynasty which had hitherto proved obnoxious to the best interests of their country.

William Murray Nairne and Carolina Oliphant were the great-grandchildren of William, second Lord Nairne; and when they were wedded they could not claim an acre of the very fine estate which belonged to their great grandfather. But they were so far reconciled to their position by a painful knowledge of the fact, that Charles Stuart, the grandson of James, King of England, for whom they suffered, had been bereft of crown and home, and sent wandering over the face of the earth with a worse mark on him than that put on Cain the murderer, because any one finding him could kill him, whereas any one killing Cain was to yield sevenfold retribution.

Before leaving Gask, Carolina Nairne solaced her home-fevered spirit by composing the following beautiful ode, resonant with echoes from every beloved object that meets the eye and charms the ear about the place of her birth:—

TO THE BANKS OF THE EARN.

Fair shone the rising sky
The dewdrops clad wi' many a dye,
Larks lilting pibrochs high
To welcome day's returning.
The spreading hills, the shading trees,
High waving in the morning breeze,
The wee Scots rose that softly blows,
Sweet Earn's vale adorning.

Flow on, sweet Earn, row on, sweet Earn,
Joy to a' thy bonny braes!
Spring's sweet buds aye first do blow
Where thy winding waters flow.
Through thy banks, which wild flowers border,
Freely wind and proudly flow,
Where Wallace wight fought for the right,
And gallant Grahams are lying low.

O, Scotland! nurse o' mony a name
Revered for worth, renowned in fame,
Let never foes tell to thy shame
Gane is thy ancient loyalty;
But still the true-born warlike band
That guards thy high unconquered land,
As did their sires, join hand in hand
To fight for law and royalty.

Early one morning, immediately before her departure, she was found, dissolved in tears, sitting under the pear tree which grew against the south front of the old house. The tree is still there, but quite dead, and smothered up with ivy and white clematis, through which the windows and lettered escutcheons of the old building peep out, giving the place a highly sepulchral aspect. She thus sings of it:—

Still flourishing, the auld pear tree
The bairnies liked to see;
And, oh! how often did they speir
When ripe they a' wad be?

The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
  Aye rinnin' here and there,
The merry shout—oh! whiles we greet
  To think we'll hear nae mair!

For they are a' wide scattered now,
  Some to the Indies gane;
And ane, alas! to her lang hame:
  Not here we'll meet again.
The kirkyard, the kirkyard!
  Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Sheltered by the holly's shade
  And the dark sombre yew.

After settling at Edinburgh, Major and Mrs. Nairne lived as much in retirement as his official duties would permit. Mrs. Nairne became intimate with some of the female literati of the Modern Athens, to one of whom she communicated the secret of her authorship, under reiterated injunctions of secrecy. She was as far forward in every work of charity and pious benevolence as her circumstances would afford. A notable instance of this occurred in 1821. Nathaniel Gow, from being wealthy, fell suddenly into poverty, and being a man of the highest respectability, the public bestirred themselves, and established an annual ball for his benefit, which yielded a great deal of money. Mrs. Nairne sent him "Caller Herrin'," which he set to music, and it rose at once into popularity, yielding a handsome return to the composer. The Misses Smith, who sang this beautiful ballad so charmingly, made an emendation on the last line of the chorus which took immensely. For "New drawn frae the Forth," they sang, "Just new come frae Dunbar."

The following elegiac verses are not only beautiful in themselves, but they will illustrate to all those who are familiar with the fine old air, "The muckin' o' Geordie's byre," the facility which the authoress possessed of adapting words to an air. The very ring of the air breathes through every line:—

HE'S LIFELESS AMANG THE RUDE BILLOWS.

He's lifeless amang the rude billows,
  My tears and my sighs are in vain;
The heart that beat high for his Jeanie
  Will ne'er beat for mortal again!
My lane now I am i' the warld,
  And the daylight is grievous to me;
The laddie that lo'ed me sae dearly
  Lies cauld in the deeps o' the sea!

Ye tempests, sae boisterously raging,
  Rage on as ye list, or be still;
This heart ye sae aften ha'e sickened
  Is nae mair the sport o' yere will.
Now heartless, I hope not—I fear not—
  High heaven ha'e pity on me!
My soul, though dismayed and distracted,
  Yet bends to thy awful decree!

However much the Oliphants of Gask gave way to the Roman proclivities of the Chevalier and his son, for the last hundred years they have been intensely Protestant. Lady Nairne felt deeply the disturbance which befell the Church of Scotland in 1842, and her tendencies were in favour of the protesting party. The Covenanters of 1688 too, had her full sympathy, and she has written more than one series of verses lamenting their cruel fate. One is entitled—

THE PENTLAND HILLS.

Oh! faithless King, hast thou forgot
  Who gave to thee thy crown?
Hast thou forgot thy solemn oath,
  At Holyrood and Scone?
Oh! fierce Dalziel! thy ruthless rage
  Wrought langsome misery.
What Scottish heart could ever gi'e
  A benison to thee?

Oh! Claverhouse! fell Claverhouse!
  Thou brave but cruel Graham!
Dark deeds like thine will last for aye—
  Linked wi' thy blighted name.
Oh! Pentland hills, sae fair and green
  When in the sunrise gleaming,
Or in the pensive, gloamin' hour
  Aneath the moonbeams streaming.

I love to wander *there* my lane,
  Wi' sad and sacred feeling,
While hallowed memories wake the tear
  In waefu' eye soft stealing.
I love the wild sequestered glen,
  The bonny wimplin' burn;
For Scotland's brave and martyr'd men
  Still does it seem to mourn.

When Charles Mackay first introduced "The Laird o' Cockpen" to the stage in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," he adhered to Miss Oliphant's ballad; but after some years he added the two verses, said to be written by Miss Ferrier, the effect of which was to destroy the original character of the song altogether. The intention of the authoress, no doubt, was to raise the laird's conceit to an over-weening height, in order to make a climax of his amazement at the lady's naïve monosyllable, "Na!" She sent him a-wooing, with perfect confidence, in his well-powdered wig; and, although he meets with a most unequivocal denial, it does not humble him in the least. He concludes, in his self-complacency, that the loss is the lady's; and, taking another squint at his blue coat and white waistcoat, he exclaims vauntingly to himself, "She's daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen." Thus the authoress had finished her original and very clever song; while in the apocryphal verses, the lady began to reflect, and ultimately accepted the laird, thereby compromising that pride in both their characters which is the main point of the whole song. It must have been grating to the authoress's feelings to hear in every corner of Edinburgh, during her long residence there, her song so much maltreated, yet denying herself the power to put the public right respecting it. I can bear testimony to the enthusiasm with which the additional verses were received, but the public are fond of novelty, and they liked the laird's triumph, more especially on account of the exquisite drollery it gave Mackay an opportunity of throwing into his inimitable personification of the laird. But the additional verses were eventually abandoned by Mackay, and they should certainly be avoided in all reprints of Lady Nairne's songs.

After twenty-four years of happy wedded life, Lord Nairne died at Edinburgh on the 9th of July, 1830, comparatively unconscious of the fact that, his being the husband of Carolina Oliphant, would act more effectively in carrying his name down to future generations than all the *prestige* that belonged to it as that of a peer of the realm.

In 1834, Lord Nairne, the Baroness's son, paid a visit to the site of his ancestral home in Strathord. He was then a delicate-looking young man, and had not much of the aristocratic bearing of his mother. He was in his twenty-seventh year. Shortly afterwards, mother and son went away to the Continent, from whence the latter never returned, having died at Brussels in 1837. Lady Nairne kept moving through France, Switzerland, and Belgium, for a period of six years, when she returned to Gask, to live the remainder of her days under the hospitable roof of her nephew, Mr. James Blair Oliphant. There she enjoyed fair health for an old woman: and, while being moved about the beautiful policies in her wheeled garden chair, she was enabled to look back with chastened heart over the many long years of pleasure and vicissitude that had passed over her since she first "paidled in the Cairney Burn." The evening of her days was passed in deeds of charity, and in preparing herself for the great change, which she saw was not far away. At this time she composed the following beautiful reflections on—

"THE DESIRE TO BE YOUNG AGAIN."

Would you be young again?
  So would not I.
One tear to memory given,
  Onward I'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore.
Say, would you plunge once more,
  With home so nigh?

If you might, would you now
  Retrace your way?
Wander through thorny wilds,
  Faint and astray?
Night's gloomy watches fled,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed,
  Heavenward—away.

Where are they gone, of yore
  My best delight.
Dear and more clear, though now,
  Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me.
Fly time, fly speedily;
  Come life and light.

On a calm Sabbath morning, in the month of October, 1845, this amiable and gifted woman passed from this world of sighs into that unseen region which, in her implicit faith, she had peopled with all she ever held dear.

My harp, farewell; thy strains are past,
  Of gleefu' mirth and heartfelt wae;
The voice of song maun cease at last,
  And minstrelsy itsel' decay,

But oh! where sorrow canna' win,
  Nor parting tears are shed ava,
May we meet neighbour, kith, and kin,
  And joy for aye be wi' us a'!

A short time before her death Lady Nairne set herself, with her usual modesty, to discover the best man to guide her in disposing of a sum which she wished to devote anonymously to the forwarding of her much-cherished faith, and with characteristic sagacity she fixed on the late Dr. Chalmers. That great divine, in announcing it to his followers, said, "This noble benefaction of £300, I am *now* at liberty to announce, is from the *late* Lady Nairne of Perthshire." "Noble benefaction," indeed. But it would be difficult to find anything about her character that was not noble. Noble she was in rank,—noble as a poetess,—noble in her self-denial,—noble in her generosity,— noble in her conceptions of the dignity which should ever characterise her sex,—noble in every womanly attribute,—most noble in her godly aspirations after the better land. She thought it unfeminine to be known as an authoress, and shrank from the idea of being judged as taking a lead. She was a Woman! The distinguishing term she kept as untainted as drifted snow. She felt that she belonged to man; that all her sympathies, all her tendernesses, were his; that the moment she stepped forward as the champion of her sex, all her claim to man's protection was gone. *She* put on the masculine garb, and demand her "rights"—Never! *She* sit at the head of her husband's table, and discuss political and sexual ascendancy—Never! *She* be a party to the breaking up of that finely-balanced domesticity, which is the very charm of wedded life—Never! Her desire was to keep woman in the place she had occupied so well and so happily for eighteen hundred years, and she felt jealous of divergence either way. To ill-judged elevation, her own life was a negative; but against that degradation which began to take root in her day she could offer nothing but a gentle remonstrance. It is not the normal position of woman to be grinding among machinery,—sweating, toiling at a loom,—issuing at meal-hours from the exhausting factory, blear-eyed, sallow-complexioned, thin, and dejected. Old maidenism, penury, the street, the gutter, the poorhouse, and the grave, are the too-frequent issue. But so long as it ministers to the cupidity of both employer and employed, and so long as the exigencies of life press so heavily on the lower orders of the community, a more humane state of matters need hardly be looked for; but it cannot be denied that it would savour more of an advancing civilisation were we to urge the melioration of woman's condition, in all her ranks, rather than elevate one class to an unnatural position, and depress another in the social scale year by year.

If I have failed in setting Lady Nairne's character and talents before the readers of these short memorials, it is from no lack of appreciation on my own part; but there is so much to admire, that it is difficult to reach all. I have not been able to speak of her claims as an amateur artist, nor of the unweared assistance she gave to Mr. Purdie in the publication of "The National Minstrel." The many drawings by her at Gask House sufficiently vindicate the first; and the following remark made by a young lady at a Ravelstone party, to a companion who had forgot some verses of a song, will be enough for the second, "Do you see that fair complexioned lady seated at the end of the room? Go up to her, and she will give you the verses you want; for never, I believe, was anything in poetry or song said or sung she does not know." Two interesting memorials of Lady Nairne remain at Gask, her portrait in middle life as an elegant and staid matron, with her little boy on her knee, painted by John Watson Gordon; and, "last scene of all," her grave under the chapel floor, with its brass record stating that she was laid there in her eightieth year.

Farewell, farewell! parting silence is sad.
    Oh! how sad the last parting tear!
But that silence shall break; where no tear on the cheek
    Can be-dim the bright vision again—no never,
    Then speed to the wings of old Time,
    That waft us where pilgrims would be.
To the regions of rest, to the shores of the blest,
    Where the full tide of glory shall flow—for ever!

CHAPTER X.

ROBERT NICOLL.

> "Thou art gone to the grave!—we no longer behold thee,
> Nor tread the rough paths of the world by thy side;
> But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee,
> And sinners may hope since the Sinless hath died."
> HEBER.

ON a piece of table-land sheltered on the north by the Lower Grampians, on the west by the heights of Shanwell, and stretching eastward into the valley of Strathmore, lies the farm of Little Tullybeltane, the birthplace of Robert Nicoll, the poet. The River Ordé meanders through its centre; here winding under a red brae, and there gurgling across a shallow ford, with bramble bushes and the fantastic roots of old trees fringing its sides. The old steading stood a little way back from the high northern margin of the river, and about fifty yards to the north-west of the present buildings. The dwelling-house and a portion of the offices formed a long, irregular thatched building, facing the south; while another portion of the offices fell away back on the west, an avenue of old trees running down to the river on the east. A few labourers' cottages stood at a distance, and the usual amount of rickle dykes, peat stacks, and piggeries, formed the very primitive homestead. A model of a clay-built cottage, with a thatched roof, and a box made of willows and mortar set upon the top of each gable as a chimney,—a door in the centre, and a small square window on each side,—would answer equally well as representing the birthplace of Robert Burns, James Hogg, Robert Pollok, or Robert Nicoll. All that would be necessary in fixing the identity would be to place the model for the first to face the sun at ten o'clock in the morning, for the second at two o'clock in the afternoon, for the third at eight in the morning, and for the fourth at noon.

Within the clay hallan of the last edifice, "Scotland's second Burns" was born on the 7th of January, 1814. His cradle was slung on two posts stuck into the kitchen floor, and every member of the household, in passing, gave it a gentle push to keep it going, and before he was three years old he had to push it for another in his turn. Before he had quite emerged from childhood, his father fell into trouble by mixing himself up in monetary transactions with certain relations and acquaintances, who, in order to make him the scapegoat, induced him to accept bills, and then coolly abandoned him to his fate.

Neither can we hold them blameless
Though it is no uncommon thing.

Thus, shorn of all they had, were Robert Nicoll, the father, and Grace Fenwick, the mother, sent abroad on the world, to toil and to moil for themselves and their young family, and within twenty years to see five out of the nine laid in their coffins—a few years' longer struggle, and then a journey to Edinburgh, and then another coffin—a few years longer again, then another journey to Edinburgh, and another coffin. Then old Robert himself, nearly ninety years of age, was carried to Moneydie Churchyard; and a few years thereafter Grace Fenwick, the courageous, heroine-like mother, left her native Tullybeltane, and went away with her married daughter, Mrs. Allan, to New Zealand, where they are now settled at Alexandra, near Auckland.

The poet remained at Tullybeltane—where his father rented a cottage,—"herding kye," reading books, studying English grammar, and writing poetry, till he had reached his seventeenth year, when he left home to begin an apprenticeship with Mrs. Hay Robertson, at Perth,—an event fraught with importance to him, as the first crisis in his life. The young grocer's visits to his parents were frequent, and on both sides fondly anticipated. Robert, the smart shopman from "the neighbouring toun,"—the ex-herd laddie,—the improving scholar,—the embryo Scottish poet,—the pride of his father and mother,—conversed with them about their hardships, their patience, their piety, and unbending honest pride. They took heart from him, and he from them, and their lives were not only free from immediate trouble, but in most respects really happy and enjoyable.

During the months of November and December, 1832, while I was engaged fitting up the shop No. 15, High Street, for a circulating library, I threw out grappling-irons by opening the bow-window, and exposing the pictures of *The Newgate Calendar* and *The Terrific Register*, and occasionally an engraving by William Sharp, or Sir Robert Strange, which attracted the youths about the neighbourhood, and many were the guesses hazarded by them regarding the exact nature of the business to be eventually carried on inside. Amongst others, I observed a fresh-coloured young man come almost every forenoon about ten o'clock, with a bundle of keys in his hand, and take a hurried glance at the books, occasionally flattening his nose against a pane to reconnoitre the state of internal proceedings. One day, going up the Ship Tavern Close, I found this young man sitting astride of a form, and, with a wooden mallet, driving corks into bottles, and whistling like a mavis. I looked in at the door, and said, jocularly, "What ails ye at the bottles?" "I'm no meddlin' wi' the bottles; I'm only banging the corks." "Oh, ho!" thinks I, "there is something here;" and as I had seen him go out and in to the shop, I asked, "Are you Mrs. Robertson's son?" "No, I'm the apprentice. My name is Bob Nicoll; and that red-haired fellow," nodding towards a corner of the cellar, "is Tam M'Glashan, the journeyman." Robert found his way into the library immediately, inquiring for Stewart's "America," or Cooper's "Red Rover." A friendship then began, which continued uninterruptedly for four years. When he had been away from home four years, he laments the separation in the following exquisitely tender lines:—

ORDÉ BRAES.

There's nae hame like the hame o' youth—
  Nae ither spot sae fair;
Nae ither faces look sae kind
  As the smilin' faces there.
An' I ha'e sat by monie streams—
  Ha'e travell'd monie ways;
But the fairest spot on the earth to me
  Is on bonnie Ordé Braes.

An ell-lang wee thing there I ran
  Wi' the ither neebor bairns,
To pu' the hazel's shinin' nuts,
  An' to wander 'mang the ferns;
An' to feast on the bramble-berries brown,
  An' gather the glossy slaes
By the burnie's side; an' aye sinsyne
  I ha'e lov'd sweet Ordé Braes.

The memories o' my father's hame,
  An' its kindly dwellers a',
O' the friends I lov'd wi' a young heart's love,
  Ere care that heart could thraw,
Are twined wi' the stanes o' the silver burn,
  An' its fairy crooks an' bays,
That onward sang 'neath the gowden broom
  Upon bonnie Ordé Braes.

Aince in a day there were happy hames
  By the bonnie Ordé's side ;—
Nane ken how meikle peace an' love
  In a straw-roof'd cot can bide.
But thae hames are gane, and the hand o' time
  The roofless wa's doth raze :—
Laneness an' sweetness hand in hand
  Gang ower the Ordé Braes.

O ! an' the sun were shinin' now,
  An' O ! an' I were there,
W' twa three friends o' auld langsyne
  My wanderin' joy to share !
For, though on the hearth o' my bairnhood's hame
  The flock o' the hills doth graze,
Some kind hearts live to love me yet
  Upon bonnie Ordé Braes.

I know that there are people, whose opinions are worthy of respect, who will condescend to read this essay, yet will decline entirely to sympathise with me in the unmeasured admiration I have always had and expressed for Robert Nicoll and his works. For forty years I have been taking every opportunity of drawing public attention to him and them—sometimes with success, sometimes with failure, on one occasion with unmingled catastrophe. I asked forty gentlemen to join me in drinking the poet's memory, "with all the honours," in a place where it ought to have been hailed with enthusiasm; but I only got my nose morally pulled, and that upon a pretext outrageously at variance with the practice of all civilized society, and a query addressed to me by one of the forty, "Who was Robert Nicoll?" But *quod differtur non aufertur*, within a week afterwards I saw in the *Cornhill Magazine* a statement that, when Bourke and his party were on their journey into the interior of Queensland, they "came unexpectedly on a group of huts, at the door of one of which sat a woman dandling her child to the tune of 'Our ain Bessie Lee.'"

It would be exceedingly unhandsome in ordinary life to treasure up for forty years every carelessly-said word, or trivial business transaction, or every letter, where a man pours forth his relying heart to his friend, and then publish these unwary confidences. No doubt the lives of poets, whose works have been published and become celebrated, are, like those of other public characters, to some extent public property. Still, the dread of trenching on feelings which ought to be held sacred prevented me from implementing the following proposal. At the conclusion of the first of my "Nights with Robert Nicoll," published in 1851, this passage occurs:—"At five o'clock in the morning the book—Bulwer's 'Godolphin'—was finished, and there and then I proposed to Robert that he should try a bookselling business and circulating library in Dundee. He pled many excuses about his apprenticeship and want of capital. I shall state betimes how these difficulties were got over. A year afterwards the library was started; and when speaking of the circumstance which led him to abandon his former profession, he always characterised it as 'the crisis of a life.'" In consideration that Nicoll's mother was still living in the neighbourhood, and might be offended at any gratuitous exposure of her son's affairs,—not that I had anything offensive to say of her son, or about anything connected with him,—but there is always a difficulty and a danger in dealing openly with business matters, more especially where the writer appears as a principal actor himself; and in deference to these facts, I have hitherto abstained from the offered explanation, although there have appeared endless newspaper paragraphs inquiring, "Why?" and I have been repeatedly interrogated, both personally and by letter, respecting it. The distance of forty years, however, has greatly altered matters, and strengthened the feeling that, unimportant as the facts in themselves may be, yet, to quote the words of the *Edinburgh Express*, "anything about Robert Nicoll must be interesting."

In a moment of proud irritation, Nicoll wrote to his mother:—"That money of R.'s hangs like a mill-stone about my neck. If I had paid it, I would never borrow again from mortal man." This should never have been printed, yet his biographer, with ill-judged pertinacity, repeats it during her short tale no less than *six times!* If borrowed money is not paid, the asking of it by the creditor should not be looked upon in the light of a *casus belli*. I am not in a position to say that R.'s money was *not* peremptorily called up, but I hold that the poet's conjuring up of this figurative millstone is no evidence that it was The circumstance that he owed the money, and did not possess the means of at once paying it, was enough for his proud spirit to brood upon; and in writing to his mother, who was interested, he naturally enough refers to it in somewhat remorseful terms. But money advanced in such an off-hand gentlemanly way as that money was advanced, although called up at any time, affords no ground for wide-spread personal invective; and had Robert Nicoll lived to have paid it, he was the last man in the world to have made it so. Mr. Thomas Robertson, late draper, George Street, Perth, was the R. who advanced the money; and if he peremptorily demanded payment, it was not like him, for he was generally easy and gentlemanly in money matters. At page 24 of Mrs. Johnstone's memoir, it is stated, "By the help of his mother, and some friendly aid and encouragement from acquaintances in Perth, he was induced to open a circulating library in Dundee. A shop was taken in that town, and on this new plan of life Nicoll entered with all the ardour and energy belonging to his character." No doubt Mr. and Mrs. Johnstone and Mr. Tait acted with much kindness towards the poet in his latter days; but it does not become the lady, as the poet's biographer, while extolling that kindness, to speak in these contemptuous terms of friends who came forward to his support when his talents were little known, and when he was without the *prestige* of a name. Nicoll, no doubt, got assistance from his mother, and may have received "encouragement" from acquaintances in Perth, but I am not aware of any "aid" he got except from her, Mr. Robertson, and myself. Indeed, I do not think he sought any. Let me now proceed to redeem the old promise referred to in the quotation from "Nights with Nicoll."

Sometime after that night, I asked Robert what he thought of my proposal. He still hesitated, and spoke of the "shop-rent and no money," and his apprenticeship. We adjourned to my house, where I made the following definite offer:—"I will give you 1,000 volumes of books—let Mr. Fraser, of Griffin's, value them—and give you twelve months to pay them; pay your first half-year's rent; introduce you to Orr and to Griffin of Glasgow, and Newman of London; and if you can muster a little money to get a start, with your industry and knowledge of books, you may do well enough." We parted, and I felt I had gone far enough in my urgings: because, if he agreed and was unsuccessful, I might be blamed by his friends. So the matter hung over for a time; but, after being away into the country a day or two, rather unwell, he came in to me in great health and spirits, and told me a friend had agreed to advance him £40, and that Mrs. Robertson had in the most ladylike way offered to give up his indenture; and, if I was still willing to give him my aid, he had made up his mind to take my advice, and begin business in Dundee.

About the middle of October, 1834, I went to Dundee—Nicoll could not accompany me, and after reconnoitring the place, fixed on and leased the shop No. 6, Castle Street, at £12 a year from Martinmas, 1834, to Whitsunday, 1836, gave a line of security for the rent, measured the shop, and gave instructions for getting it shelved. On returning to Perth, Robert and I waited on Mr. Robertson, who, after entertaining us well, handed me £40, for which I saw no document whatever given. Robert's mother became bound in some form for repayment, but I think for £20 only, which was still due at the poet's death, but was afterwards paid. Next morning I went to Glasgow, purchased from Richard Griffin and Co. £40 worth of miscellaneous books, paid £20 in cash, and got £20 placed to account; thence to Francis Orr and Sons, and purchased stationery to the same amount, and on the same terms. My books were valued at 2s. a volume, being £100 for the lot; and after the shop was opened I drew upon Nicoll at six months for £50, leaving the other £50 to be drawn for at Whitsunday. Robert paid the bill due at Whitsunday, and I paid the rent as I promised, the receipt for which is in my possession. He paid the second bill of £50 at Martinmas, 1835, and refunded the rent. We had numerous transactions during the sixteen months he remained in business, all of which were honourably settled. When he left Dundee, I wanted £9, his successor paid in terms of their arrangement.

These are simple statements of what occurred between Robert Nicoll and his "acquaintances in Perth;" and, with all deference to Mrs. Johnstone, I think it very equivocal taste in her to ignore so cavalierly one of the poet's Perth friends, and to reiterate a charge against the other of hanging a millstone about his neck, when a moment's thought might have convinced her that the complaint was not uttered by Robert Nicoll against the gentleman who had advanced the money, but against the fact that he himself owed it.

In the memoir of Robert Nicoll, the winding-up of the Dundee business is very incorrectly stated; but I was personally little concerned in it, and leave its narration to a more fitting occasion, only saying that no one will then be able to call my statements in question, the deed of demission being in my hands. Before concluding, however, I must refer to the fact, that I received no notice of Robert Nicoll's death, neither was I asked to his funeral. When his memoir appeared, I asked his brother William if it was at his instigation that I was so treated in Mrs. Johnstone's memoir of Robert, and by the family at the time of his death. He answered emphatically, "It was not."

Let me here enter my protest against the oceans of stuff which have been written about Robert Nicoll's unhappy, suffering life, and his father and mother's reduced circumstances and life of penury. It is the mere vapouring of literary adventurers. True, he over-tasked his young spirit, and, like a blighted bud, he sank into the grave ere the fruits of his rich promise were realised; but until his last disease set in, his life was joyous and happy, his laugh was loud and hearty, his face generally radiant and beaming with smiles. Innocent fun was his grand passion, and a manly spirit his proudest boast.

THE WORLD'S FU' O' SKAITH AND TOIL.

The world's fu' o' skaith and toil—
Its gruesome face doth seldom smile;
But what care I how sad it be?
Its sadness shall never danton me!

An' men are fause an' women frail—
An' Friendship aft at need doth fail;
But though the warst o't I may see,
Their fauseness shall never danton me!

Life's dearest lights may fade awa',
An' dour misfortunes down may fa';
But I will keep a spirit hie,—
The warst o't shall never danton me!

O! let me ha'e a leal true heart—
Let honour never frae me part;
And, though in want, sae cauld, I dee,
Even that shall never danton me!

CHAPTER XI.

ROBERT NICOLL—*continued.*

> "In that morning the tiller of earth shall rise up,
> His brow without clouds, and his arm without chains;
> Yet no despot shall wear them, or drain the deep cup,
> Of the grief, and the wrath, and the shame that remains,
> When the toil-drop on his, shall be rather adored,
> Than the coronet gem on the brow of a lord."
> *Literary Gazette.*

No one can deny to Robert Nicoll the merit of being a poet of a high class, but, during his later life, he made those about him feel that politics were his essential characteristics. He lived on and breathed them; they were his morning's study and his evening's thought; he imbibed and perspired them; and, as a matter of necessity, became highly proficient as a student of national economics. But when he left the platform of politics and betook himself to the bowers of song, he softened down to the tenderness of childhood. In politics and in poetry, he was equally humane, but his political humanity was a little too active. At one time he spoke to me of betaking himself to the study of the law. I said he was sure to succeed, "but, Robert, never think of turning medical man." "Why?" said he. "Because you would cut off a patient's head if you feared it contained incipient gangrene. You would be like Hercules in the Augean stable." "Oh, yes, I would go to the bottom, but I would try to save the head."

The republican form of government had Nicoll's strongest sympathies, but he thought our own monarchial form susceptible of improvement. His conclusions were not rashly come to, but when he had his mind made up on any subject, no casuistry could move him. On the other hand, he did not possess the necessary subtlety to proselytise; all was above-board with him. He could carry no point readily, because he did not possess the faculty of cool debate. Passionate and impetuous, he could overwhelm with language, while the judgment of those who heard him was untouched. Those who agreed with him were rapturously carried along, but those who did not were offended by his sweeping invectives. He was himself so thoroughly convinced of the entire justice of the position he had taken up, that he opened his eyes wide at anything like opposition. Not to despise Castlereagh, and Sidmouth, and Richmond, and the whole assemblage of organized spies, was a state of mind which he could not comprehend. He had argued himself into the belief that their whole system and its influences, down to the date of the Reform Bill, was unequivocally Satanic; and that Ebenezer Elliott, Earl Grey, himself, and a few more, were born into the world for the express purpose of counteracting their diabolical influences. The affair at Bonnymuir, the "Manchester Massacre," and the execution of Wilson, Hardie, and Baird, were still fresh incidents in the people's minds, and Nicoll thought himself perfectly justified in adopting the obnoxious phrase, "the bloody Tories," which he did on all occasions of excited debate, excusing himself by adding, "that the parties in power often took advantage of their position to gratify personal revenge." On one occasion I took the liberty to question the statement and the application of the epithet "bloody." I got my answer quickly. "This friend of mine," said he, "objects to my statement, and my use of the epithet, 'bloody,' while he himself furnished me with the most conclusive evidence of the truth of the one and the applicability of the other. His story is, that at the battle of Bonnymuir, a Radical flew at a Kilsyth yeoman with his pike, and the yeoman, preparing to defend himself, turned on his opponent, exclaiming, 'D—n ye, will ye stick me, and you have been owing me a load of meal for two years?' and, drawing his pistol, shot him through the shoulder." Robert felt that the story was not very pat, and passed it off with a laugh in which all present joined.

The destiny which Robert Nicoll fondly pictured to himself of becoming, along with his adopted friends, the regenerators of mankind, was more flattering to themselves than likely to obtain fruition. If he had lived to be an old man, he would have struggled to the best of his ability in what he considered the race of patriotism; but a few years more of life would have taught him the propriety of settling down into less ambitious views. As far as parliamentary representation is concerned, it would be criminal either to say or think that since Nicoll's day it has not been made better; but some people are bold enough to insinuate that the improvement is more the result of a concatenation of circumstances than of the efforts of any party in the State. No doubt the party to which *he* had attached himself claim the merit of all improvement on the complacent score, that if they have not done everything in a direct way, their influence over their opponents has obtained their concurrence in everything that was wanted.

In addition to these influences on the young politician's mind, there was the fact that he had to start in life a long way from the winning-post, and at a time when the poor man met with every disadvantage in the race; for the mercantile classes had not yet begun that auspicious career which, in the course of half a century, was to set them alongside of the old nobility, and to put into their hands riches to which those of the fabled Crœsus were as nothing, and powers in the State which enable them to cope with any other class of the community. Had the following sentiments, however great the political energy with which they are expressed, been merely put on as a cloak of pretence, they would have been of little value; but they are the confident breathings of an earnest and hopeful spirit, pitting itself with clenched fist against the whole category of existing evils, and as such are of inestimable value:

WE'LL MAK' THE WARLD BETTER YET

The braw folk crush the poor folk down,
An' blood an' tears are rinnin' het;
An' meikle ill and meikle wae,
We a' upon the earth have met.
An' Falsehood aft comes boldly forth,
And on the throne of Truth doth sit;
But true hearts a'—gae work awa'—
We'll mak' the Warld better yet!

Though Superstition, hand in hand,
Wi' Prejudice—the gruesome hag—
Gangs linkin' still; though misers make
Their heaven o' a siller bag:
Though Ignorance, wi' bloody hand,
Is tryin' Slavery's bonds to knit—
Put knee to knee, ye bold an' free,
We'll mak' the Warld better yet!

See yonder cooff wha becks an' bows
To yonder fool wha's ca'd a lord:
See yonder gowd-bedizzen'd wight—
Yon fopling o' the bloodless sword.

Baith slave, an' lord' an' soldier too,
  Maun honest grow, or quickly flit,
For freemen a' baith grit an' sma',—
  We'll mak' the Warld better yet!

Yon dreamer tells us o' a land
  He frae his airy brain hath made—
A land where Truth and Honesty
  Have crushed the serpent Falsehood's head
But by the names o' Love and Joy,
  An' Common-sense, and Lear an' Wit,
Put back to back,—and in a crack
  We'll mak' *our* Warld better yet!

The Knaves and Fools may rage and storm,
  The growling Bigot may deride—
The trembling Slave away may rin,
  And in his Tyrant's dungeon hide;
But Free and Bold, and True and Good,
  Unto this oath their seal have set—
"Frae pole to pole we'll free ilk soul,—
  The Warld *shall* be better yet!"

In May, 1834, a contest for the county of Perth arose between Sir George Murray and Mr. Graham of Redgorton, in which our young poet took a deep interest. A large, loose mob assembled in George Street to learn the result of the poll, and when it was declared that the Tory had triumphed, the authorities had enough to do in keeping the peace. The Riot Act was read, and passage to and fro in front of the George Inn interdicted. I shrank from going to the Post Office for my reading-room newspapers. Robert volunteered, and drove through the crowd like a lion, coming back through it flourishing them in his hand, and saying, by his majestic strides, "Shoot me, if you dare!" The turmoil and chagrin in that apprentice-boy's mind, when the news came out, acted terribly on him: his face became pale at first; then, on some hopeful reaction, it got red to the tips of his ears. The lovers of song have paid dear, very dear, for these moments of excitement. It is impossible to guess how many beautiful poems like the following have been lost to the world by the exhausting glamour of moments like these. How glaringly antithetical these lines are to the conduct of political partizanship! The poet sets up two men, opposed in many respects, but, being brothers, he reasons away every cause of dissension. The grand sentiment is charity. "Faith, hope, and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity:"—

WE ARE BRETHREN A'.

A happy bit hame this auld world would be,
If men, when they're here, could make shift to agree,
An' ilk said to his neighbour, in cottage an' ha'.
"Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'."

I ken na why ane wi' anither should fight,
When to 'gree would make a' body cosie an' right;
When man meets wi' man, 'tis the best way ava
To say, " Gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

My coat is a coarse ane, an' yours may be fine,
Aud I maun drink water while you may drink wine;
But we baith ha'e a leal heart unspotted to shaw:
Sae gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

The knave ye would scorn, the unfaithfu' deride;
Ye would stand like a rock, wi' the truth on your side;
Sae would I, an' nought else would I value a straw;
Then gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Ye would scorn to do falsely by woman or man;
I haud by the right aye, as well as I can;
We are ane in our joys, our affections, an' a';
Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a',

Your mither has lo'ed you as mithers can lo'e;
An' mine has done for me what mithers can do;
We are ane, hie an' laigh, an' we shouldna be twa:
Sae gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

We love the same simmer day, sunny and fair;
Hame!—O, how we love it, an' a' that are there,
Frae the pure air o' heaven the same life we draw—
Come, gi'e me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Frail, shakin' Auld Age, will soon come o'er us baith,
An' creepin' alang at his back will be Death,
Syne into the same mither-yard we will fa':
Come, gi'e me your hand—WE ARE BRETHREN A',

I felt it easy to subdue this impetuous child of the sun when he went into any of his political *tirrie vies*. An emollient was always at hand, which, although effectless on his firmly-sealed opinions, never failed to move his feelings, and to bring from him expressions of softened animosity. On one of these occasions, when he had reached a climax in denouncing the Tories, for their treatment of Muir, Palmer, Skirving, and Gerald, I implored him to listen to the following facts :—" Early in the century, Thomas Watson carried on business as an auctioneer in the High Street of Glasgow, a little above the Cross, on the east side. Mr. Watson was a most respectable and gentlemanly man, and prosperous in business;

but he was a Tory, and not slow to tell his mind. At the time I speak of, he had advertised for a young man as clerk, and one morning a youth presented himself, with his credentials, when the following short conversation took place: 'Is that your hand-writing?' 'Yes, sir!' 'What is your name?' 'Alexander Skirving!' 'Oh! you'll be a son of that d—d democrat.' 'I *am* a son of William Skirving's, but he was no d—d democrat.' Mr. Watson was struck dumb by the simple grandeur of the reply, and after a moment's hesitation, he said, 'Sit down at that desk.' There Skirving sat down, and there he continued, during business hours, for many years, and, until he commenced business in connection with Mr. Thomas Barclay, under the firm of Barclay & Skirving, so long prosperous auctioneers in Glasgow. Now, Robert this is no mere *canard*, for the story was told to me by Mr. Skirving himself, in his own office." The tears gathered in the eyes of the impassioned young poet, and it actually ended in "Three cheers for the Tories!" Nicoll moralizes on the feelings suggested by this anecdote in "Youth's Dreams:"—

Sae weel I lo'ed a' things of earth!—
The trees—the buds—the flowers—
The sun—the moon—the lochs an' glens—
The Spring's and Summer's hours!
A wither'd woodland twig would bring
The tears into my eye:—
Laugh on! but there are souls of love
In laddies herdin' kye!

O! weel I mind how I would muse,
And think, had I the power,
How happy, happy I would make
Ilk heart the warld o'er!
The gift unendin' happiness—
The joyful giver I!—
So pure and holy were my dreams
When I was herdin' kye!

A silver stream o' purest love
Ran through my bosom then;
It yearn'd to bless all human things—
To love all living men;
Yet scornfully the thoughtless fool
Would pass the laddie by:
But, O! I bless the happy time
When I was herdin' kye!

The scorn with which Nicoll treated the aristocracy was more affected than real—more a popular theory than a settled conviction. He knew perfectly well that they were no worse than other classes; but once, in a moment of frenzied espousal of the "People's Charter," he spoke of the upper classes as utterly and entirely contemptible; and within twenty-four hours he produced the following rather remorseful lines:—

I DARE NOT SCORN.

I may not scorn the meanest thing
  That on the earth doth crawl,
The slave who dares not burst his chain,
  The tyrant in his hall.

The vile oppressor who hath made
  The widow'd mother mourn,
Though worthless, soulless, he may stand—
  I cannot, *dare* not scorn.

The darkest night that shrouds the sky
  Of beauty hath a share;
The blackest heart hath signs to tell
  That God still lingers there.

I pity all that evil are—
  I pity and I mourn;
But the Supreme hath fashioned all,
  And, O! I *dare* not scorn.

While resident in Dundee, Robert Nicoll contributed largely to the columns of the *Advertiser* on almost every subject. Political leaders, poetry, and local gossip, a series of articles on Art, signed "Who?" came from his pen; and many splendid essays, signed a "Working Man." What between speechifying to the Dundee Radicals, writing poetry and politics, reading, and keeping his shop open, he led rather an exhausting life. But he had no idea of sparing himself—no presentiment that he was consuming the few short years he had to live, by incessant labour. His sympathies and energies were ever at the command of his friends, and the knowledge of that fact tended to increase those friends to an extent beyond what most people would think reasonable. Those who speak of him as studying Milton's prose works, Jeremy Bentham, and "The Corn Law Rhymer," represent his political tendencies alone; but during the years I knew him he read every *readable* novel that came from the press. Three volumes a night was a common achievement, after delivering a Radical speech of half-an-hour's duration. I never saw him with a book in his hand during business hours, and rarely in non-business hours without one. He stole from his hours of sleep what many men steal from hours of business, but he stole away that very life which his Maker had given him to nurse and to tend. No amount of physical strength can continue to meet such incessant drainings of the mind; they are bound to go down together; and our poet formed no exception. He flashed like a rocket on the Yorkshire Radicals, and they rallied round him with wondering eagerness; but scarcely had they obtained a glimpse of their youthful oracle when the rocket burst, and the exhausted fragments fell to earth in one tumultuous blaze. The short episode of the young Scotchman at the editorial desk of the *Leeds Times* was brilliant and remarkable; he entered on the people's battle with the energy of a resistless champion, and in his fond dreams he beheld the ægis of oppression torn at his approach; but a lurking foe came in behind, and struck him in the part which he had, in the heat of action, recklessly left exposed.

The leaders of the *Leeds Times* during Nicoll's editorial career were full of scathing vengeance on the parties against whom he had been for the past years of his short life bottling up his wrath; and when the contested election between Sir William Molesworth and Sir John Beckett came on, he thundered his anathemas against the latter gentleman's supporters with unbridled profusion, the consequence of which was a rapid accession of readers, and the establishing of an influence which was the anxious desire of the proprietors and the party of which it was the avowed organ. These parties exulted in their success, but they seemed to overlook the fact that a life of the greatest value was being sacrificed. They were tacitly immolating an existence so precious, that neither power, nor influence, nor gold, could be put in the balance against it. They were scattering amongst the froth of a contested election gems of philanthropy that, in a better cause, might have adorned the book of human life, and been a lasting memorial of the young man himself, instead of the adjuncts of a contemptible struggle for power. Of all the paltry objects on which an intelligent man can engage himself, that of writing up the pretensions of the casual aspirant after parliamentary honours is unquestionably the most paltry. When men of excitable temperament are engaged in it, they become keen and intolerant; and many constitutions, originally more robust than Robert Nicoll's, have sunk under its baneful influences. Men employed in contested elections should be made of timber—stolid, heartless, and indifferent.

Mrs. Nicoll said, "If Sir William Molesworth had lost his election, Robert would have died on the instant." Was this a justifiable stake? Is a man entitled to set his life on the hazard of such a die? Robert says in a letter to his mother, "I do not know how I could better serve my God than by serving my fellow men. He gave me a mission, and I trust I have done my best to fulfil it." These are noble sentiments, but they are lost when applied to a mere political squabble. Any improvement in man's condition, as one of a nation, is necessarily a slow process. It is not a mere escalade, where a man can throw himself into a breach, and allow his fellow soldiers to trample him to death on their way to victory. Oil, cool deliberation, and joint action achieve wonders, but personal sacrifice goes for nothing. The extreme Radical party, into whose toils the poet threw himself, treated him with kindness while they were killing him; but those who knew him best deplored the bargain most,—feeling, as they did, that although he had, in his own proper person, succeeded in turning every Becket out of the House of Commons, and putting a Molesworth in his place, when he turned his face to the wall, the public would dispute the wisdom of what he had done over his new-filled grave. The man is a fool who barters a single loaf of bread to obtain the domination of any political party in a country like this. It may be both necessary and patriotic where freedom, either civil or religious, has been banned, and where the simplest breathing of liberty leads to vagabondage: but not in this land of liberty, and in this nineteenth century, where men do not condescend to be tyrants in power, and where every mother may sing her child asleep with a lullaby in praise of the redemption of Jesus Christ.

There have no doubt been times when tyranny stalked abroad, and no man deplored the advent of Claverhouse more than our poet. He says of the Covenanters, "Had they shrunk from the contest, and bowed before the tyrant's power, Britain might have now been what Spain is, the *Thule* of European improvement. But blessed be God for it, the men of those days were well fitted for their lofty parts. They threw aside all personal considerations, and boldly defied the tyrant and his laws, when these infringed on the inherent rights which God hath given to men." The following is their fervid hymn of triumph :—

WE ARE FREE.

Like lightning's flash,
  Upon the foe
We burst, and laid
  Their glories low!
Like mountain-floods
  We on them came—
Like withering blast
  Of scorching flame,
Like hurricane
  Upon the sea,—
Shout—shout again—
  Shout, WE ARE FREE!

We struck for God—
  We struck for life—
We struck for sire—
  We struck for wife—
We struck for home—
  We struck for all
That man doth lose
  By bearing thrall!
We struck 'gainst chains
  For liberty!
Now, for our pains,
  Shout, WE ARE FREE!

Give to the slain
  A sigh—a tear;—
A curse to those
  Who spoke of fear!
Then eat your bread
  In peace; for now
The tyrant's pride
  Is lying low!
His strength is broken—
  His minions flee—
The VOICE hath spoken
  Shout, WE ARE FREE!

It is a matter of deep regret to myself that one so well fitted for the gentler avocations of life should have become the victim of the more rigorous, and I am entitled to that regret, because I am a common sufferer. He had in his nature strong human sympathies, energy, perseverance, versatility, poetry, and marked political bias; but he had only one life, and it was difficult for him to apportion it amongst so many claimants. His worldly circumstances joined issue with his natural taste, and sent him in his twenty-second year into the very vortex of English politics.

A few months did the work, and at the approach of winter he sat down to his desk, and wrote his memorable farewell address :—

To the Radicals of the West Riding.

BRETHREN.—I go to try the effect of my native air as a last chance for life. . . . If I am spared you may yet hear of me as a soldier of the people's side ; if not, thank God ! there are millions of honest and noble men ready to help in the great work. Your cause emphatically is

The holiest cause that pen or sword
Of mortal ever lost or gained.

And that you may fight in that cause in an earnest, truthful, manly spirit, is the earnest prayer of one who never yet despaired of the ultimate triumph of truth. ROBERT NICOLL.

The first letter Nicoll wrote to me was the beginning of his active correspondence. It is dated Dundee, January 15th, 1835, when he was twenty years of age. Full of vitality and hope, he is preparing to enter on the world as a poet, and is exultant in the prospect of success, and ultimate position and fame. But within a compass of thirty-three short months, he is prostrated before the car of Juggernaut, and his valuable life woven into the filament of trash which formed the difference between two aspirants after place and power. "Very well !" The debt is paid, but when considering it, let the following extraordinary fact be taken into account. On the 31st of August, 1835, writing to me from Dundee in reference to the first edition of his poems, he says :—"It will be published on *this day eight days, and I have* 30 *pages to write yet.*" Now these thirty pages, wherever they are placed in the book, have gained the applause of the world, and it is impossible to over-estimate the value of what might have come from the same felicitous pen in the course of a life of ordinary duration. At the end of the thirty-three months the poet wrote a letter—the last—to his brother William, under the immediate prospect of death, most heartrending, but still breathing the same passionate political war-cry, and ardently longing to be at it again. I here insert two long quotations from that painful letter :—

KNARESBOROUGH, October 10, 1837,

MY OWN DEAR KIND BROTHER,—Both your letters have been received, and I would have answered them long ago, had I been able. I came to this place, which is near Harrogate, and eighteen miles from Leeds, about a fortnight ago ; but I feel very little better for the change, My bowels are better ; but I am miserably weak, and can eat little. My arm is as thin as that of a child a month old. Yet it is strange that, with all this illness and weakness, I feel as it were no pain. My breast, cough, and all have not been so well for years. I feel no sickness, but as sound and wholesome as ever I did. The length of time I have been ill and my weakness alone frighten me; but whether I am to die or live, is in a wiser hand. I have been so long ill I grow peevish and discontented sometimes; but on the whole I keep up my spirits wonderfully. Alice bears up, and hopes for the best, as she ought to do. O, Willie! I wish I had you here for one day—so much, much have I to say about them all, in case it should end for the worse. It may not, but we should be prepared. I go home to Leeds again on Friday.

Thank you for your kind dear letter; it brought sunshine to my sick weariness. I cried over it like a child, ... Sickness has its pains, but it has likewise its pleasures. . . . . , . .

You admire my articles: they are written almost in torment.

You will go to Tulliebeltane on Sunday, and read this letter to them. Tell them all this. I wish my mother to come here immediately to consult with her. I wish to see her. I think a sight of her would cure me. I am sure a breath of Scottish air would. Whenever I get well I could get a dozen editorships in a week, for I have now a name and a reputation.

My mother must come immediately. Yet I feel regret at leaving the paper, even for a season. Think on all that you, and I, and millions more have suffered by the system I live to war against, and then you will join with me in thinking every hour mis-spent which is not devoted to the good work.

Dear, dear Willie, give my love to them all—to my parents, to Joe, to Maggie, to Charlie, to aunt, to grandfather. Write to say when my mother comes, Write often, often, and never mind postage. I have filled my paper, and have not said half of what I wished. . . . I can do nothing till I see my mother. I cannot find words to say how I feel Tait's kindness. Write soon. I have much more to say, but I am tired writing, This is the most beautiful country you ever saw; but I have no heart to enjoy it.—God bless you,

Robert Nicoll.

Hope was dying within the suffering young man, yet he grasped "the banner with the strange device," and shouted "Excelsior!" and his energy must not abate, even in the prospect of death. A better device would have been "Endurance!" because no domestic government can long withhold from its people any political privilege which they have fitted themselves to claim and to enjoy. The freedom of a people is generally proportioned to what they are apable of using aright.

CHAPTER XII.

ROBERT NICOLL—*continued.*

"So his life hath flowed;
From its mysterious urn, a sacred stream,
In whose calm death the beautiful and pure
Alone are mirrored; which, though shapes of ill
May hover round its surface, glides in light
And takes no shadow from them."
T. N. Talfourd.

The character of Robert Nicoll embodied such a combination of exalted moral feeling, of intellectual power, and of romantic devotion to the cause of his fellow-men, that the six short years of his manhood afforded little time for its development; they had all been nursed in his youth, confirmed as he grew up, but an early death superseded fruition. As a politician, he took the world for his platform; but as a poet, all his ideal forms, all his conceptions of the amiable in human life, took their shape from amongst the people of his native Ordé braes. Go where he would, his heart bounded back to the "toun where he was born." There his tendernesses loved to nestle. He left the place young, but in imagination he was never away; he toiled in Perth, in Dundee, and in Leeds, but thought in Tullybeltane. The woods and the broomy knowes were never absent from his vision. He could write politics and harangue an assembly as he went on his way, but he was too young and inexperienced to write poetry for the outer world; and he had hitherto wisely contented himself with the scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure which he had known in his own home land. Had his life been prolonged, his genius would have taken a wider scope, for he writes to William from Leeds, "I am engaged on a long poem just now, which will be by far the best thing I have ever written. It is founded on the story of Arnold of Brescia, which you will find in Gibbon, about the year 1150." A great portion of that poem was written and we shall see what became of it by-and-bye.

Fletcher of Saltoun says, "Give me the making of a nation's ballads, and I care not who makes its laws." Had circumstances permitted, Robert Nicoll would have echoed this sentiment; but, as I wrote of him twenty years ago, "Poet he was by nature, politician by necessity, but upright and honest of choice." He must have bread, honest bread, and to gain it required both head and hand. From his earliest days, the press, as an engine of power, bulked largely in his mind; and to be in some way connected with it, was his fondest wish. The poetic link would certainly have been preferred; but it made no offer of bread, so he took the other road. Had he been a little less ardent in temperament, and in a position to live the life of Moore or Tennyson, Scotland would have received from his hand things of beauty that to her would have been "joys for ever." He would have followed Burns as the great master; and gained strength as he went on. His mind would have been chastened by the experience of years, and the spirit that was ever ready would have lost no opportunity of doing good to himself and his fellow-men. Besides, he would have learned to be less a spendthrift in the economy of his own life. But while thus lamenting his early death, we must not speculate too far. Let us not forget that he has blessed us with so many lays of our lowly cottage homes, and so many passages in the peasant life of Scotland, lest we illustrate the old saying, "When a man has tasted anything good, instead of being grateful, he wants more."

"The Lament of Benedict, the Married Man," is the best of Nicoll's humorous songs. When sung with taste and feeling, the sentiment is so marked that it cannot possibly fail of success, No country, no language, no era, has produced a song more calculated to gain on an audience than this. The pawkie reminiscences so appositely called up,—the evolution of the words and air, so sharp, yet so gentle, and so admirably fitted to each other, flow on together like a piece of reasoning that cannot be gainsaid. The second verse is a piece of exquisite satire. The long string of affirmatives in the first three lines is quite enough to generate remorse, but the negatives that come after are conquerors. He sees you are convinced, and tells you what you must obviously know already,

We were happy thegither, my mither an' me.

The auld mither must have been in comfortable circumstances when she could afford "a cuppie o' tea" in "the year aughty-nine." I remember very well that, twenty years afterwards, the farmers' wives thought the use of tea an extravagance that was sure to raise scandal, and they concealed the process of infusion, and sipped the tea amidst whispers. Many a time have I seen the little brown teapot sitting amongst the peat ashes, with an old stocking drawn down to its middle, to soften its shining vermilion, and make detection somewhat more difficult. I once told Nicoll a story of a presumptuous young farmer whom I knew, which all but sent him into fits, and he confessed afterwards that it furnished him with a hint for Benedict's sons in the last verse. I insert the song first; then tell the story:—

THE LAMENT OF BENEDICT, THE MARRIED MAN.

I ance was a wanter, as happy's a bee:
I meddled wi' nane, and nane meddled wi' me.
I while's had a crack o'er a cog o' gude yill—
Whiles a bicker o' swats—while's a heart-heezing gill;
And I aye had a groat if I hadna a pound,—
On the earth there were nane meikle happier found:
But my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

Fu' sound may she sleep! a douce woman was she,
Wi' her wheel, an' her pipe, an' her cuppie o' tea.
My ingle she keepit as neat as a preen,
And she never speer'd questions, as "Where ha'e ye been?"
Or, "What were ye doin'?" an' "Wha were ye wi'?"—
We were happy thegither, my mither an' me;
But the puir bodie died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

When my mither was gane, for a while I was wae;
But a young chap was I, an' a wife I maun ha'e
A wife soon I gat, an I aye ha'e her yet,
An' folk think thegither we unco weel fit;
But my ain mind ha'e I, though I mauna speak o't
For mair than her gallop I like my ain trot,
O! my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

If I wi' a cronie be takin a drap,
She'll yaumer, an' ca' me an auld drucken chap,
If an hour I bide out, loud she greets an' she yowls,
An' bans a' gude fellows, baith bodies an' souls:
And then sic a care she has o'er her gudeman!
Ye would think I were doited—I canna but ban!
O! my auld mither died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne.

Our young gilpie dochters are lookin' for men.
An' I,ll be a grandsire or ever I ken ;
Our laddies are thinkin' o' rulin' the roast—
Their father, auld bodie, 's as deaf as a post !
But he sees they're upsettin' sae crouse an' sae bauld :—
O ! why did I marry, an' wherefore grow auld ?
My mither ! ye died in the year aughty-nine,
An' I ne'er ha'e had peace in the warld sinsyne !

The hereditary tenure of farm leases often gives rise to family troubles, and leads to litigation and poverty. If the old gentleman is passive and the young one presumptuous, the monosyllable, "My" speedily goes down a generation. The eldest son of a farmer, many years ago a tenant on the estate of Abercairney, carried this to aggravation. He was showing a friend through the farm barn, and, coming on some bags very much torn, he exclaimed, in an affected passion, "D——n these rats *of my father's*, they are eating all *my* sacks!" During the seven days struggle already referred to, Robert sent me copies of two of his poems, that I might notice them in the review afterwards rendered famous by the escapade with Alexander Gregor, of the *Strathmore Journal*, narrated in the "Nights with Robert Nicoll." The following is the conclusion of the poet's letter after he had inserted the two complete songs ?—

There's joy to the lave, but there's sadness to me.

The muse has departed, and I can rhyme no longer. Oh, dear! but the first line is not so bad, I'll complete it.

Before beginning the review, I wrote to him to say that I could do very well with the complete songs ; but as to the single line, I could not make much of it, for "though you think it good, that opinion must arise from what you saw looming in the distance, of which, of course, I know nothing ; but as you are so very hard pressed for time, I have finished a verse, and sent it for your approval, and would be glad to hear what length you would like it to be. I think it 'not so bad,' and after it has received a shake of your inspiration pepper-box it may do very well." Up came a letter next day enclosing mine. "For God's sake, finish it. Mine is written and enclosed. The only difference is, that yours is a poor lassie whose off-putting lover is breaking her heart ; while mine is a poor man whose on-laying wife has broken his head with the tangs" :—

THERE'S NEVER AN END O' HER FLYTIN' AN' DIN.

There's joy to the lave, but there's sadness to me;
For my guidwife an' I can do a' thing but 'gree;
In but-house an' ben-house, baith outby an' in,
There's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

She's girnin' at e'enin'—she's girnin' at morn—
A' hours o' the day in my flesh she's a thorn:
At us baith a' the neighbour-folk canna but grin:
There's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

She scolds at the lasses, she skelps at the bairns;
An' the chairs an' the creepies she flings them in cairns,
I'm joyfu' when aff frae the house I can rin:
There's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

When I bid her speak laigher, fu' scornfu' she sneers;
Syne she shrieks like a goslin' till a'body hears;
Then I maun sing sma'; just to keep a hale skin:
There's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

Ance deav'd to the heart by her ill-scrapit tongue,
To quiet her I tried wi' a gude hazel rung:—
Wi' the tangs she repaid me, and thought it nae sin:
There's never an end o' her flytin' an' din.

There's ae thing I ken, an' that canna be twa—
I wish frae this world she ance were awa';
An' I trust, if ayont to the ill place she win,
They'll be able to bear wi' her flytin' an' din.

To the wa' the door rattles—that's her coming ben;
An' I maun gi'e o'er the Luckie would ken.
Guide save us! she's clearin' her throat to begin:
The Lord keep ye a' frae sic flytin' an' din!

It is well for my readers that my letter was returned, for otherwise I should not have been able to treat them with a perusal of the following delectable verse :—

There's joy to the lave, but there's sadness to me;
My een's bleared wi' greetin', that I canna see,
If ye want me noo, Jamie, you'll better be clever,
For better be dead than be deein' for ever!

The last visit I had from the poet was in February, 1836, and his last letter is dated the 2nd March thereafter. It is written in a querulous spirit, and altogether away from his usual hearty style. His business was about to be handed over to M'Cosh (his partner, and eventually his successor), and some invoices of mine had been under scrutiny. Nicoll says, "I find you have charged me with 'Rob Roy' and 'Agnes de Mansfeldt,' two books which you wrote me to keep." Before I had time to reply, M'Cosh came to Perth for my account, saying they had "been balancing from the *invoices*." This explained everything. He got the account, and it was duly paid. M'Cosh came to Perth to show me the deed of dissolution, and, on looking it over, the name of one of the witnesses opened my eyes a little; and when I learned from him of Robert's engagement, the whole truth flashed on me at once.

In 1835, a certain Mr. Peter Brown was editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*. He was a man of vast pretension. His mental proportions weighed prodigiously in his own scales, though at the public steelyard they would have been outweighed by those of a water-wagtail. He walked the streets of Dundee, clad in flint barnacles, with as much importance as if he had held the whole town in fee-simple. At that time I was agent for the paper, and sold in Perth *six copies weekly*. This being the only newspaper connection I had, I naturally wanted to be quit of it, and wrote to Mr. Brown intimating the wish. He presented himself in Perth next morning, and we walked to the top of the North Inch together, to have the matter discussed. Mr. Brown urged me to continue the agency; but not being able to plead profit as a reason, he fell back on the respectability that would arise to me from being connected with such an institution as the *Dundee Advertiser*. I did not gainsay him, but he failed to convince me; and after an hour's extolling of the grand connection, we parted as we met. Very shortly thereafter the *Perthshire Constitutional* was started. I was appointed sole agent, and sold a very large number; and in an unfortunate moment it occurred to me that I might now really become a newspaper agent. So down I went to Dundee, resolved to continue Mr. Brown's paper. I had some misgivings as I walked upstairs to the great man's sanctum; but, opening the door very quietly, I told my story in few words. Peter rose to his feet, stuck his pen behind his ear, and his thumbs into the armpits of his snow-white waistcoat, threw out his chest, and expanded his nostrils. O ye gods of the heathen! O ye little fishes of the brook! Speak of whirlwind, or tempest, or volcano, or earthquake, or tornado—mere penny trumpets: Chatham's phillipic on the American war was pretty well; so was Pitt's reply to Walpole, but not to be put in comparison with Peter Brown's reply to Peter Drummond! I never opened my mouth till Mr. Brown had thoroughly exhausted himself; then, lifting my hat from his desk, I bade him good morning, and walked to the door. When outside, I burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, for which misbehaviour I never was forgiven. I told this adventure to Robert Nicoll, and in a letter to me, dated Dundee, 31st August, 1835, he says, "What did ye think of my article on the Songs of Scotland in last *Advertiser?* Is your respectability greatly enhanced yet?" The last sentence is in allusion to the lecture I got on the North Inch.

Now, Mr. Peter Brown had a house in Dundee, and a gay young niece, Miss Alice Suter, and to that house he invited the poet and the niece. The consequence was that Robert fell in love with the young lady, wooed and won her. But, for myself, when I heard of his engagement, and of the *locale* of his bride-elect, I felt that a death-blow was struck at the friendship so long existing between us; and so it turned out. I had been asked to his marriage long before, but the fair lady tabooed me; and during the poet's married life, and at his death, the oldest friend he had was "nowhere."

The parties have all long gone to their account, and it would be poor revenge for me to bring up anything calculated to depreciate any one of them; but the time has now come when the truth must be told, however reluctantly, and one portion of that truth unfortunately is, that Alice Suter's conduct during her survivorship was a deliberate violation of all the sentiments of devotion which she made the world believe that she entertained towards the talents and character of her deceased husband. With her second marriage the world had nothing to do, and it took no concern in the matter; but she might have exulted sufficiently over that marriage without, in the pride of her heart, burning every vestige of manuscript confided to her by the dying poet. For that the world blames her, and deplores her senselessness. She should never have been amongst the Nicolls. They were sterling as gold; she unstable as water. I have in my possession three letters which illustrate to perfection the character of the Nicoll family. One is from Robert, containing expressions of deep gratitude to myself and other Perth friends for selling his poems, and enclosing the following exquisite verses on his grandfather:—

But mair than a'—frae beuks sae auld—
  Frae mony treasured earnest page,
Thou traced for me the march of truth,
  The path of right from age to age;
A peasant, auld, and puir, and deaf,
  Bequeathed this legacy to me,
I was his bairn—he filled my soul
  With love for liberty!

Be blessings on thy reverend head,
  I dinna need for thee to pray;
The path is narrow, but nae een
  E'er saw thee from it stray.
God bears his ancient servants up—
  He's borne thee since thy life began!—
I'm noble by descent: thy grave
  Will hold an honest man,

The second letter is from William Nicoll, and dated Edinburgh, 25th May, 1850. He had sent me, a year before, his volume of manuscript poems, desiring my advice respecting their publication. I thought them highly meritorious, but felt that it would not pay to publish them, poetry being at a discount; but I was reluctant to tell him so, and kept the book too long, for which misdemeanour I dreaded a complaint. I regret exceedingly not having kept copies of any of William Nicoll's poems; they would have suited my purpose admirably at this juncture. [These poems have since reached me and form the subject of the three following chapters.]

Edinburgh, 25th May, 1840.

DEAR SIR,—You will take the trouble to make up the MSS. I left with you into a small parcel, and I have directed one of Mr. Robertson's young men to call for it, and send it, along with some other things, to my address.

Should you wish to retain them any longer, I trust you will do so frankly, and without a moment's hesitation, as I only wish them in case you are entirely done with them.—Dear Sir, in haste, yours respectfully,

Mr. P. Drummond, Perth. WM. NICOLL.

The third letter is from Mrs. Nicoll, the mother, addressed to her sister, Mrs. Paton, of Bankfoot, and dated 18th February, 1873. It is here printed entire from the original, and for a woman of eighty-six years, it is certainly extraordinary:—

Alexandra, February 18, 1873.

DEARLY-BELOVED SISTER,—It is long since I have heard from you, but I have heard an echo that James is not well. Also, it is long since we received a paper or papers. I am truly anxious to hear how you both are. We are disappointed in not getting a minister that came here from Scotland.

And, then, my writing is so bad that I fear no person can read it.

March 23.—I have got no word yet. Dear sister, what is the matter with you? We have now got a minister, and from Scotland.

We have got no papers yet. I know you are blind, but would no one write one line to say what is the matter with you? Besides, I am so anxious, I cannot sleep nor rest. I must write to some person to learn.—Dear Sister, your affectionate Sister, G. NICOLL.

These were the companions of the poet's boyhood, and his surroundings were the hills and the valleys,—the blue bonnets and the spinning wheels—the broom, the heather, the thistle, and the claymore. He left these for the street and the counter; he left *them* in turn for the press; and in these turnings he began to feel pain in his chest and an occasional irritating cough. But in the action of his impetuous nature he concealed them from himself, saying to the insidious disease, "Get thou behind me!" But it followed its mission until it carried to the silent tomb one of the best young men of his day. Mrs. Johnstone's memoir of the poet is written in a kindly spirit, but under mistaken impulses. It is like a chapter of Fox's "Book of Martyrs." She deplores his early death, yet approves of the pestiferous struggle which, she tells us, led to it. She represents him as upright, earnest, and self-sacrificing; and born to a great purpose; yet she applauds his immolation at the very threshold of his life, and of that great purpose. "To make man in very truth a temple where God might dwell," was an aspiration of the utmost grandeur; but to "throw himself heart and soul" into a local election was an absurd way of inaugurating a scheme of such gigantic proportions. She ends her memoir by the following climax, copied from Ebenezer Elliott:—"Robert Nicoll is another victim added to the hundreds of thousands who 'are not dead, but gone before,' to bear true witness against the merciless." Most apt quotation! But who were the merciless? Certainly not the myths of Elliott's dreamy conjuration, but the "too, too solid flesh" of the poet's own immediate instigators. Sir William Molesworth was "The sparrow with his bow and arrow;" the proprietors of the *Leeds Times* were "The fish that held the dish;" and the Radicals of the West Riding were the "Owls with their spades and their showls," who encompassed the death and burial of poor Robin. No man will convince me that the gain was worth a thousandth part of the sacrifice; yet "the ways of Heaven are dark and intricate," and not to be presumptuously scanned by weak, erring man. The soul called early away bears a light burden of sin, and when the day of retribution comes, who will stand so well at compt as Robert Nicoll? If brotherly love, ardent devotion, unbending honesty of purpose, unwavering confidence in all that is revealed, are to weigh in the balance of Divine justice, where is the man who, in six short years of manhood, performed the same amount of work, yet left no visible stain to be wiped out? His poems are like a bouquet of flowers, sweet of flavour and tender of form, like clusters of ripe grapes, bursting with the juices of the heart; no redundancy of foliage, no meretricious ornament, no floods of impetuous garniture, but mere droppings of truth, that are simple as Nature herself; and when the ashes of this generation and those of other ten have gone down among the mools, their requiem will be sung, by kindred lips, in language already fashioned, but which will then be better known, yet fresh as the dew of morning, and suited to the circumstances of all time.

Sleep on, sleep on, ye resting dead;
The grass is o'er ye growing
In dewy greenness. Ever fled
From you hath care; and, in its stead,
Peace hath with you its dwelling made,
Where tears do cease from flowing,
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: ye do not feel
Life's ever-burning fever—
Nor scorn that sears, nor pains that steel
And blanch the loving heart, until
'Tis like the bed of mountain-rill
Which waves have left for ever.
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: your couch is made
Upon your mother's bosom;
Yea, and your peaceful, lonely bed
Is all with sweet wild flowers inlaid;
And over each earth-pillowed head
The hand of Nature strews them.
Sleep on!

Sleep on, sleep on: I would I were
At rest within your dwelling,—
No more to feel, no more to bear,
The world's falsehood and its care—
The arrows it doth never spare
On him whose feet are failing.
Sleep on!

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM NICOLL.

> "O happy days! for ever, ever gone,
> When o'er the flowery green we ran, we played,
> With blooms bedropt by youthful summer's hand;
> Or in the willow shade."
>
> MICHAEL BRUCE.

ALTHOUGH these papers are to some extent biographical, it is not my intention to enter into any detailed account of the life of William Nicoll, but only to set him before the world as a poet of no mean ability, and to dip into those passages of his short career necessary to vindicate and illustrate that position. It must not for a moment be thought that it is, in any degree, from the fact that he was Robert Nicoll's brother that I have brought him forward here; but solely because he was himself singular above most young men as an earnest scholar, a sincere friend, and a successful lyric poet. If he had not the poetical temperament in the same strong development as his elder brother, he was the more polished and fitter man of the world. For upwards of seven years he stood behind the counter in George Street of Perth, a joyous and lively neighbour, whose face was the brightest, and whose laugh was the loudest; and although his profession was not suggestive of the Fine Arts, he maintained that he could take as much music out of a hat as I could take out of Noah Webster's Dictionary, for that both contained *raw* material, and the contents of the hat were generally the rawest.

Much has been written and said about the hereditary character of genius, and abundant evidence has been brought forward, both negative and affirmative. Robert Nicoll's biographer dwells on this point, and cherishes the belief that it was from his mother that he drew his poetic fire. The historians of Robert Burns come, one and all, to the same conclusion. For myself, I am not so very clear on the subject in either case. The mother is the darling object of every well-constituted young mind; and the Nicolls clung to their mother, in their hour of trouble, with commendable tenacity. Of the two parents, she was the more demonstrative, and in their latter years of conjugal life, was more out in the world than the father; but it would be wrong to conclude, from these slender premisses, that old Robert Nicoll was a mere passive on-looker, signing away his patrimony, and recklessly disregarding the interests of his family; and it would be equally wrong to conclude that no portion of the talents of his two intellectual children descended from him. He was a sensible, well-informed, peaceable man. As a farmer, he played a losing game, but he could watch his cards as well as his neighbours; and, although the summary of his troubles recorded in the life of his son may be true enough in the main, it does not contain the whole truth, because, to take away every appearance of blame, he is set down as weak and facile. He was not so, however; neither was he perfectly innocent of the causes whose effect led to his ruin as a farmer.

William Nicoll was the second of four sons; he was born at Little Tullybeltane in the year 1817, and died at Edinburgh in 1855. He was more of a business man than Robert, and at his early death had saved a little money. Keeping his devotion to the muses in healthful exercise, but in due subjection,—often laughing at politics, though a Radical,—sneering at Jockys and Jennys, though himself as inflammable as phosphorus,—he went on unswervingly in his self-imposed curriculum, as an aspirant to some humble niche in the Republic of Letters. From his earliest days, Robert's longings were after a literary life and a connection with the press, as the great engine of power; but William aimed no higher than the lettered amateur, who could make a song or keep a ledger, as circumstances necessitated or humour prompted. His love-songs are full of the most ardent devotion. The Book of Nature furnished him with images, his own susceptible heart with the initiative and progress of passion; and when the external objects were fleeting and evanescent, he conjured up images of female beauty that take as firm hold of natures like his as the veritable flesh and blood. The following ode will introduce William Nicoll to my readers:—

O where is she, my loved one?
  Where is her happy home?
Do soft winds round her dwelling
  With balmy influence come?

Do Summer flowerets gather
For her their best perfume?
Does Winter come before her
With only half his gloom?

O fair is she, my loved one,
As yon bright stars of Heaven,
And pure as pearly dew-drops
That lightly fall at even.

I feign no tale, my loved one,
I use no guileful art;
I love thee as thou should'st be loved,
With fond and trusting heart.

I seek not Fortune's smile, love,
I ask not Heaven for gold;
To gain thy angel smile, love,
To me were wealth untold.

When others crowd around thee,
And Flattery's voice is near,
Oh! think not of me then, love,
I would not then be dear.

But when thou art alone, love,
In maiden fancy free,
Then, dearest, in thy heart of hearts,
Oh! sometimes think of me.

Early in 1839, William Nicoll paid a visit to his brother's grave, in North Leith Churchyard. Its desolate, far-from-home look affected him much, and led, not only to a tablet being placed over it, but to the following exquisite elegiac lines:—

THE POET'S GRAVE.

Is the poet's grave in some lonely spot,
Is his requiem sung by the wild-bird's throat,
Where the forest flowers are first in bloom,
Is this the place of the poet's tomb?

Do his bones repose on his native hills,
Is his spirit soothed by their dashing rills,
Where the heather waves and the free winds come,
Is this the place of the poet's tomb?

Is his last, long sleep made in hallowed mould,
Where the bones of his fathers rest of old?
Doth the same grey stone record his doom?
Is this the place of the poet's tomb?

No! alas, bright thoughts of a deathless name
With o'ermastering power on his spirit came;
And his childhood's home, and his father's hearth,
He forsook for the busy haunts of earth!

He had dreamed a dream in the moorland glen,
Of oppression and pain 'mongst his fellow men;
He buckled his helmet with clasps of gold,
But fell ere half his tale was told.

Nor tree, nor flower o'er his lowly bed,
Their bright spring tears, or sere leaves shed.
For, 'mid countless graves and a city's gloom,
Sleeps Nature's child, in a nameless tomb.

The current of thought disclosed in these lines is easily perceived. Now, that the end has come, and his brother is laid in a "nameless tomb," William Nicoll deprecates the "bright thought of a deathless name" that carried him into the vortex of southern politics. More congenial to the surviving brother would have been a quiet life nearer home, and a grave on the sylvan bank of the Tay, instead of the heartbreaking struggle at Leeds, and a grave on the margin of the polluted Leith, surrounded by the haunts of wrangling and noisy men. But if "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," how much less is it in him who is shrouded in his last robes, and is the mere passive *reliquæ* in the hands of dejected survivors. Within a few short years William was laid in the same grave; and at this day, if ever a question merited an affirmative answer, it is the one here put,—"Is this the place of the poet's tomb?" for in that narrow grave, and under that single turf, lies all that is earthly of two young men unequivocally poets:—Robert, by the united voice of all who are capable of judging; and William, by what is here printed for the first time, and what is to follow. It is no man's province to tell his fellow-men who are poets and who are rhymesters; but it is no violation of good taste to hazard a strong opinion, when the evidence upon which that opinion is founded is placed alongside. "The Poet's Grave" alone is sufficient to secure for William Nicoll a place amongst our national poets.

The following remarkably truthful and saddened lines were written when William was an apprentice, in his sixteenth year. Youth is the flattering index to the prospective life, "where all is happiness, we deem,"—but sordid thoughts come in, and the struggles of life go on, ending in the destruction of "all we loved and thought so fair."

THE THREE STAGES IN MAN'S LIFE.

What is youth? a joyous dream
Of gay, unclouded light,
Where all is happiness, we deem,
And ocean, mountain, wood, and stream
Speak to our hearts a welcome theme,
With Fancy's visions bright.

What is our manhood? 'tis a fight,
Where sordid thoughts control,
And early feelings, pure and bright
Are hid, like stars in cloudy night,
By wordly thoughts that scorch and blight,
And wither up the soul.

What is our age? a waste of care,
A dreary wilderness,
Where all we loved and thought so fair
Is vanished like the desert air,
And joy is quenched in sad despair,
And utter hopelessness.

The writer of these lines must have been a deep miner in the book of life, before he could realise, at sixteen, facts that are understood to become obvious only as that life progresses. True, a youth is not long in the world before he feels its hardships; but, as these hardships beset him, he generally forgets his former pleasures, and thus drops the poetic faculty—poetry, as an art, consisting mainly in building with choice materials the two castles of "Evil" and "Good." The Serpent had no success with Eve until he introduced the poet's dream, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Milton's great poem is the song of good and evil. Another great poet says,—

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark,
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home.

Here is good and evil beautifully contrasted. The mind is led away to the way-worn traveller on the lonely road: from him to the ever-watchful dog, upon whose sharp-set ear the first echo of his footstep falls; and then to his blazing fire and smiling domestic circle. William Nicoll had drunk deep of Nature's well in his very early days, and her images so impressed his poetic heart that he was able upon any future occasion to call them up.

————————wood and stream,
Speak to our hearts a welcome theme.

But their absence is continually conjuring up the poet within him, and he thus laments it:—

THE CITY PENT.

I wish I were on a green hillside,
With the breezes round me blowing,
While far beneath is the swelling tide,
With murmurs onward flowing;
To hold free converse with Nature there,
And heavenward mount on the wings of prayer.

Oh! would I were in the forest dim,—
For true hearts still 'tis the holiest fane,—
When the gay lark carols his matin hymn,
And the echoing woods return the strain,
No roof but God's blue sky above me;
None nigh but one true heart to love me,

Oh! that I were in a cottage low,
In some far glen, aye there to bide,
With loved ones round me, that dearest grow
Because unloved by all beside.
There wear out, in the joy of the dear caress,
All that life can give of happiness,

Oh! far would I live from the city's din,
Its senseless noise and its sordid care,
Where outside glare hides a dusk within,
And the hollow smile gilds dark despair,
And men barter that God-sent soul away
At the shrine of its image of dross and clay.

Poets of all ages have held up flattering pictures of country life. The woods and fields are ever the burden of their song. The close of a summer shower, so admirably described by James Beattie, presents a vivid contrast to "London after a Shower," by Dean Swift.—

Green earth and all her flowers look up
And smile to Heaven again;
Red life is in the rose's cup.
The spirit of the rain.

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them as they go;
Filth of all hues and odours, seem to tell
What street they sailed from, by their sight and smell.

Yet man, being naturally social, clings to his fellow, and builds a house next door to him. Evils accumulate as numbers increase, but to restrict society to scattered units is the vision of the Utopian.

The politics of the brothers Nicoll were of the ultra-Liberal type, and, upon moving occasions, they allowed these politics to take the lead of every other feeling, merging into the belief that their opponents were to be put down by mere declamation. Discussion was useless, because the end was as easily seen as the beginning. In a moment of natural irritation, I spoke of them as "those eternal politics," "Everlasting as the hills," said William. "Surely, when you have got everything you want, there will be an end to them?" I suggested. "Oh, no! we will want a little more," said the incorrigible *Liberal*.

In this free country, every man is entitled to hold his own political opinions, but it ought to be known to every roaring, political partisan, that unless there is some valuable undercurrent in his character, he becomes despicable in the eyes of his fellows. Some politicians justify and commend the Nicolls for sacrificing their health and their lives in forestalling the issues of a struggle—that was bound to be national or nothing—upon the principle that "Union is strength"; but applauding tacit immolation is not the way to enforce union, though it certainly is the way the discontented counter-politician urges his more facile neighbour on to the sacrifice. Had the Nicolls possessed no greater intellectual endowments than the noisy men that goaded them on, we could have looked upon them simply as leaders in a struggle that was in itself justifiable, though, in its action, selfish and cruel. But the springs of a better life were scorched up, and the poet's grave was opened.

Robert Nicoll said emphatically, "I have written my heart in my poems." William could not have made the same assertion, for, although the poems he has left savour of a depressed spirit, his outer life—which has its origin in the heart—was ever joyous. His countenance open as sunlight, and his eager ear ever greedy of amusement and facetious anecdote, abrupt, ready, sparkling with vivacity; his heart and hand of the same temperature; fond of entertainment, and quite as willing to furnish it. In a letter to his brother, dated 1837, he says: "Mother told me of some one that was dead and some one that had gone daft, but I forget the names."

In all his movements through life, William Nicoll had constantly recurring thoughts of home. Not a tree rose by the wayside but reminded him of the oaks at "Little Tully;"

not a thatched cottage appeared in the bosom of the glen, but he dreamed of the "Coates" away up on the road to Shanwell, where, in his young days, he scudded barefooted about the braes, and "paidled in the burn." Then the schule, the shelfies' nests in the hedges, the blackeys in the woods of Berryhill, and the silver trout wimpling in the shallow pools of the Ordé, were dear to him, and they furnished food for his song after he had left them far behind. Sadder recollections came, too. The lonely burying-ground at Logiebride, with its ghostly head-stones perched up in the moonlight—where he always kept his mother between him and the dyke—and every whisper of the brawling river that came across the eerie tombs, carried with it an undercurrent of terror, and made him move on faster and faster, drawing his mother after him until they were safe past the mill.

Not an old woman with her clean mutch and checked shawl passed him without conjuring up recollections of his mother. No little Maggie came in his way, but up started thoughts of home, like the ready tear in the sympathetic eye.

LINES TO A VERY YOUNG LADY.

My dear little Maggie, so smiling and friendly,
   At evening and morning thou meet'st me the same ;
No cloud on thy wee brow, but open and kindly
   As the love of a dear little Maggie at hame.

Like a sister I'd cherish thee, fair opening blossom,
   And thy sweet winning ways with heart gratitude pay,
And teach thee to shelter thy griefs in my bosom,
   And guide thee from evil through life's stormy way.

But life will us sever, and soon thou'lt forget me,
   And thy smile give to others more happy than I ;
Yet 'tis pleasant, sweet Maggie, for a time to have met thee,
   Like the flower on life's wayside that gladdens the eye.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILLIAM NICOLL—*continued.*

> "Lives of great men all remind us,
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us,
> Footprints on the sands of time."
> LONGFELLOW.

THERE is no feature in man's character less controllable than his stern individualism. It is a necessity of his nature to begin with, and grows with his growth. So long as it is kept in its innate state, it makes the soldier brave and the merchant careful. It instils "the glorious privilege of being independent." But when it becomes morbid, and a father casts off his son, or a son his father, a husband his wife, or a brother his sister, the social circle becomes disorganized, and the remanent members become isolated as the trees of the forest. Few families have retained their corporate character longer than the Nicolls of Little Tullybeltane. William, after he went to Glasgow, on forty pounds a year, sent a present of a shawl to his sister; and when his mother proposed to refund him, he spurned the offer with all the honest pride of his nature. He writes:—"I really mean to get angry with you for your very ungenerous proposal. It was quite as much pleasure, you may rest assured, for me to send Meggie a shawl as it was for her to receive it; and if I do not do more for both her and you than I now do, it is because my circumstances will not allow me to do so, without lessening in some degree my chances of being able, at some future period, to place you in some greater comfort; and you to talk of repaying me is really too bad." Poor man! The Nicolls have not yet arrived at the morbid state of individualism. The old lady to whom this dutiful son wrote as above in 1841 is now, after a long succession of years, living in her far-away home, surrounded by her grand and great-grand-children, wearing out her ninety-third year in all the comfort that belongs to so great an age, and looking wistfully away back over the great expanse of ocean and of time that lies between her and the days when her hopeful sons began to stir the interests of their fellow-men, and gave indications of coming greatness that were, alas! destined never to be fully realised. Then, when the Sabbath comes round, she is mounted on horseback, and rides away to church, to hear the "minister from Scotland,"—whose appointment cost her so much anxiety five years before,—preaching the simple doctrines of Presbyterianism, within ear-shot of Maoridom, holding in her hand the same Bible that she carried, tied in a snow-white handkerchief, alongside of Elder John, when he trudged away to the Seceder Kirk at Auchtergaven, nearly a century ago.

There is nothing very singular in this destiny, but there is an interesting family involved and an individualism to deprecate. In matters of religion, the Nicolls were singularly strict. Robert, when at Leeds, was so engrossed in politics, that William was afraid he might be led away from matters of infinitely greater moment, and in 1837 he writes him from Perth:—"Aunt Mary, at the instigation of grandfather, has, with a laudable anxiety for your religious improvement, desired the Rev. David Young to write you an evangelical letter,—I cannot get a better expression,—and which, on my seeing him yesterday, he said he would write very shortly. Of course, you will send him a becoming answer, more especially as David is a very particular admirer of yours. *Apropos* of religion, you do not seem to have the organ of veneration—in which phrenologists, I think, place all religious feeling—so fully developed as might be wished. In some of your articles, at least, you seem to delight in getting hold of a Scripture text by the ear, and wrenching it as remorselessly to your purpose as I would a Scotch proverb. Take my word for it, it is an ugly habit, and I would recommend you to get rid of it as quickly as possible."

This is the social wholeness which forms the very germ of happy human life. Here are the grandfather, the aunt, the clerical adviser, and the brother, all uniting in a gentle remonstrance; not that they had any absolute misgivings as to the state of Robert's religious feeling, but that they saw, with regret, by what came from his pen, that he was throwing himself into the arms of a frenzied political party, reckless alike of health, life, and everything that intellectual or physical man has in his power to stake.

Death itself does not necessarily fuse the golden chain that binds brother to brother while the heart of one continues to throb. After Robert Nicoll had been fifteen years in his grave, we find William writing to Mr. James Sprunt, late of the *Perthshire Advertiser* :—" In your review of the new edition of my brother's poems, write what you feel to be true. If you condemn, I am sure it will be with a tender and loving hand; and when you have room to praise, you will, I know, do so in no niggard terms. In any case, intelligent and hearty appreciation is always to be preferred to indiscriminate praise." Mr. Sprunt was the valued friend of both the Nicolls. Born in the same homestead, educated at the same school, and actuated by the same devotion to literary matters, the three had twenty years of close companionship.

It is matter for study how or why two straw-roofed cottages, perched on the lower fringe of the Grampian Hills, should send forth three such eager aspirants after the honours of the " Fourth Estate." However much may have been due to original formation of mind, it will readily be admitted that the companionship I refer to excited and nursed that formation, leading to commendable rivalship and such irrepressible longings after self-culture, that the three hill-fledglings became birds of mark, and have left tracings of their existence wherever they have been. It matters little how effaceable these tracings may turn out to be. It is generally, a very infinitesimal portion of men's sayings and doings that meets the eye of a second or third generation.

Robert Nicoll had written a book, and William was naturally desirous of following his example; but he dreaded failure, " There is no being," he used to say, " for whom I have a greater contempt than the man who writes a really bad book, except, indeed, that greater ass who never reads a good one." This mysterious desire for literary employment manifests itself in all circumstances, and in every rank of life. Queen Victoria herself, the greatest potentate on earth, has written a book,—an unpretentious little book,—full of heart, simple and unaffected. *Ion*, the best tragedy since Otway, was written under the shadow of Westminster Hall. In Scotland the three most pungent authors and wits of our day, have been a clergyman of the Church of England, a Judge of the Supreme Court, and a learned Professor. To follow in the wake of such literary magnates, though at a remote distance, is a laudable ambition, and William Nicoll made it the object of his night and morning's study; but politics would break in, and he was off at a tangent. On one occasion, after reciting one of his beautiful lyrics to me, he said, "I am going away to a Radical meeting in 'Glencoe.'" "Have you nothing else to take up your mind with?" I enquired. "O, yes," he replied, "but then these Powmarie weavers."

No inducement, no prospect of literary fame or worldly greatness, could make him shake off "the folk o' Auchtergaen." They were ever present with him. When he moved from one town to another, he limbered them up as his stock-in-trade. When New Year's Day in Glasgow came round, it was not enough for William to join the young friends about him in celebrating the festive season, but in the midst of personal enjoyment, in which he took a liberal share, his mind sought his native home; and while handing about his "bread and cheese and a dram," as was the custom round old St. Mungo's, how gratified he would have been if, by any possible witchcraft, he could have presented the affectionate offering to his mother and sister. He felt for the moment, "how fleet is a glance of the mind." But when the lull of the winter morning came to the relief of his exhausted spirits, he sat down and wrote to Tulliebeltane:—

My Dear Mother,—A good New-Year and a merry Handsel-Monday to you, and many returns *during* the season, as the Highlandman said.

After referring to a neighbour of his mother's who had given her son an outfit that cost £400, he goes on to say:—

What a pity my mother had not, by some lucky Providence, £400 to give me, because, if she had, who knows but by this time I might have had my name

Emblazoned on the mighty city walls,
In German text, red ink, and capitals,

as Robert used to say. However, and upon the whole, you are a very good mother, "for a Scotch mother;" and I would not give my mother for any mother in the parish, with forty times £400 hangin' in a pock o'er her shouther.—Yours very affectionately,

Willm. Nicoll.

After thus paying his *devoirs* to his mother, he turns to his sister, and delaying four days, sends her the following simple, yet beautiful, metrical prayer:—

A GOOD NEW-YEAR.

I wish thee a good New-Year,
My little gentle sister dear;
And may the one now entering in
Be kind as ere the past hath been,
And brighter still appear.

And as it runs, this good New-Year,
Free be thy heart from aught might fear;
And as its months so quickly flee,
May brightest happiness on thee
Shed joys undimmed and clear.

Heaven give thee many good New-Years,
And save thy heart from sorrow's tears,
And strew thy path with fairest flowers,
Till thy pure soul to heavenly bowers
Shall wing its way from here.

With the hot, youthful blood dancing merrily in his veins, and his "shining morning face," insuring him a welcome wherever he went, it cannot be supposed that William Nicoll escaped the influence of the tender passion. On the contrary, he was continually in love, and consequently occasionally made woeful ballads. He has written the progress and unsatisfactory ending of one of these attachments in terms that leave us little to guess. In this instance he has certainly "written his heart in his poems:—

Oh! rosy's thy lip, my Mary,
And thy blushing cheek is fair,
An' white and modest is thy brow,
Like the raven's wing thy hair;
But rosy lip nor blushing cheek,
Tho' baith be fair to see,
Nor e'en thy kindly, gentle smile,
Has made thee dear to me.

Not for thy skin so white, Mary,
Nor thy e'en so bright and blue,
That o' them a' that gang sae braw
I lo'e nae ane but you.
'Twas thy heart and mind sae pure, Mary,
So innocent of art,
That taught me first to love, Mary,
And won frae me my heart.

Lang hae I lo'ed thee dearly,
  And wi' high and holy pride,
And when sorrow dark came round me,
  Like a star thou didst me guide.
Ah! promise to be mine, Mary,
  And live for me alone,
For weel thou kens, my Mary dear,
  My heart is all thine own.

Matters progress favourably, and Mary receives another ovation :—

Oh! fair is the primrose in yon woody valley,
An' modest the mossflower on yon castle wa',
The gowdspink is sweet in its lonely retreat,
And fair blooms the gowan in yonder green shaw;
But Mary is fairer than primrose or mossflower,
To find one to peer her, search cottage or ha',
And tho' sweet be the gowan, the primrose, and mossflower,
Far dearer is Mary to me than them a'.

Oh! kings may be proud of their rank and their treasure,
But a pleasure so pure they can ne'er know or feel,
As mine when I clasp the loved one to my bosom,
Who, blushing, scarce hides what she fain would conceal.
Oh! bliss so delightful, who would ever change it
For the world and its grandeur, its pain and its guile.
No! take frae me a' thing, an' leave but thee, dearest,
Wi' truth in thy blue een, and love in thy smile.

But, "the course of true love never did run smooth." Observe a young lady, who has been courted and jilted by some heartless scamp, stand up in a Court of Justice and tell her story. Letters are read, full of devotion, and she tells of his incessant visits. But!!! "last spring he began to cool." This is the invariable tale, and thus the faithless Mary falls from her allegiance.

I fondly deemed another love
  Would drive thine image from my heart.
I said, "Why should I constant prove,
  To one all heedless of my smart?"
Another's brow may prove as fair,
  Another's eye as bright as thine.
I'll sigh no more, I'll have no care,
  Nor happiness to love resign.

I'll learn to live on other smiles,
  Since she I love ne'er smiles on me:
I'll laugh at woman's power and wiles,
  And joy her pride hath made me free,
I even wished to meet thine eye,
  That thou might'st see him calm and cold,
Whose brow erst flushed if thou wert nigh
  With burning thoughts might ne'er be told.

I do not know where the poet found the Laggan referred to below. It was perhaps suggested to his mind by the possession of his pedagogian namesake, "the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills." Mary does not come, and he discharges her without a certificate, sympathising with his successors, yet lamenting his own inability to forget her:—

The e'enin falls on Laggan lea,
  An' wanderin' lone by Laggan burn,
I mourn o'er joys ha'e flown frae me,
  My heart the while wi' anguish torn.
Oh! Mary, why did Nature gie
  Sae fause a heart a face so fair?
And foolish! why did I to thee,
  Gie love nae ane on earth might share.

Hast thou forgot the solemn vows
  That ye to me sae oft hae gi'en?
The hazel braes, the broomy knowes,
  Where we ha'e wandered oft at e'en?
Hast thou forgot the birken bush?
  Its scented branch that o'er us hung,
The fond embrace, the mutual blush,
  While lip and heart together clung.

Thou mayest forget; thy fickle love,
  Once mine, may be another's now,
Till he, too late, like me may prove,
  That changeful as the winds art thou.
Yet frail and faulty as thou art,
  My love to hate I canna turn;
Still for thee pleads my steadfast heart,
  Affections fond still wildly burn.

CHAPTER XV.

WILLIAM NICOLL—*continued.*

"No sooner fired than doth the taper burn,
No sooner born than to the grave we turn;
So fleet our days, so quick our glass doth run,
Our birth is nothing but our death begun,
Our cradle rocks us nearer to our tomb."
Inscription on a tombstone in Abernethy Churchyard.

NOTHING was more repugnant to the spirit of Robert and William Nicoll than laying themselves under obligation to relations or acquaintances. It was their rock in the ocean of life. Robert says: "That money of R.'s hangs like a millstone about my neck." William writes: "Personally I have some right to speak, as I was at the time most strongly opposed to any use being made of Sir William's (Molesworth) kindness." Mr. Kingsley, in his review of Robert Nicoll's poems, says: "Whether carrying *Kenilworth* in his plaid while herding, or selling currants and whisky as the Perth storekeeper's apprentice, or keeping his little circulating library in Dundee, tormenting his pure heart with the thought of the twenty pounds which his mother has borrowed to start him." William Nicoll resents these statements as misapplied, and to himself an aggravation of the millstone's weight, involving, as it does, a charge of extreme poverty against his family—a deep, sunken penury to which they were utter strangers. He was clear for rejecting Sir William Molesworth's gift of fifty pounds. But he was too late; Mr. Tait had got the money, and laid it out, to the best of his judgment, in Robert's interest. Thus a millstone is provided for William also. In the following letter he tries to throw it off, and no doubt succeeds; but the public was left to conclude that Robert Nicoll's otherwise comfortless deathbed was cheered by the liberal gratuity of Sir William Molesworth:—

I had read the critique in the *North British* which you had prefixed to the "Life." The spirit in which it is written is so kind and cordial, that I notice with reluctance a few trifling errors as to fact into which he has inadvertently fallen. I shall give two instances of what I mean. He allows my brother credit for magnanimity in accepting the fifty pounds from Sir William Molesworth without "any bluster of independence." In the circumstances this statement is a little cruel. To the best of my recollection, Sir William's remittance was received the day before Robert's death, and when, consequently, he was in no condition to receive or to reject Sir William's kindness. Not knowing my brother's address, the money was sent to Mr. Tait, who received it and spent it, no doubt properly, at his own will and pleasure.

The reviewer, from not being personally acquainted with my brother, in my opinion, while over-rating him in some points under-rates him in others. Sir William's letter distinctly says that he considered he owed his election to my brother's exertions;—he brought him forward, wrote him up, spoke at public meetings, and personally canvassed the constituency in his favour. Few agents could have done the work he did, and none would have done it for ten times £50. In consequence of my brother's disinterested exertions Sir William's election expenses were under £500; while his opponent, Sir John Beckett's, were estimated as high as £10,000—an exaggeration in all likelihood, but showing that the real sum was very great. It was, therefore, with some truth as well as delicacy that Sir William represented the sum he sent my brother as an acknowledgment of services rendered, and not as a charitable donation. Personally, I have some right to speak, as I was at the time most strongly opposed to any use being made of Sir William's kindness.

Mr. Kingsley's critique was fair in intention, but founded on ill-formed data. The proud, though tender-hearted brother winces under its erroneous conclusions, and in a letter to Mr. Sprunt he says:—"The critique at the beginning of the volume is by Rev. Mr. Kingsley. I think you will agree with me that Robert, in his personal character, was a more manly fellow than the rector gives him credit for; and also that his political creed was somewhat wider and deeper than that of his reverence, as the experience of every year would, if attended to, by this time have taught the critic. But 'None so blind,' &c."

William Nicoll had some misgivings as to the propriety of Robert accepting R.'s money, although volunteered in a friendly way. "Hang the fellow," he said, "my brother will have to lie and cheat, or do anything he desires him, and agree with him in every one of his statements, however absurd he may feel them to be." "The auld laird o' Muckersie," he would continue, "had helped a facile friend, and got him into his toils. The laird was partial to the public-house; but not relishing the idea of going alone, he always had recourse to his bondman. John was ready at all times, never gainsaying the laird. 'Your good health,' the laird would say. 'So be it, sir,' John would reply. 'Here's a good hairst, John.' 'So be it, sir,' 'Merry days to honest fellows, John.' 'So be it, sir.' The laird began eventually to suspect that John's concurrences were more conciliatory than genuine, and, to test him, he one morning said emphatically, 'Here's t'ye, John; may the devil take ye.' 'So be it, sir.' This is the way all borrowers of money are expected to act; but I daresay the governor will have enough to do with Robert."

The love episode presented in a former chapter must have preceded the following in point of date, if the number of the manuscript is to be taken as evidence; but that is a matter in which I do not offer any opinion, because I had no knowledge of the circumstances, further than can be learned from the narrative verses. On the contrary, I knew well the progress of the love drama which now begins. It embraced some years, was fully reciprocated, and was the subject of many more verses than can be now recovered.

William Nicoll's position denied him the privileges of a marrying man; and, however the passion of love may be toyed with, fair ladies have a wholesome dread of undue procrastination. Another lover presented himself, and William, after due warning, lost the heat. I would not have prefaced these lyrics in this circumstantial way, were it not that truth gives vitality to verse. A song of real love is like a landscape painted from nature, while the dreamings of a visionary imagination take no hold of the mind, and, like their type, sink day by day. The poet attributes no blame to his mistress, but regrets the destiny that parts them, and bids her farewell in an ode that justifies every word I have said of him as a poet and a man.

FAIR ART THOU.

Fair art thou as the breaking
  Of the light of orient morn,
When the gentle winds are shaking
  The dewdrops from the thorn.

My heart with joy hath bounded,
  In hill and woodland glen,
Yet with Nature all surrounded,
  Thou hast been with me then.

For floweret, leaf, and fountain,
  All that's beautiful to see,
In dale or lofty mountain,
  Was mingled still with thee.

The little skylark borrows
From thee her blithest lay,
And the e'enin' mavis sorrows
Because thou art away.

The breath of even dying,
Among the young green leaves,
Thy name is softly sighing,
So fond drawn fancy weaves.

OH! DEARLY SHE LO'ES ME.

O, dear is she that lo'es me,
Though her name I daurna tell;
And fair is she that lo'es me,
As the daisy in yon dell.

An' modest as the wee moss-rose,
That grows itself alone,
An' saft the glances o' her eye
As dusk when the sun is gone.

Her face aye beams wi' rosy smiles,
Like an angel bright is she;
An' a' her ither gifts aboon,
Oh! dearly she lo'es me.

MY CHARMING FAIR.

O weel I like the blush o' morn,
When the flowers are wet wi' dew,
And the rose-leaf blooms its freshest tints,
The lily its brightest hue.

O weel I like the summer woods,
When the sun's in the lift sae hie,
An' the wee bird's throat wi' its cheerfu' note,
Wakes Nature's melodie.

An' weel I like the siller burn,
An' its banks o' emerald green;
But dearer than a' 's the happy hour
'Neath the scented birchen screen.

An' then a blink o' purest love
Wi' my bonny ——— I'll share,
An' I'll press to a heart that's a' her ain,
My artless, charming fair.

FAREWELL.

Adieu! sweet maid, adieu for ever.
Once how loved let Memory tell;
One fond kiss, and then we sever,
One bitter pang, and then farewell.
Yet e'er we part, say will one thought,
One kindly thought e'er turn on him,
Whose early love unstained, unbought,
Made thee the goddess of his dream.

Wilt thou with interest view his path,
  Along of life the stormy wave,
Or should he sink beneath its wrath,
  One tear shed o'er his nameless grave?
Wilt thou when others loud condemn,
  In accents mild defend his name,
Whose heart to thee, if not to them,
  Once burned with friendship's purest flame?

E'en should the world's cankerous breath,
  His name with blighting influence sear,
Wilt thou even in that worse than death,
  Remember that he once was dear,
And o'er his frailties draw a veil,
  And deem in secret he may mourn,
The heart from purity may fail,
  Then seek to hide regret in scorn.

And when another voice is sweet,
  Unto thy ear as once was mine—
When other eyes responsive meet
  With answering thought each glance of thine,—
Oh! think not of me then, I'd be
  No rude intruder on thy joy;
But hours like these too quickly flee,
  And sorrows come, and cares annoy.

But should the hand of sorrow cloud
  In coming years that brow so fair,
Though newer scenes may memory shroud,
  That sorrow let my friendship share;
But now we part; alas! for ever,
  No tie but that which memory brings
Remains for worldly cares to sever,
  And to that tie the heart still clings.

And midst the world's cares and sadness,
  I'll think of thee as what thou wert,
My early love, when joy and gladness
  Danced gaily through my youthful heart.
Again adieu! again endeavour,
  To crush the thoughts my bosom swell,
And while this heart forgets thee never,
  With bursting sigh I say farewell!

Poets enjoy no immunity from the ills of life; they have rather to bear them in aggravation. We read in fabled history of "minstrels old," and "poets with loose beard and hoary hair;" but in our experience the life of the true bard has been troublous and circumscribed. William Nicoll was now approaching that period of life so fatal to poets of more illustrious name. The dreaded Thirty-seven—final to Byron, and Burns, and Landon, and Tannahill, and a thousand others—was closing in upon him. But he was too modest to classify himself, even at the remote bottom of such a galaxy, and their guerdon of death formed no item in his measurements of life. His was no drained existence. He felt vital as the full-orbed morning. "The heyday in the blood" was unimpaired. But while his constitution was unscathed, and his visions of long life were neither unnatural nor presumptuous, word came to a dear friend's house that William was stricken down with fever.

The literary turn of the two brothers is finely illustrated by the fact that Robert, at the close of his life, was assiduously cared for by Mr. Tait and Mr. Johnstone, both respectable publishers of Edinburgh; and William, during a previous illness, was a source of deep anxiety to the family of Mr. Nichol, another respectable Edinburgh publisher. They sent a valued, confidential servant to nurse him, and he weathered that illness. He strictly forbade any notice whatever being sent to his mother or those at home, and bore up stoutly against a rather serious attack. But, unfortunately, as a sequel, those immediately about him, having regard to the injunctions he had laid upon them during his former illness, were reluctant to alarm his more distant friends, when he was prostrated by the disease which speedily carried him to his grave, consequently few of them knew of anything wrong until they heard of his death. I learned at the time, and it has been again confirmed, that from the first his case was hopeless, and that any excitement would be likely to facilitate the disease, while no attention or sympathy could possibly stay its progress.

As I have claimed for William Nicoll the character of a genuine lyric poet, I have comfined myself, in the quotations given, to that species of composition, although he wrote many pieces, both political and humorous.

In person he was rather above the middle height, fair complexioned, with deep grey eyes; in manners affable, insinuating, and sprightly; in social life, warm and unsuspicious, though somewhat violent in his attachments, and merciless in his denunciations; in love, tender and faithful; impatient of contradiction; a dutiful son; an affectionate brother, and a firm friend. With all these endearing qualities in healthful action, he was called upon in middle life to gird up his loins, and go away upon that companionless journey that has its end on the confines of the two worlds, beyond which mankind have no ties, for we are told they "shall be like the angels of God in heaven."

CHAPTER XVI.

JAMES STEWART.

"Wit will never make a man rich."—JOHNSON.

THERE is no pitfall so ensnaring to the poet as that of writing too much. The incessant outpouring of the human mind does not only waste the physical structure of life, but exhausts and impoverishes the mental. However unpoetical the thought may be, a man can only do *so* much. There is a point of exhaustion beyond which he cannot go: and if the prescribed talent is nursed and concentrated, it follows as a matter of certainty that what it is bestowed on will be thereby enhanced. Quality will produce quantity, but quantity will not produce quality. A really good poem does not require length to make it acceptable, and an indifferent poem cannot be too short. If Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore" and Tennyson's "In Memoriam" were each put into the crucible, the former, notwithstanding its very limited proportions, would perhaps be found to contain more "raw material" than its more lengthy competitor. Scarcely anything that a man can set his head or hand to, but he will do better in small quantity than he will do in larger. This is especially the law of verse-making. Had the poor wayward shoemaker whose name stands at the top of this essay settled down to finish and correct his poem on "Birnam," which he began so auspiciously, he might have rendered himself of some account amongst the

Scottish poets; but it suited his erratic humour better to cast pebbles into the great ocean of forgetfulness.

The life and works of James Stewart, published in 1857, give such ample details of both, that there is little for me to add, except such matters as came under my own immediate knowledge. His poem, "The Defence, a Presbyterian Speech," I undertook to sell for him at his earnest request, cautioning him at the same time that he would raise himself enemies by its free circulation. He admitted that he would, but, falling back on the facts, he said emphatically, "They deserve it." The satire is very cleverly written, and pungent to severity; but it is so excessively Byronic that it becomes stale on a full perusal. One verse will show how closely he followed his model, and how very capable he was of doing it:—

"All honourable men" of good condition,
  Men of much wealth and more respectability;
For the best reference see their neat petition,
  Penn'd and presented with so much civility;
Wherein they tell you of the strange position,
  They stand in—so on—and with great humility
Beg that your reverences would form a junto,
The conduct of some person to look into.

I knew nothing of the merits of the affair except what could be understood from the satire itself, but the ostensible facts were: The Presbytery of Dunkeld were handling one of their number, right or wrong, with much severity, and the accused, turning to bay, hurled at his co-Presbyters the defiance of an unbridled gladiator—

Shall I be "baited with the rabble's curse?"
  Shall my best feelings to the stake be bound?
Shall I not retributively emburse
  The assassin who has dealt the festering wound?
Prepare for payment, open each your purse,
  You shall get twenty shillings in the pound,
And double interest where 'tis longest due—
Like Banquo's offspring, pass now in review.

Two characteristics of Stewart's time, which are quite unknown now, he has recorded for coming generations, and done it well. The Highland exodus which occurred in August of each successive year, when men and women, boys and girls, left their homes among the mountains, and wandered across country to the Lothian harvest, he has described beautifully in the ballad of—

ALLAN MAC ALLAN DHU.

Wauken, O wauken, Allan Mac Allan Dhu,
High Carn Gower gleams red in the sun;
Wauken, O wauken, Allan Mac Allan Dhu,
The hairst's i' the south, where a fee can be won.

Tak' a wee pickle meal on the road to mak' sturroch;
Tie your brogues, Allan Dhu, hasten and run,
Allan Mac Allan Dhu, why do ye furroch?
The hairst's i' the south, where a fee can be won.

Fear na but Allan has donned his blue bonnet,
There's haste in his looks, there's dew on his shoon;
Eager, yet kindly, he cheers on his Shanet,
While Shanet, puir lassie, mair fain wad lie doon.

The mists o' Benvrackie nae langer enfauld him;
He rins wi' the Tummel, he marches wi' Tay,
The steep craigs o' Birnam canna withaud him,—
He hails the braw Lowlands wi' Highland "Good-day."

Far, far he wanders for Sassenach siller,
Sair, sair he labours that siller to gain;
A part's for the laird, and part for the miller,
Allan Dhu's honest—they'll baith get their ain.

Say na poor Allan is beggarly greedy,
Say that he's provident—naething's mair true;
Allan has wants, but amang a' the needy,
Charity hasna beheld Allan Dhu.

What though the Lowlander jeers honest Allan?
Allan has virtues a king might revere;
Wha that has stappit within his clay hallan,
Faund unproffered welcome or unproffered cheer?

Be that Lowlander famished 'mid fulness and plenty,
Unhoused when the north winds shall raise their halloo,
Unheard in his wailing, uncheer'd by his dainty,
Wha winna show kindness to Mac Allan Dhu.

The valley of the Almond, from the head of the Sma' Glen to Logie, and the hollow ground which lies at the foot of the lower Grampians, between Logie and the head of Glenshee, were long the retreat of the smuggler. I remember well seeing them about the year 1810, in bands of six or seven, all mounted on sturdy half-bred horses, with a keg on each side of the saddle, brushing past my father's farm about ten o'clock at night on their way to Stirling. So exceedingly punctual were they, that we considered the rattle of their horses' feet as good an indicator of time as the striking of a clock; and in any dispute about the hour, the question would be put, "Are the smugglers past?" Unless a large body of Excise had been mustered, these bands could not be overcome. This state of matters continued till 1824, when a troop of Scots Greys was stationed at Crieff to assist the Excise and awe the contrabandists. It was popularly said that, before a final surrender, the smugglers fought a pitched battle with the Greys at Amulree, and beat them. James Stewart celebrated this fight in a song. Some people say two parties aided in composing it, and I think that very likely, for the set inserted in Stewart's Poems is a *travestie* of the set I have heard from the poet himself. Except as an epilogue to the history of the Highland smugglers, the song is really worth nothing. A quotation will suffice:—

DONALD AND HIS SMUGGLED DRAP.

December on the first, I hear,
  A party o' our gude Scotch Greys
Went up amang the mountaineers,
  Some whisky from the rogues to seize.
They were equipped from top to toe
  For any foe upon the spot;
Yet a' they wanted was to seize
  Poor Donald wi' his smuggled drap.

* * * *

When the action it was o'er,
  A horseman lay upon the plain;
Says Sandy unto Donald—"Man!
  We've killed ane o' the bearded men!"
But up he got, and aff he ran,
  And straight to Amulree he flew;—
He left the rest to do their best,
  As they had done at Waterloo.

* * * *

Quo' Donald, when the fight was done—
  "We'll took a dram, the best we hae."
"That's right, quo Dugald; "But I'm shoore,
  They got a hurry doun the brae."

This, it is said, ended that daring style of smuggling which, without enriching the parties engaged in it, demoralised the country to an extent from which it has not yet quite recovered. The main features of the Amulree battle are little to be depended on, however. Those who have seen skirmishes between mounted soldiers and an undisciplined rabble, know how instantaneous the rout always is. In

1819, I saw in Glasgow ten thousand valorous, boasting, half-armed men, moved along a broad thoroughfare, as fast as such a dense mass could be moved, by twenty mounted dragoons galloping across behind them, and pushing them on with the broadsides of their horses and the broadsides of their sabres, while the only resistance was howls of execration. An undisciplined mob shrinks instinctively before mounted soldiers.

Although somewhat satirically disposed, Stewart was a true student of Nature, and by no means destitute of pathos. His ballad of "Mary Rose" contains some beautiful passages. Mary has reached fifty years, and begins to look back, a sad business:—

The blinks o' fifty summer suns
Had bleached her silken hair;
Whaur ance a dimple gemmed her cheek
A wrinkle furrowed there.
Yet still she would in blythesome mood,
Count owre and owre her joes;
Though ane by ane cooled in his love,
And slighted Mary Rose.

Then her gentle tale is told how Mary is every little boy's auntie, never wanting in times of distress, and by inveterate practice a nurse and a doctor:—

O sweetly, sweetly, Mary sang
The cradle *balaloo*
To mony a mither's waukrife bairn,
Till sleep had smoothed its brou.
Nane kent the bairnies' frets and ails,
Nane mixed the healing dose,
Nor band their bruises, cuts, and scars,
Like gentle Mary Rose.

Then her admirer leaves home to enter the struggle of life, and for twenty years goes on successfully, youth bearing up against trouble and years "wending swiftly by":—

In after years I left my hame,
'Mang strangers to sojourn;
If sorrow missed me when awa,
It waited my return:—
I found my faither 'neath the yird,
My mither bowed wi' woes;
And death!—oh, death!—had stown awa
Kind, couthy Mary Rose.

CHAPTER XVII.

JAMES STEWART—*continued.*

"Gather the rosebuds while you may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And that same flower which blooms to-day,
To-morrow shall be dying."
HERRICK.

THE active and intelligent mind needs no promptings, and it is impatient of control: no external circumstances will drive it from its prescribed sphere of action, and its workings in that sphere defy all check. Like fire or water pent up, it may be held in control for some measured time, but only to burst forth with more impetuous boundings. The prisoner of Gisors had such a passion for sculpture that he carved the walls of his cell into the history of "Christ's Incarnation." Sir Isaac Newton had such a veneration for the great laws of Nature, that an apple could not fall to the ground without suggesting to his mind some of her more recondite principles. When James Watt was constructing the most scientific of all "parallel motions," his mind ran incessantly on the varied lines and curves travelled over by moving arms on fixed centres, until it settled on this simple abstract fact, that any upright rod, moving between two opposing semicircles of equal diameter, must necessarily be perfectly parallel in its action. George Moreland painted his famous picture, "Watering the Horse," on terms that he be allowed a sixpenny loaf and a pint of beer during the work, and a dinner of fried liver when he was done! Bunyan wrote the grandest allegory the world has ever seen in the common gaol at Bedford. Hood wrote "Miss Kilmansegge" while he was prostrated with disease and continual spitting of blood. Dodd composed his "Prison Thoughts" while he was under sentence of death! No position in life will thoroughly damp the ardour of the "ruling passion," whatever that passion may be. If writing poetry is a disease, it defies the whole faculty of physicians. No privation, no risk of giving offence, no desertion, no warning, affords the slightest relief. When the love of numbers has fairly settled itself in the constitution, the remedy is postponed to the end of life.

If poetry is to be understood as language spoken from the heart to the heart, and bearing on its floating wings the impressions of unseen nature, suggested by those features which are seen and felt, how intensely of that character are the following lines on the moon. James Stewart was a humble Scotchman, but I do not know anything finer in the whole range of his country's poetry than these five verses. We have no reason to conclude that the muse has sighed an eternal farewell to Auld Scotland so long as pieces of such unquestionable merit are produced by her sons. There is, no doubt, to some minds, a charm in the swollen and inflated periods which are the leading characteristics of the present school of poetry: and perhaps they would be a charm to all if they were really understood; but, unfortunately, the great mass of the poetry issuing from the press at present is, to the greater portion of the reading public, a sealed book. There is no mystery, no weak platitude in the ideas suggested by Stewart—that the new moon is like a rent in the veil of the world of light, and that the half-moon is like a skiff upon which the souls of the ransomed sail to the world of bliss:—

THE MOON.

O bonnily, bonnily, shines the moon,
On her first an' youthfu' nicht:—
She seems to the e'e like a rent i' the veil
That shades the land o' licht—
And cheerily thro' that rent there strays
To earth a blessed gleam,
Like a distant joy-fire's kindling blaze,
Or the fairy licht that quenchless plays
Round Memory's early dream.

An' wha that sees the bonny half-moon
Sailin' yon ocean o' air,
But deems her a skiff wherein ransomed souls
To lands o' bliss repair?—
And fearlessly on that heavenly sea,
Onward and onward she hies;
In number like flowers on the green summer lea
Are the beacons o' licht, shining aye bonnilie,
To guide her to paradise.

O bonnily shines the broad, round moon—
  The lovliest star o' nicht—
When she glides owre the arch o' a cloudless sky,
  In the beauty o' snawy licht.
An' O how saftly her radiance fa's
  On mountain, muir, an' glen,
In a silvery veil o' gossamer gauze,
While a holy stillness reigns that awes
  The wonderin' minds o' men!

O bonnily, bonnily, shines the moon,
  Jinkin 'mang cloudlets grey;
Anon she's hidden, anon she's seen,—
  So a wee young lassie at play
Will peep owre the hicht o' her blithe mither's knee,
  Wi' a pawky innocent grace,
An' think hersel' hid when she closes her e'e,
Then fondly we smile at her frolicsome glee,
  An' bless her bonny sweet face.

Shine on, shine on, thou bonny broad moon!
  O, neither set nor wane!
Day's for the sun, but the gloamin an' nicht
  Are thine and thy kindred's alane.
Warmly and brichtly the sunbeams flow
  In the strength of their glory at noon,
But they canna enkindle that soul-felt glow,
An' those raptures o' fancy which young poets know,
  Like the beams o' the bonny round moon.

Equal in beauty is the address to a fly surviving winter. The *Edinburgh Review* spoke of this poem at the time of its publication in terms of high approval. I can only make room for two stanzas:—

TO A FLY SURVIVING WINTER.

What were thy thochts when a' thy kith and kin
Fell fast around thee as a shower o' rain,
Or forest foliage, when November's wind
Sings through the boughs his wild bravura strains?
Surely thy wee bit heart was rent in twain,
Thus left to be the hindmost o' thy race;
Perhaps philosophy taught thee how vain
It was to mourn an' break thine inward peace:
Plato could not have reason'd better in thy case.

* * * * *

An' thou, our co-mate, rub thy palms for glee!
Soon in thine eyes exultingly shall spring
Warm tears o' joy; prepare thyself to see
A new creation o' thy kindred wing.
O sic a busying, sic a fluttering,

As there will be amon' the Johnny Raws,
Gath'rin' around thee in a cloudy bing,
Anxious to ken the Charter an' their laws—
To hear thy queer auld cracks, an' note thy pithy saws!

During his stay in Crieff, James Stewart fell into one of these unfortunate adventures to which his impulsive nature laid him open, and which are frequently the penalty of being too clever. He had improvised a song for a charity concert, at the urgent request of the parties concerned, and gave it the very comprehensive title, "Fou's-can-haud." The song took immensely, and, for a time, it was the town talk. Stewart must certainly have had the song *in retentis*: it is too good for a sitting. Besides, he must have had some unfortunate Celt in his eye when he was composing it. The likeness has too much identity for a random effort, and the characters are too vivid to be entirely imaginary. Yet no one, however much satisfied that he was the sitter, was entitled to appropriate the picture to himself, and, in deference to that self-adopted belief, to plot and carry out deliberate revenge.

Stewart, according to his own story, and the report current in Crieff at the time, was waylaid by three *friends*, and by the offer of a dram, was induced to enter a *howff*, the landlord and landlady of which were of the true Celtic breed, and had come to the conclusion that they were the veritable parties referred to in the ballad. No sooner had the conspirators got the poor poet inside than they bolted themselves and then *bolted* the door, leaving him to the tender mercies of the enraged landlord and landlady. The latter flew at him like a pythoness, and, before he had time to reconnoitre the foe, laid him flat on the floor with one stroke of the kitchen poker; while the husband got above him, and made way to get at his jugular vein with an open knife. The poet was stunned by this unexpected attack, and for a time he lay in the power of his merciless assailants, but the first glance of the brandished weapon roused the demon within him, and throwing them off by one strong convulsive effort, he started to his feet, and wrenching the poker from the fair lady he gave the pair a terrible mauling. Then, finding the door locked outside, he burst through one of the windows, and, in an instant, was on the street, flourishing the poker like a roused maniac. This rendered Crieff too hot for James, and within a few days he was off to Dunkeld:—

FOUSCANHAUD.

Are you be climb the hielant hill,
  To shoots the bonny moor-cock?
Are you be sneeshan in a mull,
  To gie a sneesh to poor folk?
Here's your good health, sir, by the nose;
That be good snuff, sir, me suppose—
A bonnie box, too—hoo her close?
  You'll no be faund a box so grand
  In ony hielant shentle's hand—
The Sass'nachs braw be our folk.

Did you'll be heard o' Fou's-can-haud?
  Her nainsel just be me, man;
Are you be weary, dull, or sad?
  Just come her drink an' prie, man.
The better drink no cross your mouth—
The better drink no kill your drouth—
As fack's the death me tells the truth,
  So you just micht come in the night,
  To her nain house to see the sicht,
Get famous funs an' glee, man.

Mo chaileag laghach—hoots, that be Earse;
  But what she'll gone to mean, man,
Her nainsel's wife he comes from Perse,
  Hims name they call him Shean, man:
Hims be the bonnie lassie braw—
Hims skin be white's Ben-Vorlich snaw—
Hims e'e be black as hielant craw—
  And she be crouse in her nain house,
  Wi' Sheans her wife, the clever mouse;
Hooch! likes o' him's no seen, man,

And Sheanie mak the braxy kail,
  And Sheanie brew the tea, man;
Her nainsel fill the drams an' ale,
  And gather the bawbee, man.
That's Alster Faysac 'wa oot noo,
Within her house there's Pharig Dhu,
And Shemus Beg—cod, man, they're fu'!
  They'll drank by more than stoups a score,
  And plenty siller till the fore—
Hooch! they're the mans for me, man.

They say should must a sangs be made
  On her and Sheans, her lamb, man;
But what me cares? she'll plenty trade,
  In selling whisky dram, man.
Be mony shentlams her good freen,
That drinks wi' her and spokes wi' Shean,
So you'll be ken she's no to mean;
  And as me said, she's plenty trade,—
  Be thousand sangs about her made,
She dinna gie a *tam*, man!

Noo, what you'll thocht to took a dram,
This moment's very time, man?
Maybe you'll took a collop ham?
Her Sheanie mak' her prime, man;
Come 'wa, no stand on stapping stones,
A dram will strong your very bones;
When me be sair, and cry, *Och hones!*
Me seldom long, till she's among
The bottle wi' the double strong—
Best doctor far for me, man.

A mournful story on which Stewart intended to write a long narrative poem, is told in his published life; but, as usual, he only began it. No doubt his early death put a stop to many pieces which, if his days had been prolonged, he would have finished. The story is not at all necessary to the understanding of the three stanzas left in manuscript by him. If he had written thirty stanzas equal to these three, he would have taken his position alongside of Moir and Kirk White. The dawn of day he so beautifully describes, is the ushering in of a wedding morn, when the fair bride was to be stretched, not on her bridal bed, but on the bed of death; and the few lines left, foretell in their pathetic cadences, the sorrowful character of the approaching day:—

MORNING.

One little cloud, befringed with gold,—
A lonely pilgrim, wandering lorn,
High on the boundless azure wold,
Foretells the dawn of summer morn
O'er dewy field and rocky steep,
Far-stretching, huge, and grey,
The billowy mists of morning creep,
Or, listless, in the valleys sleep,
When dies the breeze away;
And the few pale stars of the twilight night
Retire from the glance of morning's light;
They have watched since the hour when the daisy and rose
Hung their perfumed heads in dewy repose;
Since the murmurs of gloaming expired in the glen
Since the holy hymns sung in the dwellings of men
Ascended on high to the foot of the Throne
Of the bright, eternal, invisible One—
They have watched in the sky, looking on, looking on
The night-mantled earth, from their loop-holes on high,
To see if the dews of heaven were shed
On the corn field and the floweret's bed—
To lighten the path—with a holy ray—
Of the favoured of heaven, the heirs of the sky,

Redeemed from sin, and have flown away
  To their promised home in the land of peace,
Where night never shrouds everlasting day,
  Where tears are dried and sorrows cease.

In these noble lines Stewart has dared much. The loophole whereat the favoured of heaven look down on terrestrial affairs reminds one of a similar idea of Susan Blamire's. I cannot possibly be wrong in asking the lovers of true poetry to con and study deeply these verses. They are so intensely beautiful,—so full of a passionate love of Nature in all her forms,—such enraptured conceptions of man's after-life,—so glowingly diversified,—so exquisitely tender,—it is hard to conceive the fact, that an ordinary, uneducated working man should be capable of so travelling away into the realms of imagination, and leaving behind him a trail of such gorgeous brightness. The troublesome workings of the Education Act may well be borne if it will bring from the people such men as James Stewart, and, by educational polish, give the world races that will cope with those whose lives fill the pages of past human history.

The circle of life was with James Stewart very limited. He began it in Paul Street of Perth, and afterwards buzzed about his birth-place like a moth round a lighted candle. Hovering here, nestling there,—not unstable, but contented,—until, at the end of forty-two years, he came to die within one hundred yards of the place where he was born. The lesson nature teaches can be got at home. The top of Birnam is little less classical than the top of Parnassus. Heaven and earth can be as well studied from there as from the top of Mont Blanc. The Tay is as pure as the Lugar. The lakes of Perthshire are as picturesque and verse-inspiring as those of Cumberland. If a man wants trouble, he has not far to go in search of it; if he wants ease, he is as likely to get it at home as by roaming abroad; if he wants to be humbled, his friends will do that for him as well as the dwellers at the antipodes.

In the lamentation for the dead bride, Stewart has unconsciously foreshadowed his own fate; for early in March, 1843, he left his home at Dunkeld, and came to Perth in order to be present at a dear friend's marriage, and at the mid hour of night, when the cry was "On with the dance," he stole away from the bridal party to his humble lodging, and threw himself on his bed. When he returned to his friends next morning he was found to be suffering under an attack of acute inflammation. He walked by himself to the Infirmary, and was at once admitted; but his now frail constitution could not battle long against such a foe, so he sank quietly under it, and within a few days was buried in the Greyfriars Churchyard. Peace be to his ashes! and when the hours arrives for the good to rise from these graves, may he not be wanting.

Thus, at the shut of eve, the weary bird
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
Sits down and doses till the dawn of day,
Then claps his well-fledged wings, and flies away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT.

"Oh! sweet and beautiful is night when the silver moon is high,
And countless stars, like clustering gems, hang sparkling in the sky;
While the balmy breath of the summer breeze comes whispering down the glen,
And one dear voice alone is heard—oh! night is lovely then.

But when that voice, in feeble moans of sickness and of pain,
But mocks the anxious ear that strives to catch its sounds in vain—
When silently we watch the bed, by the taper's flickering light,
Where all we love is fading fast—how terrible is night!"

BARHAM.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT was born at Gask in the year 1807. Let us take a look at the place a year afterwards. The old house, with its associations, had been seven years numbered with the things that were, and the present mansion had been finished, and some time occupied. The old church had been demolished, and a new one built away back in the moor near Clathybeg; but the "nest of singing birds" was now flown, they were all away. Mrs. Nairne was with her husband at Wester Duddingstone. Caroline Oliphant, a little song girl, was at Durham with the family, and the house of Gask was desolate, and doomed to remain so for many years to come. The great oaks and sweet chestnuts flourished on notwithstanding. The fat buds of the ash and the sycamore waved about the ears of the cattle which browsed on the pastures, and lowed as they gazed at the shut windows. The green-crested Ochils threw their morning shadows over the landscape; the sunlit river chequered through the trees; the birds whistled in the arbours, and built in the eaves. But the earth lacked the presence of those whom its great constructor designed were to keep it and dress it. Nature held out her ever liberal hand, but there was no one to grasp it; she sung her usual song of cheerful encouragement, but the echoes were still.

In the absence of the family the crows increased prodigiously. During the latter months of summer they sailed in myriads with the early morning away west to gather berries on Turleum Hill and the Braes of Callander and Balquhidder, looking down with contemptuous indifference on the intervening country. Then, in the gloaming, the air would be darkened with them on their return journey. These crow migrations were reckoned on by the people living under their route with as much certainty as one looks for a movement to and from a factory door at the recurring hour of six o'clock. In my early recollections, Gask is, oddly enough, associated with songs, trees, and crows!

It would be wrong to conclude that Caroline Oliphant profited much as a poetess by her connection with Lady Oliphant Nairne; because, in the first place, the latter had left Gask before the former was a year old; and, in the second place, Lady Nairne kept her poetical proclivities such a profound secret that even her husband was not cognisant of them. So it is not likely that her niece would know of them, except in a very limited way. Besides, there is so much individuality about all that she has written,—so much that is in harmony with the leading features of her own short life, that it would be doing her an injury to call her originality in question; and when it is considered that the verses I am about to quote were written by a young lady, between her fourteenth and her twenty-fourth year, they ought to be the more readily appreciated.

How few whose hairs have grown grey with years are equal to the composition of an ode like the following! The susceptible feelings so pathetically yet so simply expressed, the touching references to her friend's vacant place are exquisitely tender, and the evanescent nature of all earthly possessions and removals are described with a harmony of versification rarely surpassed:—

OH, NEVER! NO, NEVER.

Oh, never! no, never!
  Thou'lt meet me again!
Thy spirit for ever
  Has burst from its chain;
The links thou hast broken
  Are all that remain,
For never, oh! never,
  Thou'lt meet me again.

Like the sound of the viol,
  That dies on the blast;
Like the shade on the dial
  Thy spirit has passed.
The breezes blow round me
  But give back no strain;
The shade on the dial
  Returns not again.

Where roses enshrine thee,
  In light trellis'd shade,
Still hoping to find thee,
  How oft have I strayed;
Thy desolate dwelling
  I traverse in vain;—
The stillness has whispered,
  Thou'lt ne'er come again.

I still haste to meet thee,
  When footsteps I hear;
And start when to greet me
  Thou dost not appear;
Then afresh o'er my spirit
  Steals mem'ry of pain—
For never, oh! never,
  Thou'lt meet me again.

The idea expressed in the first four lines of the last stanza has a strong resemblance to one of James Stewart's in his poem on "Birnam:"—

> Well I remember how I wept and cried,
> To see her wrapped and laid upon her bier;
> And yet I could not think that she had died,—
> I thought she slept,—I spoke,—she would not hear,—
> I touched her brow—'twas cold!—I started back with fear.

The years 1823-4-5 and '6 were known among the light-land farmers of Strathearn as the "drouthy years." The three former were severe, very little rain having fallen from seedtime to Midsummer; but the latter was catastrophe. New barley was offered at Midsummer Market. The anxious farmer looked during that weary summer first at the barometer, then at the sky, then at the barometer again, hitting it hard! But no change,—horizontal, immoveable, "set fair." The wind blew from every point of the compass. The sun rose like molten iron and set like burnished brass. The moon changed—entered her second, third, and fourth quarters. The day lengthened and shortened. Days, weeks, months elapsed, but that barometer-hand pointed, as if in mockery, like a soldier presenting arms, like the ghost in *Hamlet*, like a rifleman in ambush, dead against all human patience. The cattle were starving; the burnt grass cracked under their feet. The earth was rent as if it gasped for moisture. No place suffered more from the distressing drought than the estate of Gask; it lies high, and it became a perfect Sahara! During the early summer, the Oliphants were most regular in their attendance at the Parish Church, and most devoutly did the excellent minister pray for rain, but it came not.

Perhaps the wise men who are leading on the present crusade against the doctrine of "Special Providence" may chuckle at the unsuccessful prayers of the minister of Gask, and I have no wish to disturb their confidence; but I will here narrate a circumstance connected with these dry summers that had a cheering effect on the confiding mind. No doubt the crusaders can very easily explain it away as a mere coincidence. I have no objection; I merely state the simple fact. Some years before the era of which I have been writing, I went to the sacrament of Fowlis-Wester. The weather had long been intensely dry and hot. My father's men were fee'd to start at five o'clock in the morning during the bere seed, because by ten o'clock neither man nor horse could work, the heat was so great. The tent was set with its back to the gate, and as I came near its rear, I heard the loud, earnest, sonorous, and melancholy voice of Mr. Cameron, of Monzie, beginning the morning prayer. He burst into his subject as one that would brook no delay. "Lebanon is not enough to burn upon Thy altar, nor the cattle on ten thousand hills for a burnt-offering. Thou art our fathers' God, and we will have none other; the Ruler of earth and of heaven, and we bow before Thee. Thou wert the God of Abraham, and came to him in his extremity. Thou wert the God of Moses, who brought water from the rock, and whose face the children of Israel could not behold for the glory of his countenance. Thou wert the God of Elijah, who fed him by ravens at the brook Kedron, and who, in answer to his earnest prayer, licked up the water that was in the trench on Mount Carmel. Thou wert the God of David, who came from the sheep-cote at Bethlehem-Judah, and sang the songs of the Lord in the wilderness of Kadesh. Send, we implore Thee, Thy ministering angel to the relief of Thy suffering people. Open the windows of heaven, and spread Thy refreshing rain over this devoted land," &c. Within two hours the roads were ankle-deep with water!

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs.

Such was the school in which Caroline Oliphant learned the lesson that prepared her for an early death. At this time she was in her twentieth year; her brother Laurence had been dead two years, and James Blair Oliphant was now the head of the family. The place of her nativity had always a first claim on her fond regards, and she thus took farewell of its charming scenes:—

THE GARDEN AT GASK.

Fain would I linger here as I have seen
The sun reposing on this mossy green,
That well might tempt his chariot wheels to stay,
And check his coursers in their fiery way.
Speed on, thou Sun, thy home is in the west;
I too must speed, for this is not my rest.

Like thee, bright orb! my further path is traced,
And to my going down I too must haste;
For on my pilgrim path no Gibeon's hill
Invites my weary spirit to stand still.
Thou hast returned, and brought the shadow back;
I may not, would not, turn me from my track.

Still o'er these mossy walls thy circuit make,
Still in these bowers thy bright siesta take;
On me the gate hath closed, and I must go
Forth from this Eden through a vale of woe;
Diverse our path, yet both our God hath blest;
Heaven spreads a couch for each—a glorious golden rest.

In the summer of 1826 the Oliphants left Gask for Clifton, where Caroline had a severe and protracted illness, from which she never quite recovered. On becoming partially convalescent, she composed the following exquisite hymn:—

ON RECOVERING FROM SICKNESS.

I thought to join the heavenly choir,
  To strike a harp of light;
While this forgotten, tuneless lyre
  Rested 'mid shades of night,

I thought to dwell in heavenly bowers,
  Where angels have their seat,
And wreathe immortal amaranth flowers
  To cast at Jesus' feet,

Alas! this jarring broken lute
  Alone remains to me!
In vain I sweep its cords so mute;
  They wake no melody.

No fragrant crown from Eden's bowers
  Is giv'n into my hand;
Only a wreath of with'ring flowers
  Culled in this desert land.

With pity, Lord, my offering view,
  Although for Thee unmeet;
'Tis all enthroned saints can do,
  To lay it at Thy feet.

From silence my mute lyre release,
  And tune its chords to love;
Breathe o'er its numbers breathe thy *peace*,—
  Echo of *joy* above.

Next year our poetess paid a visit to Ireland, but she did not recover strength, which, coupled with her family antecedents, naturally tended to depress her spirits; and, like a sentient being, she set herself to translate all her hopes and confidings to an existence which she felt would be of longer duration, and more congenial to her subdued and relying spirit. At this period the lines entitled "Home in Heaven," were written—lines which not only show uncommon powers of versification, but the rarer talent of being able to combine a series of objects to form one grand whole. The first and second lines, as applied to the Christian invalid, whose life is quivering on the confines of the unseen world, and with the great gulf of death between her and all she is panting after, represented as "Standing windbound near the unfathomed main" is a poetical and most expressive conception. Waiting close to death, with no knowledge of its character, she can look beyond the death of the body, and see the last duties paid to herself; the coming of the coffin and the gathering of the mourners,—the open grave, and the first hollow knockings of the clod as it falls over her fair young face. Then all is still. The imagination goes no further. Where the existence is lengthened out, she knows least; she cannot even imagine it. "The unfathomed main" rolls, and ever did roll, between.

HOME IN HEAVEN.

A wind-bound exile far from home,
While standing near th' unfathomed main,
My eyes the far horizon roam,
To see the land I long to gain.
Though dim with mists and faintly blue,
The hills of bliss e'en now I view;
Oh! when will heaven's soft breezes come,
And waft the weary exile home?

Let those who know no lovelier shore
Their shells and sea-weed idly heap,
Then mourn to see their paltry store
Dispersed and sinking in the deep.
My storehouse lies beyond the wave,
My treasure fears no wat'ry grave.
And oh! I wish fair winds would come,
And waft me o'er to that blest home.

Already some I held most dear,
Have safe arrived on yonder strand;
Their backs afar like specks appear,
The exiles now have gained the land.
Their parting signals wave no more,
No signs of woe float from that shore!
And soon the skiff for me will come,
And Heaven's own breath will waft me home.

She had a desire to see Gask, before the skiff, propelled by Heaven's own breath, came to "waft her home," to see the old woods and hollow valley of the Earn, with all their kindred associations, once more. So she came by herself in the summer of 1828. Miss Oliphant has sometimes been spoken of as contradictory in character; but so far from that, I think her short life was eminently consistent. In youth she was volatile and gay, fond of novel-reading and seeing the world. In her teens she became studious, and set herself to the business of her own accomplishment. When she reached twenty, she settled into an exemplary and sincerely Christian lady; and when she came to die at twenty-four, her tranquil and patient submission to the decrees of Providence presented to those about her those aspects of confident anticipation which show that mere self-conviction is a thing of the past.

She says in her "Lines on Dreams,"—

> When the surge
> Beats on the tossing vessel, and the winds
> Make it their sport, say, Will there then be time
> To rise and call upon their God?

The changed prospects of the country, added to the too obvious indications of a short life, appear to have prevented Miss Oliphant from indulging in any of the Jacobite proclivities which formed the leading characteristics of her aunt's career. She was ardently devoted, especially during the latter years of her limited term of life, to the duties which she considered best suited for those about to enter on a new state of existence. She was an accomplished scholar, and read and studied the Scriptures in the original tongues. She composed many hymns, singing them to airs with which she was familiar; and on any occasion when her health offered to rally, she indulged her youthful mind in studies of mental philosophy, her library of reference being the Old and New Testaments, the Philosóphical Works of Professor Dugald Stewart, and Dr. Chalmers' Astronomical Discourses.

It cannot be supposed but that Caroline Oliphant, as well as her aunt, Lady Nairne, was duly conscious of her sinful and fallen condition; but the peculiar feature of her latter days was an apparent ignoring of that fact, and a constantly-recurring prostration before the perfect scheme of Divine substitution. Dr. Chalmers taught them this. They have been long in their graves, and their memories are consecrated by their own verses. Like Robert Nicoll, they have written their hearts in their poems; and any one who studies these poems will have little occasion to go elsewhere for their biographies.

Judging from what has already appeared, whoever is in possession of Miss Caroline Oliphant's manuscripts would confer a boon on the public by their publication. This estimable young lady, whose early death is much to be lamented, died at Clifton, in presence of her aunt, the Baroness Nairne, and other members of the family, on the 9th of February, 1831, and was buried there beside her mother.

NON OMNIS MORIAR.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRISTIAN GRAY.

' Hail, holy light! offspring of heaven firstborn—
* * * * * *
Thee I revisit safe
And feel thy sovereign vital lamp; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the muses haunt."
JOHN MILTON.

In 1816, while the country was struggling to right itself after a protracted war that had exhausted its finances and its temper, and left millions of its people without business and without bread, there set in a series of dry arid summers, that impoverished the light-land farmers of Perthshire, and so crippled their energies that the practice of agriculture fell into a very primitive condition. These seasons went on, and culminated in 1826; after which, the country began to gather strength, and farming began to recover, and has gone on until it has reached a point far in advance of anything that had been attained previous to these disastrous years. I have already referred to these times in the paper on Caroline Oliphant, and now must recur to them again in treating of Christian Gray.

Nearly at the top of the stiff sloping ground that rises from the north bank of the Earn, in the parish of Aberdalgie, stands a snug cottage, which in 1827 was possessed by Christian Gray. On the west side a rivulet runs down through a deep gully to the valley below. In summer it is a place of great beauty. To the south, the low grounds along the banks of the Earn, backed by the Ochils with their green summits, the woods of Freeland, and the birks of Invermay, present a picturesque and luxuriant landscape. I paid Christian a visit in the summer of the year I have named. She was then a tidy, contented-looking, tall, thin woman, with symptoms of intelligence about her, but quite blind, and her face much injured by small-pox. She told me that she published a little volume of poems in 1809, and another in 1821, but that they were both out of print. I expressed a wish to possess them, and she referred me to Mr. Lorimer or Mr. Peddie. I managed to pick them up in Perth, however. She told me her father and many previous generations had been farmers under the Kinnoull family, but that the bad seasons had ruined them, and that she was about the last of her race. I shall leave Christian to tell her own story; but I cannot help reflecting how very capricious the muses are. What singular whim sent them into this obscure nook of earth? Yet here they had been, for Miss Gray's poems are above mediocrity. She did not essay anything very lofty, but went crooning about, forming ideas, and repeating her own lines, until she had them so completely by heart that she could repeat them to the first amanuensis that turned up. Mr. Peddie, the schoolmaster of Aberdalgie, had been very kind and serviceable to her in this way.

Christian drew my attention to her nice house and its surroundings, and evinced much gratitude to Lord Kinnoull for providing it for her. She then recited, in a very subdued and musical voice, the following poetical epistle, which she had forwarded to Mr. Lorimer for presentation to his lordship:—

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KINNOULL,

On his granting me the neat Cottage which I now inhabit.

Neat is the cottage rear'd for me
  Upon this rising bank;
I'll send my handmaid, Poesy,
To Dupplin Castle on her knee,
  The noble Earl to thank.

Lest wrong my messenger betide,
  Or lest she should offend,
A guardian for her I'll provide,
And to his kindness her confide,—
  Poor nymph, she needs a friend.

Will Mr. L—— then introduce
  My handmaid into view?
Perhaps his Lordship wont refuse
To hear, for once, a hamlet muse
  Who sings with deference due.

Tell how I prize this cottage bower,
  Commodious, new, and clean;
Near where my swaddling clothes I wore,
Where long my fathers dwelt before,
  Which more endears the scene.

My ancestors are pass'd away
(So families fail apace),
And soon at latest comes the day,
When with myself the name of Gray,
Will vanish from this place:—

Christian was not born blind, but lost her eyesight when quite young. Her impressions of external Nature were vivid, and had never faded. When she spoke of anything that had occurred within her knowledge, she always said, "I saw." When her cottage was built, she had been blind nearly fifty years; yet she says,—

Here bushes, braes, and rocks *remind*
Of childhood's happy days.

How suggestive of blindness, and how touching, the lines—

Where dashing falls the proud cascade,
Oft when a message sent,
So long I there have *listening* strayed.

She had passages read to her every day from the Bible, the metrical Psalms, and books of poetry, from which she formed her descriptive ideas; and she *felt* about her cottage and its neighbourhood until every object became familiar to her mind. She did not seem to feel the want of observing power so much as that of language, to express in appropriate terms a blind person's conceptions of the ever-changing aspects of external Nature.

The neighbouring farmers were kind to Christian Gray, and when any change occurred, she felt her interest in jeopardy. The two gentlemen referred to, in the following metrical petition, are Mr. Adam Pringle, who was then tenant of Mains of Aberdalgie, afterwards Provost of Perth, and Mr. Mellis, of political fame, who had just taken possession of Mundy:—

A LETTER TO A GENTLEMAN FARMER,

Requesting a favour.

Sir, just at a venture this freedom I took,
And here, as it is, is a letter;
Excuse its design, its defects overlook,
For the truth is, I could not do better.

I will not address you in flatt'ry's fine strain,
Which is at the best a mere bubble;
But simply, and shortly, will try to explain
The cause why I give you this trouble.

Being born in this place, and brought up in my youth,
By parents not rich, but respected
For honesty, industry, kindness, and truth,
On whom some esteem was reflected.

For whose sakes, this neighbourhood, not then estrang'd,
Would have helped me, one or another;
But now, one excepted, the tenants are chang'd,
Who e'er knew my father or mother.

Another of late to his farm bade farewell,
On whom was the half of my leaning;
And one over-burden'd will naturally fail—
So now you may guess at my meaning.

A favour from you this is sent to obtain,
And for leave, too, to beg a renewal;
Please grant me, at this time, and sometimes again,
A cart, to bring sticks home for fuel.

No claim can I urge to your kindness at all,
Necessity made me invent this;
And to Mrs. ——'s tho' my claim is but small,
Yet her I request to present this.

And should she, sweet pleader, but give me her vote,
These lines will, at least, not offend you;
The favour I ask, be it granted or not,
I wish, sir, that good may attend you.

The following verses in imitation of "The Land o' the Leal," are referred to in one of my papers on Lady Nairne. I could not ascertain from Christian what led her mind to the subject, but concluded that the great popularity of the original had done it. However, when Lady Nairne's trustees published the first edition of her songs containing "The Land o' the Leal," it occurred to me at once that she had a suspicion where it came from, ay, forty years before its authoritative publication. The term "jo" is not an abbreviation of a name, but a Scottish term of endearment equivalent to "dear," and used in the songs, "John Anderson, my jo," and "My jo, Janet."

SONG, IN ANSWER TO "I'M WEARIN' AWA' JEAN."

Oh! you are happy now, jo!
Your care is a' through, jo!
Nae pain reaches you
In the land o' the leal.

Our lassie wan awa', jo!
Nor muckle sorrow saw, jo!
Now I mourn twa
In the land o' the leal.

But a' is guid and weel, jo!
Though nature it maun feel, jo!
Ilk pain will be heal
In the land o' the leal.

My locks are thin and grey, jo!
My powers fast decay, jo!
I'm laith lang to stay,
Fae the land o' the leal.

But my tears drap in vain, jo!
Alane I maun remain, jo!
Till we meet again
In the land o' the leal.

Though trouble here us tries, jo!
'Tis blessing in disguise, jo!
To mak' us mair prize
The land o' the leal.

Altogether, Christian Gray has published upwards of fifty poetical pieces, every one of which possesses much unpretending merit. When the mind has no physical outlet, it naturally turns back upon itself; therefore, whatever comes from a blind person is necessarily more closely studied than what comes from the same cast of mind with all the endearments of this fascinating earth continually passing in review before it. Although John Milton had been born blind, he would have been none the less fit to have written "Paradise Lost," but he could never have attempted "L'Allegro," or "Comus." If he had retained his eyesight to the end of his life, mankind would never have heard of these grand flights of imagination which he has so lavishly bestowed on an admiring world. His mind would have been distracted, and "Pandemonium" would have partaken a little more of earth. Satan would have left the unpeopled regions of solar and lunar chaos, and approached nearer to the confines of tangible existence. Blind Milton had no mind to "Nickie-ben;" this world formed a mere fragment of his great field of operation, and his heroes had no sympathy with its people, except the sympathy of devils. As soon as he had impregnated the serpent and seduced Eve, he rose from the field of his renowned achievement like a phœnix, and went away floating through sulphurous regions, devising, plotting, making his arrangements, regardless of the fact that a scheme was already formed that would crush him as the man whom he had deceived could crush his small auxiliary, the asp, as it crawled across his path.

Christian Gray lived a number of years after the time about which I have been writing, and, as she confidently predicted, the name of Gray—long familiar in the parish of Aberdalgie—"vanished from the place."

CHAPTER XX.

DAVID DRUMMOND.

> ————"spirits are not finely touched,
> But to fine issues."
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

ONE of the best features of man's character is the discrimination he shows in rejecting, except upon the most unequivocal evidence, any story respecting an individual to which his separate life shows the most absolute antagonism. For instance, who believes James the Sixth's story of John Earl of Gowrie? James tries to turn, at one sitting, a man who has hitherto been judged as an example of honour, truth, and integrity, into an adventurous, motiveless regicide! The amiable, handsome young noble—the learned, opulent, popular Provost of Perth—into a blundering, absolute fool, a mere Cretan of the Alps! "He sent for me," says James, "to his own house to murder me," while the only sword he had to do it with was rusted in its scabbard. "The Gowrie Plot!"—absurd! Where was the plot? The poorest drama, the meanest novel that issues from the press, has a plot of some shape; but the so-called "Gowrie Conspiracie" had less arranged climax than that other equally veritable drama, "The House that Jack built." James was afterwards kind to Perth (?) Very! He stopped gagging, he abandoned his theory of ecclesiastical dictation, and he built an almshouse—not with the cleverly-devised pot of gold, however. Scotchmen! you who love your country and hate tyranny, you who "buy the truth and sell it not," trample the memory of this "most dread Sovereign," and his "unnatural and vile conspiracie" under your feet. For myself, I care nothing, in a matter of history, for the opinion of John Parker Lawson, or Fraser Tytler, or Sir Walter Scott, because the facts are as open to me as they were to them. I am like Uncle Tom with the minister, "I can pray right up!"

I feel grateful for this opportunity, remote as it is, of coming forward in defence of David Drummond. Had he not been a true son of song and an accomplished scholar, and had the story I am going to tell not been connected with his beautiful and very popular lyric, the opportunity might not have arisen.

Before going into it, I insert the lyric. It was very much esteemed in its day, and kept its place alongside of "Kelvin Grove" and "The Flower of Dumblane."

THE BONNIE LASS O' LEVENSIDE.

Air—"Up amang yon cliffy rocks."

How sweet are Leven's silver streams,
Around her banks the wild flowers blooming;
On every bush the warblers vie,
In strains of bosom-soothing joy.
But Leven's banks that bloom sae braw,
And Leven's streams that glide sae saucy,
Sic joy and beauty couldna' shaw
An't were not for my darling lassie;
Her presence fills them a' wi' pride,
The bonnie lass o' Levenside.

When sober eve begins her reign,
The little birds to cease their singing,
The flowers their beauty to renew,
Their bosom's bathe in diamond dew,
When far behind the Lomonds high,
The wheels of day are downward rowing,
And a' the western closing sky,
Wi' varied tints of glory lowing,
'Tis then my eager steps I guide,
To meet the lass o' Levenside.

The solemn sweetness Nature spreads,
The kindly hour to bless inviting,
Within our happy bosoms move
The softest sigh o' purest love,
Reclined upon the velvet grass,
Beneath the balmy birken blossom.
What words could a' my joy express,
When claspéd to her beating bosom,
How swells my heart with rapture's tide,
When wi' the lass o' Levenside.

She never saw the splendid ball,
She never gazed on courtly grandeur;
But like her native lily's bloom.
She cheerfu' gilds her humble home.
The pert reply—the modish air,
To soothe the soul were never granted.
When modest sense and love are there,
The guise o' art may well be wanted.
O Fate! gie me to be my bride
The bonnie lass o' Levenside.

David Drummond was born at Crieff, in the year 1774, and remained there till 1804. I know his history well, although, personally, I had not the opportunity of obtaining his friendship. A near and much-esteemed relation of mine, then residing at Galvelbeg, was his intimate friend so long as he remained in his native place, and much I have heard from him of Drummond, as a poet, a freemason, and a man.

He left Crieff to fill a situation he had obtained at Kirkland Works, near Leven, where he remained about eight years; but at the suggestion of a gentleman from India, who came to St. Andrews for his son's education, he went out to Calcutta in 1812, and there established a boarding-school similar to that afterwards established at St. Andrews by Mr. Smitton. During his stay in Kirkland he fell deep in love with Mary Wilson, daughter of the proprietor of Pirnie, a handsome and much-accomplished young lady, who returned his passion, and became the heroine of the above song. When they were about to part, they met on Leven-side, and pledged their mutual faith, like another more celebrated pair. Drummond's verses had not yet appeared, but he now handed them to a bookseller in Leven, and two days thereafter set sail for Calcutta.

Four years afterwards, and after the passing of many epistles of love, Miss Wilson went out to India to become the wife of Drummond, and then ensued a romance which created a very great sensation in Calcutta, and was the beginning of half a life of injured feeling to the survivor. On her arrival in Calcutta, Miss Wilson was met by Drummond, who very properly conducted her to the house of a respectable female friend, although he had a very large establishment of his own. One story goes, that she, shortly after her arrival, expressed a wish to withdraw from her engagement, and Drummond, on seeing her coldness, offered to pay all the expenses of her journey home to Scotland.

Another story was, that he jilted her. Meantime the poor young lady took fever and died; and Drummond, before he could offer a word of explanation to her friends, laid her in her foreign grave, the time that transpired between her arrival and her death being less than a month.

Drummond gave no countenance to either of the stories, and the more sensible portion of the community believed that the excitement which would naturally arise from the prospect of being at the head of such an important establishment, acting upon a constitution weakened by a long sea voyage and a hot climate, had, while final arrangements were being made, induced the fever of which she became the victim.

Dr. Rogers, who gives a very correct version of the affair, certainly errs in one statement. He says that Miss Wilson was led to decline the connection because she found her betrothed so very plain-looking. Now, four years could not make a very marked difference in his appearance, and he was now rich, much respected, held an influential position connected with the press of India, and was otherwise a most eligible match for a young lady who had formerly known him so very well.

The late David Thomson, of Perth (sometimes called Calcutta Thomson), knew Drummond well, and described him as an excellent scholar and a most respectable man, moving in the first circles, and exercising considerable influence as a citizen of Calcutta; and Dr. Buist, at one time editor of the *Perthshire Constitutional*, writing to a friend in Perth, said of him: "He is an honour to his country." Still, the gossips of Calcutta kept the cruel story going, and sent it wafting home to Fife and to Crieff, much to the detriment of our poet's fame. But he lived and prospered many years after it, never doing anything to give credibility to the tale that he had jilted "The Bonnie Lass o' Levenside."

CHAPTER XXI.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

"The examples of eminent men are in his visions by night, and his delight is to follow them all the day long."—Dodsley.

On the side of the public road leading from Lochearnhead to Callander, and near the margin of Loch Lubnaig, stands the clachan or homestead of Tombea. Though exceedingly romantic and beautiful the place at one time looked poor and desolate to the last degree. Far away from any active civilisation, it was little to be expected that the march of intellect would penetrate far into a country hitherto unrecognised, and which had to wait for many years before it became so well known as the scene of Monk Lewis's noble poem of "Glenfinlas,"—as partially the scenery of "The Lady of the Lake"—and as the home and burial-place of Rob Roy Macgregor. Yet Alexander Campbell was born here in the year 1764, and before he had reached middle life he had achieved for himself a familiar friendship with the leading literary men of Edinburgh. At twenty-four he became the intimate and esteemed friend of Robert Burns; at forty that of Sir Walter Scott and David Allan; and at forty-five that of James Hogg and Professor Wilson. A man of extraordinary capacity, yet wayward and singularly impressionable, he preached Jacobitism,—composed music and taught it, both in theory and practice, with marked success,—taught drawing and painted pictures,—and in latter life, turning his attention to poetry, he published his poem, "The Grampians Desolate," which added more to his fame than to the contents of his purse.

At the time of Campbell's birth, the ardour of the Great Rebellion had somewhat cooled down; still there surged about among the people of the glens of Perthshire a lingering devotion to the exiled Stuarts, more especially in the spots where the axe and the gibbet had thinned the ranks of the attached clansmen. The slogan of the Macgregors still echoed round Ben Ledi, and the requiem of Stewart of

Glenbuckie still hovered along Strathyre. Campbell's father assisted the clan to carry the body of their murdered chief from Leny House to the burying-ground of Balquhidder; and urged them to return to their homes, now that their chief was dead, and they heard and obeyed his counsel. But such incidents sink deep into the heart, and it took half-a-century of years to wipe out the remembrance of the foul deed, more especially as its history became as much vexed as its perpetration had been originally mysterious. The historians of the Rebellion differ somewhat in their accounts of this cruel transaction, but I have been long conversant with it, having heard it narrated early in the century by an intelligent elderly gentleman, Mr. James Wright, who resided at Cape, in the parish of Kippen, near the seat of the present Buchanans of Arnprior. The main facts are as follows:—Immediately before the action at Prestonpans, Stewart of Glenbuckie, accompanied by Macgregor of Invercairnaig—not Glencairnaig, as styled by Robert Chambers,—each with their followers, left their homes in Strathyre and Balquhidder to join the Prince's army, and as they were moving in the dusk down the Pass of Leny, they were accosted by Buchanan of Arnprior, then living in his house of Leny, near the foot of the pass, who invited them to be his guests for the night. Stewart consented, but Macgregor peremptorily declined. The two supped together, apparently in good spirits and on the best of terms, and in due time Stewart went to bed, but he never rose again: his body was found in the morning stretched above the bedclothes, an empty pistol clenched in his right hand, and a ball through his head. Buchanan's allegation of suicide did not obtain credence, and when the Stewarts came next day to carry off the body of their chief, Buchanan wisely kept out of the way. He afterwards denied the murder in the most solemn manner and under the most solemn circumstances, and it does seem singular that he should have murdered the head of a clan that was on its way to support Charles Stuart, while he himself was known to be one of his staunchest adherents. But the Government, in defiance of all recognised principles of justice, put the two things together, and, on the cumulo charge, without troubling themselves much about evidence, executed Buchanan at Carlisle, along with eight others, in October, 1746.

Born at the scene of this fearful transaction, and within a few years of the time of its perpetration, young Campbell's mind became deeply tinctured with Jacobitism; and during his early career in Edinburgh, the leaders of that party, who saw such wonders achieved by their protegé, Robert Strange, patronized Campbell, and he became the pliant follower of the Nonjurors. His treatises on music became very popular, and were translated into some of the Continental languages,—no doubt influenced in some degree by the presence of Strange at Lisle and at Rome, where he resided for many years. The example of Burns did not seem to awake the tendency to verse in the mind of Campbell, for it was after he became intimate with Sir Walter Scott that he began to turn his attention to poetry. His contributions to "Albyn's Anthology" keep their places very well alongside those of Scott, Hogg, and Wilson. In one of them he narrates the Leny affair, but it is too lengthy for insertion here. The following beautiful verses were set to music by the poet's friend, R. A. Smith, and became very popular in the west of Scotland about the year 1818:—

ROW WEEL, MY BOATIE, ROW WEEL.

Row weel, my boatie, row weel,
   Row weel, my merry men a'.
For there's dool and there's wae in Glenfiorich's bowers,
   And there's grief in my father's ha'.

And the skiff it danced light on the merry wee waves,
   And it flew o'er the water sae blue,
And the wind it blew light, and the moon it shone bright,
   But the boatie ne'er reached Allan dhu.

Ohon! for fair Ellen, ohon!
   Ohon! for the pride of Strathcoe,—
In the deep, deep sea, in the salt, salt bree,
   Lord Reoch, thy Ellen lies low,

Mr. Campbell was too erratic in his tastes to arrive at very marked distinction. Had he been a little less florescent, and had he economised the abilities bestowed on him, his capacity would have set him high amongst men; but he aimed at being a second Admirable Crichton, and as a matter of necessity broke down in the attempt. He speculated in wives too, his second lady being the widowed chieftainess of a wealthy clansman, from whose awfully grand connection he dreamed of great halls covered with broadswords, and years of Celtic grandeur; but not only did the superstructure crumble down, but the foundation itself gave way, by the lady suddenly levanting, and taking up house on her own account, in one of the fastnesses of her first lord's domains, leaving Campbell to make his way in the world as he best could.

The following lines are the production of his latter years, and, though a little mysterious in narrative, they are full of picturesque situations, and the winter of life is delineated in the true language of poetry:—

NOW WINTER'S WIND SWEEPS.

Now, Winter's wind sweeps o'er the mountains,
  Deeply clad in drifting snow,
Soundly sleep the frozen fountains;
  Ice-bound streams forget to flow,
The piercing blast howls loud and long,
  The leafless forest oaks among.

Down the glen, lo! comes a stranger,
  Wayworn, drooping, all alone;
Haply 'tis the deer-haunt ranger!
  But alas! his strength is gone!
He stoops, he totters on with pain,—
  The hill he'll never climb again.

Age is being's winter season
  Fitful, gloomy, piercing cold;
Passion weakened, yields to reason,
  Man feels *then* himself grown old;
His senses one by one have fled,
  His very soul seems almost dead.

CHAPTER XXII.

WILLIAM WILSON.

"My heart still hovering round about you,
I thought I could not live without you;
Now we have lived so long asunder,
How I lived in you is the wonder."
JOHN CLARE.—*To the town of Helpstone.*

THE cities and towns of Perthshire, with their businesses, their numerical augmentations, and civic struggles, go on year by year. The battle of life is fought hand to hand within their walls, and the clamour of municipal turmoil moves in an incessant round, yet now and again, amongst the ever-absorbed crowd of politicians and money-hunters, a mind constituted for an arena of a different sort will quietly well up, and throwing off all conventional trammels, will form a soil around itself suited to its nature, in which it will grow more congenially, and, despite all attempts to drive it into the prescribed current of every-day life, will continue to strengthen and pulsate in defiance of wise shakings of the head and prophetic speculations. In this way the gifted men of a generation separate themselves from ordinary life. They will brave the penalty of ostracism and poverty; because viewing their own tendencies and those of their fellow-citizens, they can discover no tissue of "mutual eligibility," and shrink from all active mutual contact. Poets and men of science are as little fitted for being civic rulers as the Provost of Little Pedlington is for being Poet Laureate or President of the Royal Society. Dr. Chalmers used to speak of a "moral adaptation," but here there would be a lack of *mental* adaptation. The people of Greenock said of young Watt, that he had "too many bees in his head." Those of Gask said that Laurence Macdonald was lazy, because he took somewhat slowly to the mason's hammer, and "put off his time making clay effigies." In the year 1834, I waited upon a worthy shopkeeper in the High Street of Perth, and asked him to subscribe for Robert Nicoll's poems. "Who is Robert Nicoll?" "He is so and so." "That laddie; no, no!" This is the way young promise is nipped in the bud, and I presume this is the way David Drummond and William Wilson were sent adrift from Crieff. They were both tuning their harps amidst the gorgeous scenery of Upper Strathearn in the year 1808; both went to foreign lands early in life; and each earned for himself fame, and—what is usually infinitely more prized—fortune. Very recently Wilson was—and, so far as is known to me, is still—a prosperous publisher in the United States. He was a coeval of David Vedder and Robert Nicoll in Dundee, and during his stay there produced many very clever fugitive pieces, which appeared in *The Edinburgh Literary Gazette* and in the local newspapers.

AULD JOHNNY GRAHAM.

Dear Aunty, what think ye o' auld Johnny Graham?
  The carle sae pawkie an' slee.
He wants a bit wifie to tend his bein hame,
  An' the body has ettled at me.

Wi' bonnet sae vaunty, an' owerlay sae clean,
An' ribbon that waved 'boon his bree,
He cam' doun the cleugh at the gloamin' yestreen,
An' rappit, an' soon speert for me.

I bade him come ben whaur my minny sae thrang
Was birlin' her wheel eidentlie,
An' foul fa' the carle, he was na that lang,
Ere he tauld out his errand to me.

"Hech, Tibby, lass! a' yon broad acres o' land,
Wi' ripe craps that wave bonnilie,
An' meikle mair gear shall be at yer command,
Gin ye will look kindly at me.

"Yon herd o' fat owsen that rowt i' the glen,
Sax naigies that nibble the lea;
The kye i' the sheugh and the sheep i' the pen,
I'se gie a', dear Tibby, to thee.

"An' lassie, I've goupins o' gowd in a stockin',
An' pearlin's wad dazzle yer e'e;
A mettl'd, but canny young yaud, for the yokin',
When ye wad gae jauntin' wi' me,

"I'll hap ye, and fend ye, and busk ye, and tend ye,
An' mak' ye the light o' my e'e;
I'll comfort and cheer ye, and daut ye and dear ye,
As couthy as couthy can be.

"I've lo'ed ye, dear lassie, since first, a bit bairn,
Ye ran up the knowe to meet me;
An' deckit my bonnet wi' blue bells an' fern,
Wi' meikle glad laughin' an' glee.

"An' now, woman grown, an' mensefu', an' fair.
An' gracefu' as gracefu' can be,
Will you tak' an auld carle wha ne'er had a care
For woman, dear Tibby, but thee?"

Sae Aunty, ye see I'm a' in a swither,
What answer the bodie to gi'e—
But aften I wish he wad tak' my auld mither,
And let puir young Tibby abee.

John Graham did not need counsel; he put his case well; and, auld as he was, it is not to be wondered at that Tibby swithered. John seems to have been well off with his broad well-stocked acres; and, like "The Laird o' Cockpen," he thought she would be daft to refuse him. But there is something more than these means and substances necessary in order "to gain a bonny thrawart lassie's heart."

Tibby does not only take time to consider the case, but she contrives to insult her lover behind his back, by suggesting that he should "Tak her auld mither!' Court-ships do not always end this way. I once knew a great raw clod of a divinity student, who had long paid his addresses to a young lady. I lost sight of him for many years, and in the meantime he had been tumbled into a church. On meeting again and talking over old matters, I asked him if he was a family man, and if he had married Miss ——. After considering for a minute, he replied, "Losh no, man! she married my uncle!"

JEAN LINN.

Oh, haud na' yer noddle sae hie, ma doo!
  Oh, haud na' yer noddle sae hie!
The days that ha'e been may be yet again seen,
  Sae look na' sae lightly on me, ma doo!
  Sae look na' sae lightly on me.

Oh, geck na' at hame hodden grey, Jean Linn,
  Oh, geck na' at hame hodden grey.
Yer gutcher an' mine wad ha'e thocht themsel's fine,
  In cleedin' sae bein, bonnie May, bonnie May—
  In cleedin' sae bein, bonnie May.

Ye mind when we won in Whinglen, Jean Linn,
  Ye mind when we won in Whinglen,
Your daddy, douce carle, was cottar to mine,
  An' our herd was yer ain bonnie sel', Jean Linn,
  An' our herd was yer ain bonnie sel'.

Oh, then ye were a' thing to me, Jean Linn!
  Oh, then ye were a' thing to me!
An' the moments scoured by like birds through the sky,
  When tentin' the owsen wi' thee, Jean Linn,
  When tentin' the owsen wi' thee.

I twined ye a bower by the burn, Jean Linn,
  I twined ye a bower by the burn,
But dreamt na' that hour as we sat in that bower,
  That fortune wad tak' sic a turn, Jean Linn,
  That fortune wad tak' sic a turn.

Ye busk noo in satins fu' braw, Jean Linn!
  Ye busk noo in satins fu' braw!
Yer daddy's a laird, mine's i' the kirkyard,
  An' I'm yer puir ploughman, Jock Law, Jean Linn,
  An' I'm yer puir ploughman, Jock Law.

Here is a ballad of topsy-turvy, nothing uncommon in every-day life. The author does not tell us how Jean Linn conducted herself in the altered circumstances. Jock should have completed his arrangements before matters went so completely against him. The example given by Thomas Hood, in his history of "Ben Battle," is a lesson to all young men who are disposed to temporise. Poor

Ben left both his legs in "Badajoz's breaches," and when he came to see Nelly Gray, mounted on his wooden pins, she treated him with heartless insolence :—

> Your love I did allow ;
> But then, you know, you stand upon
> Another footing now.

Jock Law could hold the plough, however ; and he had not dreamed that "fortune would tak sic a' turn." Besides, a laird's daughter, who kept her "noddle sae hie," and wore satin, would not make a good ploughman's wife, and he could sing in hopes of another change :—

> The days that hae been may be yet again seen,
> Sae look na' sae lightly on me, ma doo !

CHAPTER XXIII.

WILLIAM STEWART.

> "Ne'er tell me of glories serenely adorning
> The close of our day, the calm eve of our night.
> Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning,
> Her clouds and her tears are worth evening's best light."
>
> THOMAS MOORE.

If William Stewart had asked me at any time during our long friendship to write his epitaph, my heart would have recoiled at the thought ; yet, at a distance of twenty years, I am about to record his name among "The Perthshire Poets"—a name, quite unknown to poetic fame, but that of a well-known citizen of Perth. Of all those whom it is my intention to place on this list, I knew William Stewart best, although I neither know when he was born, nor where he was born ; how long he lived, nor the nature of his death. He was for many years an English teacher in Perth, first as assistant to Mr. Hindmarsh, next in a private school of his own in Athole Street, and eventually in the English Department of the Perth Seminaries. During his earlier days of teaching his mother kept his house, and a cosey couple they were. Mrs. Stewart looked upon her son as the paragon of teachers and men, and he looked upon his mother as the model of all mothers since the era of Mother Eve. They had many friends, kept a good table, and William was to some extent a diner-out. He was very lame, and always used a crutch, yet active and full of vitality. He did not sing, but those who have been at his table will remember with what gusto he recited "The Witch on the Brae." He never boasted of being the author, but his intimate friends knew that such was the fact. It appeared in print before his death, but I am not aware that it was ever set to music.

Mr. Stewart married rather late in life, and afterwards became a changed man. During his latter days a cloud came over his existence, the density of which he kept to himself. His wife died a few years after their marriage, and he did not survive her long. It affords me pleasure to have an opportunity of paying this unreserved tribute to his memory. He was a kind and considerate friend,—an open-hearted, social companion, a first-rate English scholar, and a successful teacher.

The accredited witcheries of a winsome Scottish lassie are told in the ballad with much *naïveté*, and with the utmost indifference, because the usual consummation is confidently anticipated:—

THE WITCH ON THE BRAE.

A' the witches langsyne were humpbackit and auld,
Clad in thin tattered rags that scarce kept out the cauld,
A' were bleer-e'ed, an' toothless, an' wrinkled, an' din,
Ilk ane had an ugly grey beard on her chin;
But fu' sweet is the smile, and like snaw the bit bosom,
  And black are the e'en—ay, black as the slae—
An' as blooming the cheeks as the rose's sweet blossom
  O' the bonnie young witch that wons on the brae.

They might travel at night in the shape o' a hare—
They might elfshoot a quey—they might lame a gray mare;
They might mak' the guid wife ca' in vain at her kirn,
Lose the loop o' her stocking, or ravel her pirn—
Put the milk frae her cow, an' mae tricks as uncannie,
  As queer, and as de'il-like as ony o' thae;
But o' a' the auld witches e'er kent by your grannie,
  I could wager there's nane like the witch on the brae.

'T were a sin to believe her colleagued wi' the de'il;
Yet for a' that she casts her enchantments as weel:
An' although she ne'er rode on a stick to the moon,
She has set the auld dominie twice aff the tune;

Ay, and even Mess John ance or twice gae a stammer,
  But brought himsel' right wi' a hum and a hae;
An' a' body says it was just wi' some glamour
  Frae the twa pawkie een o' the witch on the brae.

No' a lad i' the parish e'er gets a night's sleep,
There's nane mak's a tryst that he ever can keep,
Ilk lass far and near fears she'll die an auld maid,
An' the piper and fiddler complain o' dull trade;
For although tailor Rab night and day has been busy,
  Yet there's nae been a waddin this six months and mae,
An' they say it 's a' for that winsome young hizzie,
  The bit bonnie young witch that wons cn the brae.

She ne'er passes the mill but the dam aye rins out,
For the miller forgets what he should be about;
Neither mason nor sclater can ane work a turn,
An' whene'er the smith sees her some shoe 's sure to burn
An' the sergeant ne'er speaks now o' war, fame, an' glory;
  An' the droll drouthy shoemaker, Sandy M'Rae,
Ne'er sings a queer sang now, nor tells a queer story—
  For they 've all felt the power o' the witch on the brae.

The thin student, puir chiel! ower the linn lap yestreen,
An' wad sure ha'e been drown'd, but by gude luck was seen;
An' he says that the witch drove him thus to despair,
For she took his last poem to paper her hair.
Like the rest, I was put in a gey eerie swither,
  I had nae peace at hame, an' nae heart whaur to gae;
But to end baith my sang an' her witchcraft thegither,
  I will soon be the warlock that wons on the brae.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JAMES SMITH.

> "As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the mystic rhyme,
> And the smith his iron measures hammered to the anvil's chime,
> Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes the flowers of poesy bloom
> In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of the loom."
>
> LONGFELLOW.

If the place of a man's birth takes any part in the formation of his character, James Smith was bound to possess more or less poetic fire, for I know of no spot so redolent of landscape beauty as the undulating ridge which terminates the west end of Middle Strathearn, where James uttered his first epigram. On the west are seen the group called the Comrie Hills,—more weird and rugged than Ferragon.

—backed by Benvoirlich and Benmore, and, in the middle distance, Crieff and Muthill, the magnificent woods and castle of Drummond, the upper valley of the Earn, the woods of Auchtertyre, and the obelisks to the memory of Lord Melville and Sir David Baird. On the south, the green Ochils, from Sheriffmuir to the Wicks of Baiglie, backed by what Wilkie calls "Mine own blue Lomonds;" and in the middle distance, Auchterarder, the woods and castle of Strathallan, and the richly-cultivated country stretching from Culdees Castle to Invermay. On the east, Kinnoull and Dunsinane Hills, with the smoke of Perth curling up before them; and on the north, the Grampians from Benchonzie to Invermark, with Ferntower, Abercairney, Balgowan, and Methven, for intermediate distance. All this while "whistling at the plough." Yet poet James was not, but he was a pungent satirist, and spread his epigrams about in profuse abundance, giving full scope to his not over-scrupulous imagination,

Smith was a tall thin man, rather limply put together, but volatile and active. When young, he was rather good-looking, with light brown hair and remarkably large grey eyes. In temper he was fiery, restless, and impatient to the last degree.

About 1812, and during the incumbency of the Rev. Mr. Imrie, of Kinkell, church politics ran very high amongst the Dissenters of the district. James Smith left Mr. Imrie's congregation on account of some peculiar theological dogmas which the reverend gentleman had adopted, and went to hear the parish minister; but he speedily returned to his old love and to his old hatred of Establishments. The Rev. James Ramsay, at that time minister of Madderty, was very shortsighted, and being a hard reader, he never appeared in the pulpit without having a pair of tortoiseshell spectacles, with very broad brims, stuck close to his face. Smith, on leaving his congregation, felt naturally desirous to make it known that neither minister nor people were worthy of his respect—the one being stolid and dogmatical, and the other a very minimum of numbers and respectability. This is how he lampooned them:—

Upon his nose he wears a pair
  Of leathern spectaches,
Through which he glowers, wi' prudent care
  Down on his twa-three wratches.

In the early part of the century, there lived on the estate of Abercairney two tenants, named respectively William Clement and Laurence Rintoul, violent politicians, who were supposed to be nightly engaged discussing the merits of Pitt, Fox, and Harry Dundas, and sometimes finishing their orgies over a quiet game of chance. Our bard thus characterised them:—

There's Lowry Rintoul, that worthless sowl,
  And Clement of Carselairy,
They'd like to sit with Willy Pitt,
  And rattle dice wi' Harry.

The following anecdote will illustrate his comical pawkiness. He wanted a little sweet oil for some of the purposes of his trade as a cartwright, and was sadly puzzled how he was to get it from the distant grocer. He thought of my brother and me, but he saw great difficulty in the way of bribing us. Eventually he hit upon a plan which he felt confident would be successful: so he came over the way to us, looking as ethereal as possible, and said—"Lads! If you go to Jenny Rutherford's for twopence worth of oil for me, I will show you me fleein' when ye come back." Off we went at a tangent, shouting to all the boys on the way, "We are going to see Jamie Smith fleein'." We were speedily back with the oil, but I *did* think that he was dilatory in making his preparations. After a little, my brother said, "We are waitin' to see you fleein'." "Oh!" said James, "if I had taken time to put on my wings, I would soon have flown to Jenny's for the oil." This would not do, however, so we hung on. At length I was despatched to my father's barn for two leather "wechts," across which James fixed two pieces of rope, and thrusting an arm under each rope, he took firm hold of the rim of the wecht, keeping the concave side down. Thus caparisoned, we followed him to a saw-pit at the back of his workshop, at one end of which was a considerable accumulation of saw-dust, the æronaut, for obvious reasons, preferring to mount at the saw-dust end. When properly perched and balanced on one end of the cross-bars, like a mis-shapen eagle, he gave a williard look up to the sky, and bending down to obtain an upward impetus, he made an angular spring forward of little more than a foot, and came down on his face like an avalanche. There he lay for a minute or two without stirring, except certain convulsive motions of his back, which gave rise to some misgivings in our minds as to the genuineness of his intentions. However, he got up, and giving himself a shake or two, coolly remarked, "Boys! I forgot my tail; and it is as well perhaps, for otherwise you would likely never have seen me again."

The Ayrshire poet's initiative had by this time taken strong hold of the public mind, and every votary of the Muses must affect to have some dealings with the de'il. Indeed, every district had its own black potentate, selected from amongst its own people; and so capricious were they that they very often fixed the obnoxious cognomen on the most intelligent man in the community, in the same way as Mause was voted a witch because she knew more than her neighbours.

Men yet living will remember "The De'il i' Carse," "De'il Davie in Madderty," and "De'il Donald in Fowlis-Wester." The last was an active, shrewd man, in a good position, and fond of a spree. On an evening in the early winter of 1814, he had been dining with a friend in the parish of Trinity-Gask; and, on his way home, it occurred to him that he would take a rise out of his friend Davie. Accordingly, he rode up to his door, and gave it a rattle with the butt-end of his whip which made the echoes ring. Davie's wife, who was sitting spinning, hurried to the door, where she beheld through the darkness a figure like the horseman in Burger's "Lenore," standing close to, and right across the entry; and, before she had time to utter any inquiry, a voice like thunder roared out, "Is the de'il at hame?" At this David seized the poker, and, rushing out through the passage, groped for vengeance; but his visitor, seeing him coming by the little light from within, again roared in an unearthly voice, "Am I a dog, that thou comest out against me with staves? Behold, I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." David, being a little of a coward, quailed before this Philistine, and Donald, seeing this, addressed him quietly: "Do not be alarmed, my dear sir, I am the de'il o' Gorthy, and I thought it would be unfriendly to pass your door without giving you a call." "Come in," said David. Donald leaped from the saddle, tied his horse to the sneek, and, being a stalwart man, he stooped as he walked into his friend's clay biggin'. On approaching the fire through the peat-reek, he blew out his nostrils, snorting like a whale, and exclaiming, "You have too much ventilation here. I smeek my victims with green whins and broom. A wooden fender, too!"—observing a cart-wheel fillie before the clay kat, "Your temperature must be very low; all my furnishings are case-hardened steel." David looked at his visitor in blank amazement, not being clever enough to follow him in all his allusions; but when Donald drew himself up to his full height, and ordered David to put on the frying-pan, that he might get ready some blue fire, he could stand it no longer; and while he rushed frantically past his wife to get hold of the poker, Donald, much too clever for him, slipped his cable, and by the time his host reached the threshold, he could hear or see nothing but the rapid clatter of horse's hoofs dying away in the distant darkness.

This story speedily reached James Smith, and roused his dramatic proclivities to such an extent that nothing but a satanic epic could possibly allay them. James produced the epic, which extended to thirty verses, ending as follows:—

All there that night on dancin' bent
Got loupin' to their heart's content:
They yell'd, they link'd, they danced together,
And bounded o'er the head's o' ither.
Then each, on cudgels firm astride,
In a' directions aff did ride.
Who searches yet is sure to find
The smell that Satan left behind.

CHAPTER XXV.

THOMAS FINLAYSON.

"And all who heard it, added something new;
And all who heard it made enlargements, too;
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew."
POPE.

THE tale of the upper ten thousand has been often told. The poor man's annals are never forgotten. The shepherd on the hill, and the peasant in the mead, have been sung to repletion. But who has written the shopkeeper? His tale is untold; yet no class of men exercise a greater influence on society. The thousands that are paid to railway companies, the millions that fill the coffers of the banks, the fortunes of Fore Street, the Mansion-house charities, all come through the shopkeeper's hands. If a sovereign were to receive a distinctive mark every time it changed hands, how very often it would be found behind the counter! The French and Germans call us a nation of shopkeepers: if we are so, we do little honour to our representative class. How many eager, anxious lives have been spent within an area of fifteen feet square! How many weary, racking anticipations, hopes frustrated, bad debts, "bills to take up on Friday"! If a shopkeeper is prosperous, it benefits him in many ways; he acquires confidence in himself, and it daunts those who would otherwise ride over him in the journey of life.

> It is success that colours all in life:
> Success makes fools admired, makes villains boast.
> All the proud virtue of this vaunting world
> Fawns on success and power, howe'er acquired.

But if misfortune—it matters not whence it comes—once lays on its clammy hand, man becomes a shrinking coward, and then tyranny, however small in stature, puts on its rough shoes.

> So powerful are a banker's bills,
> Where creditors demand their due;
> They break up counters, doors, and tills,
> And leave the empty chests in view.

The subject of the following essay, apart altogether from the two salient points in his character here taken up, illustrated in his own proper person, better than any man I have known, the lights and shadows, the grindings and the exultations, the hopes and fears, that go to make up the life of the shopkeeper.

Thomas Finlayson was born in the parish of Muthill, in the year 1792; and in his fourteenth year, he and his elder brother, Matthew, went as apprentices to Glasgow. In 1814 they commenced business as grocers on their own account, under the style of Matthew and Thomas Finlayson, and for many years did a gigantic retail trade. Thomas was not much of a poet, but he was a very remarkable specimen of the *genus homo*. Personally, he was about five feet four inches in height, and in breadth about as much! very fair-haired, very gentlemanly, very demonstrative, full of pomposity and Latin. For thirty years he vegetated behind the counter, and became as much a part and parcel of the shop as if he had actually taken root in it. The consequence of which was that when he, on rare occasions, went out among other people, he was continually committing ridiculous escapades. He was a lord in the shop, and expected to be the same out of doors, but found his mistake; so during the day he kept his post behind the counter, in the evening read the *Times*, and in the incessant bustle of a crowded retail shop he found opportunities of sending abroad little bits of epigrammatised scandal, which came creeping along the street like a piece of offal, everybody giving it a kick—not contemptuously, but to keep it going. Finlayson's great anxiety was to be considered a learned man; he was continually quoting scraps of Latin. To an old woman who had bought a quarter of an ounce of tea, it was "*quantum suff.*" The three-shilling silver coin was then in circulation, and hundreds of spurious ones were daily tendered. Thomas knew them by the look, or by feeling, or by ringing. When a good one was put into his hands, he gave it a jaunty smart stroke on the hard counter, and when it had risen thirty inches he caught it descending, exclaiming, "*Fronti nulla fides !*,"

The following song, although somewhat faulty, is a very creditable production of Finlayson's muse. Some of the images are false, but it bears the impress of talent and feeling; and had the author cultivated his faculties with more parental solicitude, instead of scattering about trifles, he might have taken his place among the poets that are remembered, instead of among those that are forgotten:—

Clyde's green banks are clad with blossoms,
Fairer than the fragrant rose:
Blooming maids with snow-white bosoms,
Where love's tender passion glows.
Hours of rapture pass, bright river,
Like thy blue waves to the sea,
Unreturning; but for ever
Will thy banks be dear to me.

Roll along your limpid waters,
Mingling with a thousand streams;
Beauty's love-inspiring daughters
Shine around thee like moonbeams.
Hours of rapture, &c,

Green the vales and green the mountains,
Watered by thy crystal wave;
Bold the youths that stem thy fountains—
Strong in fight, in battle brave.
Hours of rapture, &c.

Lovely stream, thy banks are ringing
With the song that echo bears;
To my fond remembrance bringing
Faded joys of other years.
Hours of rapture, &c.

In 1823, Dr. Jeffrey occupied the Chair of Anatomy in Glasgow College. His house was the ground-floor next the Havannah, and on the north end it had a small wing or *to-fall* flanking that street. In an unfortunate moment it occurred to him that he might increase his revenue by converting this wing into a shop facing the High Street, which was speedily done, and the shop was let for three years at a rent of twenty-five pounds to a provision-merchant of the name of Peter Cock. This movement roused the indignation of the whole University, and led to much gossip, which culminated in the following *jeu d'esprit* being neatly written in chalk, across the shutters early on Sunday morning, and read by the thousands passing to and from the various churches situated at the top of High Street. Thomas Finlayson was understood to be the author, and some waggish student the writer:—

This once was Dr. Jeffrey's shop,
That famous rawbone cutter,
But now it's kept by Peter Cock,
For selling bread and butter!

The shop was never opened again, and the tenant—who did a roaring trade for a week—received from the learned Professor a year's rent as solatium.

But the last of the epigrams came, and the immolation of the author, as such, came with it. I insert it here as it came up in the unfolding of the following remarkable affair, of which I was a very willing eye-and-ear witness:—

"You're a thief," said a wag, "and I'll show it,"
To a butcher with angry feeling.
"'Tis a scandalous fact, and you know it,
That knives you are constantly *steeling*."

Although this is a very harmless effusion, yet in the locality where it was purposely circulated, it had the savour of an intended insult, and an opportunity of resenting it soon occurred.

In 1823, the entry into the vegetable-market in King Street was flanked on either side by *to-falls* of one story high, which on the lower side were occupied as fleshers' shops, and on the upper or north side, by Matthew & Thomas Finlayson, grocers. The passage would be about ten feet wide, paved all over. Early in January of the year above named, a snow-storm blocked up the street to the depth of several feet, and it being the prescribed duty of the shopkeepers to clear the pavement, Finlayson's men threw the snow to the centre of the passage, and the fleshers did the same from the other side, thereby raising a ridge between the two. Forty-eight hours afterwards, a second and very heavy fall of snow occurred, delaying all the mails and putting a complete stop to business. This snow had to be disposed of. The fleshers began, and the grocers began, and quickly the heap of snow reached a height of six feet, positively refusing to accommodate any more. Nothing daunted, however, the opposing parties continued to heave up prodigious spadefuls, which for a time rolled down the opposite side; but as the jealousy and wrath increased, the centrifugal action became stronger, and as fresh recruits came up from every quarter with spades, the snow flew like rockets. The flesher's wives pitched like Amazons; the grocers gasped for breath, but heaved away; both utterly regardless of what was ocurring on the other side of the barricade.

At this juncture, Thomas Finlayson, fresh as an exotic, rushed to the scene of action, armed with a shovel, and buckishly dressed with white cravat, frilled shirt, light-blue coat, with gilt buttons, and wide light-drab trowsers strapped over Wellington boots of unequalled lustre. After a rapid survey of his own side of the combat, he scrambled to the top of the snow-ridge, and essayed to harangue the enemy, but they declined to hear him; and as he raised his voice, the snow fell thick and fast on his devoted head, and what aggravated the matter, the crowd—by this time very large—shouted, "Trounce them, Tommy!" "Well done, mutton bones!" "Go it cleavers. What a guy!" and other pleasant exclamations. The spectators, who stood on the top of the snow in King Street, saw the fight to great advantage, and from them came these slang words of command.

Amongst the combatants was Mrs. Brown, a stout well-developed flesher's wife, with a chest like a Swiss plateau, red hair, and a face to match. A perfect virago was Mrs. Brown. She had tongue for six, and called Tommy a "whipper-snapper," a "mealy-pudding," and other appropriate names. Thus provoked, the little man clutched his spade for the purpose of hurling it at her, when a snowball from the hand of a lusty journeyman flesher struck him in the pit of the stomach with such force, that he tumbled like an empty puncheon to the pavement below his own shop window. A yell from the crowd brought the tardy police, and order was restored.

Next morning the parties were summoned before the sitting Magistrate, Bailie Hood, whose cooperage was then on the site of the present bazaar, and after witnesses had been examined, Tommy rose, amidst a court crammed to the ceiling, and delivered an oration, which, although remarkable for its involvement of images, had a peroration, unequalled in the records of forensic eloquence:—"Your honour will observe that all my movements in this unseemly matter were directed to the attainment of peace. When I reached the top of the snow, I found myself opposed to that volcanic mountain [pointing to Mrs. Brown], and when I attempted to throw oil upon the waters, she blazed at me like the fire of Baal. I held up my hands as an indication that I sued for peace, but that only aggravated the evil. She bellowed and gesticulated till the froth came from her mouth like lava from the crater of Mount Vesuvius. I felt in imminent danger of my life, for she held in her hand, which was red as a boiled lobster, a piece of wood, which she threatened to throw at me, shouting, 'I'll fell ye wi' a fit-stick. I'll set a' the dogs in the market on ye.' Then she whistled like a raven, and cried '*Collie, Pincher, Fangs,* here! catch him, tear out his liver, thrapple him.' Thus menanced, your honour will not wonder that I prepared for my own defence. Thrice did I lift my sugar shovel, and thrice did I say within myself, 'Good God! shall I strike a woman? Socrates yielded to Xantippe, and why should I not yield to this glorious queen of Mutton.' *Vincit qui patitur. Adversus major par secundus.*"

CHAPTER XXVI.

PETER AGNEW.

"And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might roused the slumbering dead to hear."
ROBERT BURNS.

PETER AGNEW was born in the South Street of Perth, in the year 1793. His father was a sieve-maker, and when Peter had reached his fourteenth year, and got as much education as most young men of his time, he was sent as an apprentice to a house painter, with whom he remained four years. Very early in life he showed evidence of great musical talent; and in those days, when every young man played the flute or violin, Agnew was much encouraged by his friends in pursuing his studies of the latter instrument, and was sent by his father to get lessons from John Bowie. Before leaving his native town, and while he was a mere youth, he composed a song which many people in Perth will recollect hearing about the time the French prisoners occupied the Depôt:—

SWEET PERTH.

Sweet Perth is the glory and pride of the nation.
She's envied by her neighbours, but what can they say ?
She's pleasantly placed in a fine situation,
And O ! she looks meek on the banks of the Tay.

To honour my native, 'tis surely my duty,
I'll sing of the city in which I was born.
For fine architecture, compactness and beauty,
Now Bertha may laugh all her sisters to scorn.

Some say Agricola the city first founded ;
And O, he was glad when he saw such a plain,
With hills and with valleys so neatly surrounded,
And where she now stands he encamped his men.

Serene from tornados and swells of the ocean,
Like Mars-field, like Rome, and like Tiber they cried.
Refreshed in Eden, and cherished in Goshen,
To buildings and fencings their hands they applied.

Agnew resolved to leave Perth, and push his fortune in the world, as soon as circumstances would permit. So one summer morning, about three o'clock, he took his fiddle in his hand, and going up South Street to the crossing, he tossed a halfpenny—Edinburgh or Glasgow? The latter city carried it, and off he went whistling. In Glasgow he remained, following his business, for two or three years, and then found his way to London. I first met him in the year 1819, after he had returned and settled in Glasgow. He was then a singular and really disagreeable-looking man. His face was large and square cut; his eyebrows shaggy; his nose broad and flat, with large yawning nostrils; his mouth eclipsed them all, not so much by its size as by this peculiarity—when in any mood of exalted feeling, he blew out his upper lip like an inflated rope. He was much cut with small-pox, and his thin black hair hung about his ears in tangled profusion. Yet, notwithstanding these disagreeable features, Peter Agnew was an interesting and most enjoyable man. He painted a fair landscape, knew Horatio Maculloch, sang a capital song, wrote verses, and told stories. But the charm of charms about Peter was his fiddle-playing; in that he had no competitor; and if he could have been persuaded out of the belief that he was to become a great landscape artist, fortune and fame were both within his grasp.

At the time of which I am writing, Alexander Livingstone rented a small hostelry on the west side of the Laigh Kirk Close. He had given it the name of "The Auld Cloak," as he was rather famous for singing that very popular song. When he left the house, it was taken by John Shaw, still more popular in the old ballad. Shaw belonged to Mason's company of comedians, and was possessor of the famous punch-bowl of Robert Burns, now in the British Museum. The Queen Street Theatre did not pay, so Mason's company was broken up; and Jack Shaw felt himself dreadfully humbled when he was driven to keep a public-house. He felt anxious to let the public know that he only did so for sheer life, and he called Peter Agnew to his council. The result was that a hanging sign was put up, nearly five feet square, on which was painted a terrestrial globe. On one side of the globe a recumbent head appeared, a veritable portrait of Shaw himself; and at the other, a pair of feet, the veritable slippers of Jack Shaw; while below was written, "The struggle through the warld." Both sides of the signboard exhibited the same problem. The whole was remarkably well painted. Jack Shaw afterwards went to London; and we are informed by the late David Roberts that when Mr. Hastie got possession of the punch-bowl, Shaw was keeping a public-house in the Strand.

In addition to his little painting shop, Agnew had an art atelier in the garret flat of a house at the east end of the Bridgegate. Its furnishings consisted of an easel, a rickety chair, and a form wanting a leg. The fireplace was closed by a smokeboard, on which he had painted a grate so successfully that, in certain lights, it was difficult of detection, and enabled him to "bounce the beagles," as follows:—A certain two shillings and sixpence for taxes had been called for, times without number, and it was observed that latterly, the collector cast some longing looks in the direction of the *grate*. Eventually, one cold winter morning, when the great artist was setting his palette to commence a grand picture of "Christ at the Sea of Galilee," his acute ear heard a barrow wheeled along the street and set down at his "close-mouth." Presently, heavy footsteps were heard on the stair, and without ceremony two gentlemen entered the apartment. One of them said, with a strong Highland accent, "Wood you'll pay your taxes? Half-a-croon." "No funds to-day," said Vandyke. "Fera weel; she'll shust poond her." "Proceed!" said Peter. So, taking a rope out of his pocket, the officer handed it to his neighbour, and going forward to the *grate*, attempted to take hold of the shining ribs; but instantly turning round with a look of indescribable chagrin, he exclaimed, "Oh! cot tam! she's shust a pentin!"

Against all remonstrance, Agnew would leave his ordinary trade, and away to the easel; and if he got a pound or two for a picture or a job of house-painting, he would sit down, blow out his upper lip, and paint away at some visionary landscape, which was to beat Nasmyth and Copley Fielding all to nothing; but it never did, and, in disgust at all mankind, he would go on the spree.

The following song is a fair specimen of Peter's not over-prolific muse in its best days:—

THE BONNIE WEE ROSEBUD.

A bonnie wee rosebud grows down by yon burnie,
A bonnie wee rosebud as e'er you did see,
Wi' saft silken leaves underneath a green thornie,
O spare the wee rosebud, O spare it for me.

The redbreast sings wanton around this sweet blossom
Sae fond to make love doth the wee birdie be.
But wha'd be sae cruel as steal frae my bosom,
This bonnie wee rosebud, O spare it for me.

Now, fain would I change for the wee birdie's station,
Now blythe would I chirp 'neath the green thorn tree,
Enraptured to muse and transported to gaze on
This bonnie wee rosebud, O spare it for me.

O hasten the moment, blest moment o' pleasure,
When locked to my breast the sweet rosebud shall be,
United for ever my soul's dearest treasure,
O spare the wee rosebud, O spare it for me.

The above was set to music seven years afterwards, and published in a Glasgow periodical.

I come now to the grand incident of my acquaintance with Peter Agnew—an incident which has only to be called up, to excite the same enthusiasm as it did in days of yore. My readers would accuse me of exaggeration if I were to give expression to my unmeasured admiration of Peter Agnew's violin-playing; but they will be able to sympathise with me to some extent when I have told them how he was received by a community, which by this time (1827) had become familiar with Paganini, and Blagrove, and Cervetti, and Lindley, and who had amongst themselves amateur violinists, such as are now rarely to be met with in any town in the British dominions.

Near the end of July, 1827, Peter Agnew recovered from a protracted illness, to find his exchequer down to zero. This came to the ears of a few of his friends, who at once formed themselves into a committee of ways and means, and sent for him. I knew that, if we were to offer him ten guineas to paint a picture, he would soon close with us; but we could not see our way to it. At my instigation one of the party made the following proposal—I would not have dared to do it myself; the upper lip would certainly have burst:—"We have resolved to advance you three pounds to-morrow night if you will dress yourself in such a way as nobody will know you, and play 'Black Joke' between the head of Stockwell Street and King Street. We will send a boy to collect the bawbees; and whatever more than three pounds is collected (bold), you will get it; and if it turns out less, we will bear the loss." There was no occasion to tell Peter to dress like a decayed gentleman, for that was perfectly natural to him. He stormed a little at first, poor fellow; but after reasoning the matter with him, and rather treating the affair as a grand lark, he consented, and before he had discussed two tumblers of toddy, he became quite enthusiastic in the business. Next night, at nine o'clock, we met in the Stag Inn, King Street, and there and then formed ourselves into a Joint-stock Company, with a capital of sixty shillings, in twelve shares of five shillings each. One spirited shareholder offered to take up the whole stock; but he would have been wrong, as the sequel will show. Agnew's variations to the air were perfectly interminable, but it was arranged that the natural air was to be played, at least six times, during the journey, the length of which would be about three hundred yards. The dress Peter came in I will not attempt to describe, because it was beyond all description. His fiddle was in grand tune, on purpose to prevent any pause at the starting-post. So off we sallied, every one taking his own road, and, as if by accident, we all met at the head of Stockwell Street at a quarter to ten o'clock. Peter stepped on to the street a yard or so from the pavement, and drawing out his fiddle from the bosom of his upper integuments, he put it to his shoulder in a way that none but high proficients do, and down came the bow, and down came the crowd, and within five minutes, the broad Trongate was covered half-way across. "Stand back," said the hat-boy. "Stand back," cried the shareholders. "Stand *you* back," said the crowd. I had never heard Agnew play in the open air, and I had some misgivings. Bah! Peter would have been heard in a coal-pit—such bowing, such whistling of octaves, such cheers from the crowd, such jostling. Three or four giants stepped forward from the mob, crying "Shame! Keep back! Give him room!" So they did give him room, and he played superbly. But, alas! the poor collector lost the hat, and very nearly lost his life. Money was offered, but there was no one to take it; and by this time, Peter was away up in the third heavens, and no amount of money would have made him slacken his bow-hand.

In less than twenty minutes our joint-stock scrip became of as little value in the market as Pennsylvanian bonds, but Agnew had faith in the proprietary, and he dealt his fascinating strains with a liberal hand. By the time the moving crowd reached the head of King Street, a gentle hint came from the police, and Peter, feeling his way, prepared for the *coup de grace*. When he stood still, the crowd formed a circle round him; and, managing his last series of variations so as at the finish the bow was at its extreme pitch, he came rolling down into the natural air with a vehemence that was perfectly startling. The crowd shouted "Bravo! Bravissimo!" and Peter, after playing the air once over, vanished amidst the plaudits of a thousand voices. We all landed at the Stag; but the business had got wind, and before we had time to balance our affairs, two young gentlemen waited upon us, with an invitation to supper at the Ram's-horn Tavern. Thither we all repaired, and found a party of about thirty; and after being sumptuously treated, and after Agnew had played them all into ecstasies, the chairman got hold of a state of our joint-stock affairs, and, with an improvised generosity of which Glasgow gentlemen are highly capable, he did not only assess our obligations on the general company, but collected as much more for Peter Agnew as sent him home to his humble lodgings in the New Wynd, a comparatively rich man.

After this escapade I sold Agnew's picture of Christ at the Sea of Galilee, to a Glasgow gentleman, for £15, and was to have got a cheque next day for the amount, but, instead of the cheque, I got a note to say, that the picture, although cleverly painted, was entirely destitute of atmosphere—a truth which I did not dare to gainsay. I afterwards sent it to Lamont's saleroom, where it was sold for £12. Peter was urged to put this sum into the bank, together with the proceeds of the fiddling, and to join one of the city bands; but he spurned the proposal, saying, "I refused to join John Gow's London band fifteen years ago. Why should I join a Glasgow one now?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAVID WEBSTER

> " Consider well the poet's case,
> By turns protected and caressed,
> Defamed, dependent, and distressed,
> The joke of wits, the bane of slaves,
> The curse of fools, the butt of knaves."
> ROBERT LLOYD.

THERE is not a colder place under the firmament than the moor of Tarnawie. At least so thought John Webster, and John must have known, for he had been thirty years a crofter on it, and all that time had maintained a stand-up fight against heather and grey boulders; but 1826 came, and declared in favour of the boulders. He was an acute man, and fond of abstract theories, some of which were eminently original. For instance, he held that the north wind blew with ten times more force when it reached the top of the moor than it did down at the river hollow, because, although a very moderate breeze at first, it accumulated as it ascended, packed upward, and concentrated, until, by the time it reached Highrigg, it was ready to blow the tail off his cow.

John Webster had a good head, a good heart, and a capital pair of hands, and he kept them all in healthful exercise. Any local difficulties or quarrels were generally referred to him; he would smooth down the asperities, and soften the edge of resentment. But if bearded or disgusted, he would fight with a gate-post. He preferred peace at all hazards, but he found that it could only be obtained sometimes after war; on which occasions he made no scruple of going at it. War he did with everything he thought wrong, and he made no difficulty in appointing himself judge.

An instance of this occurred towards the close of the year 1815. John had been reading a great deal in the papers about a certain blackamoor who called himself Mendoza, and who, it was said, made it his business to go into the smaller provincial towns and challenge the community either to find a man to fight him, or said community to pay him five pounds. All that John learned of him was that he was black, and a prodigious fighter. Webster had occasion to be in Stirling at this time with a horse and cart, and, driving along Cowan Street, he saw a black fellow—who, it turned out, was an ostler at one of the hotels—ill-using a youth, and beating him up against a well on the side of the street, while the crowd shouted "Shame! shame!" It never entered John's mind to doubt that this was the great Mendoza. He was black, and black men are not so very common; so, without more ado, he gave his horse in charge to a boy, and, bursting in through the crowd, cried, "Stand back! D—n him, I'll Mendoza him!" The black fellow was both taller and stronger-looking than John, and, judging his purpose he set himself to do mortal combat. But John merely flung down his whip, and, running into the blackey, with one stroke felled him to the street, like a bullock. A vociferous hurrah arose from the crowd. The victor did not seem to care whether the recumbent blackey came up to the scratch again or not, for he coolly picked up his whip, and, giving it a flourish and a crack like a bursting shell, exclaimed, "I'm thinkin' I ha'e saved the toun o' Stirlin' the five pound, at ony rate!" Webster was eventually taken before the authorities, and, after a great deal of wise proceeding, his case was declared one of "mistaken identity." "There is no mistake about it," said he, *He* deserved all he got, *at ony rate;*" so they dismissed him as incorrigible.

John Webster's brother David lived in Dunblane: he was a working man; and although in straitened circumstances, he managed to give his son David a superior education. But the young man, when he grew up, showed little inclination towards any of the learned professions; and, at his own request, he was sent as an apprentice to a shawl-weaver in Paisley. Eminently social and a clever mimic, he was seduced into the company of men of indifferent character, and acquired habits which he had not fortitude to throw off, and for the fifteen years which he lived after I knew him, he never emerged from the loom. His poems were published at Paisley, in 1835, and sold well. Some of them are exceedingly clever. The two I am about to quote are known over the length and breadth of Scotland. Mr. Whitelaw, in his "Book of Scottish

Song," says, "he was born in Paisley," but that is a mistake, which his long residence there may have led to. Dunblane is entitled to the credit of his birth and education, or much as I admire the talent of the man, I would not have been entitled to class him among the Perthshire poets.

Webster's song, "Tak' it, man, tak' it," is an extraordinary piece of philosophical sarcasm—clever, plausible, and searching. The workings of the human mind, and the faint rebellions of conscience, both in a state of moral declension, are pourtrayed by the hand of a master. On its first appearance this song became very popular, more especially in the west. A young gentleman of the name of Nelson, who was for some years assistant to Mr. Stone, road-surveyor, Perth, used to sing it admirably. Nelson was about the best amateur comic singer I ever met. He had a song wherein a "gentleman," in a state of maudlin drunkenness, attempts to recite the particulars of a dinner-party he had been at, in which he utterly fails: "It was a fery nish party. There were four of ush. Sir Felix was one, the two Macgregors was two, myself three. But who the deuce was the fourth? Let me see. Sir Felix was one, the two Macgregors was two, myself—oh! I have it now. Sir Felix was one, the two Macgregors was three. Pshaw! how could two Macgregors be three?" and so on to a dead lock, when he gave it up, and went on to the next verse, which contained something equally puzzling.

TAK' IT, MAN, TAK' IT.

AIR—"*Brose and Butter.*"

When I was a miller in Fife,
  Losh! I thought that the sound o' the happer
Said, "Tak' hame a wee flow to your wife,
  To help to be brose to your supper."
Then my conscience was narrow and pure,
  But someway by random it rackit;
For I lifted twa neivefu' or mair,
  While the happer said, "Tak' it, man, tak' it."
    Then hey for the mill and the kill,
      The garland and gear for my cogie,
    And hey for the whisky and yill,
      That washes the dust frae my craigie.

Although it's been lang in repute,
  For rogues to make rich by deceiving;
Yet I see that it disna weel suit
  Honest men to begin to the thieving.

For my heart it gaed dunt upon dunt,
Od, I thought ilka dunt it wad crackit;
Sae I flang frae my neive what was in't,
Still the happer said, "Tak' it, man, tak' it"
Then hey for the mill, &c.

A man that's been bred to the plough,
Might be deav'd wi' its clamorous clapper;
Yet there's few but would suffer the sough,
After kenning what's said by the happer.
I whiles thought it scoff'd me to scorn,
Saying, "Shame, is your conscience no chackit;"
But when I grew dry for a horn,
It chang'd aye to "Tak' it, man, tak' it."
Then hey for the mill, &c.

The smugglers whiles cam' wi' their packs,
'Cause they kent that I liked a bicker,
Sae I bartered whiles wi' the gowks,
Gi'ed them grain for a soup o' their liquor.
I had lang been accustomed to drink,
And aye when I purposed to quat it,
That thing wi' its clappertie clink,
Said aye to me, "Tak' it man, tak' it."
Then hey for the mill, &c.

But the warst thing I did in my life,
Nae doubt but ye'll think I was wrang o't,
Od, I tauld a bit bodie in Fife
A' my tale, and he made a bit sang o't.
I have aye had a voice a' my days,
But for singin' I ne'er gat the knack o't:
Yet I try whyles, just thinking to please
My frien's here, wi' "Tak' it, man, tak' it."
Then hey for the mill, &c.

Now, miller and a' as I am,
This far I can see through the matter;
There's men mair notorious to fame,
Mair greedy than me o' the muter.
For 'twad seem that the hale race o' men,
Or, wi' safety, the half we may mak' it,
Ha'e some speaking happer within,
That says aye to them, "Tak' it, man, tak' it."
Then hey for the mill, &c.

The ballad of "Donald Gunn" is founded on circumstances which occurred in the parish of Kirkpatrick, in Dunbartonshire. A farmer's daughter had an only brother who had long been in Demerara, and dying had left her a large fortune. During the time the news was on the way she committed herself to a working man in the neighbourhood, and unfortunately, when the news came she was not in a position to resile,—so that in the matter of choice her money did her no service. However, the husband-elect kept his position, and a marriage ensued, which turned out a happy one. The amusing part of the story is that, as soon as the news of the great legacy broke out, the poor girl was haunted by all the fortune-seeking sparks about Glasgow, who generally came back boasting of success, until the *dénouement* changed the boast into a query, "When were you at Duntocher?" Webster's treatment of the married life of the husband is very highly coloured, and he was a good deal found fault with for it:—

DONALD GUNN.

AIR—"*Johnnie Pringle.*"

Heard ye e'er o' Donald Gunn,
  Ance sae duddy, dowf, and needy,
Now a laird in yonder toun,
  Callous-hearted, proud, and greedy.

Up the glen aboon the linn,
  Donald met wi' Maggie Millar,
Wooed the lass amang the whins,
  Because she had the word o' siller;
Meg was neither trig nor braw,
  Had mae fauts than ane laid till her;
Donald lookit ower them a',
  A' his thought was on the siller.
    Heard ye e'er, &c.

Donald grew baith braid and braw,
  Ceased to bore the whinstone quarry,
Maggie's siller pays for a',
  Breeks instead o' duddy barrie:
Though he's ignorant as a stirk,
  Though he's dour as ony donkey;
Yet, by accidental jirk,
  Donald rides before a flunky.
    Heard ye e'er, &c.

Clachan bairnies roar wi' fricht,
  Clachan dogs tak' to their trotters,
Clachan wives the pathway dicht
  To tranquillise his thraward features:
Gangrel bodies in the street
  Beck and bow to mak' him civil,
Tenant bodies in his debt,
  Shun him as they'd shun the devil.
    Heard ye e'er, &c.

Few gang trigger to the fair,
  Few gang to the kirk sae gaucie,—
Few wi' Donald can compare
  To keep the cantel o' the causie;

In his breast a bladd o' stane,
Neith his hat a box o' brochan,
In his neive a wally cane,
Thus the tyrant rules the clachan.
Heard ye e'er, &c.

A copy of David Webster's poems came into my hands in 1836, and some time afterwards, in passing through Dunblane, I made enquiry about him, and found he had died rather suddenly six months before, in the 51st year of his age.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JAMES C. SHAIN.

"My sun his daily course renews,
Due east, but with no eastern dews,
The path is dry and hot;
His setting shows more tamely still,
He sinks behind no purple hill,
But down a chimney pot!"
THOMAS HOOD.

FORTY years ago, the bottom of the High Street of Perth, now an open vista, terminating at Rosebank, was jammed up by a great iron-barred old house, in front of which the common gallows was from time to time erected, and where, with their faces into the very heart of the burgh, Larg and Mitchell were executed early in the century, for robbing the Friarton Toll-house of *half-a-crown!* and where a poor Dane suffered the same extreme penalty for a crime which a more enlightened criminal code has all but tabooed. Ascending from the left-hand pavement was the "Braid Stair," the very naming of which caused many a heart to quake. Opposite the right-hand pavement was a wide arch-way, leading by a flight of steps down to the river; and in the right-hand angle a common stair, the stone steps of which belonged originally to Gowrie House, leading up to the flats of the corner tenement. The first of these, at the time of which I write, was occupied as a sort of "Do-the-boys Hall," where James Shain taught English and Latin, without treacle or any other condiment, and lent books to those who were disposed to read. In 1843, I bought his books and the goodwill of his trade for £5 10s.

James Shain was a poet, and a very gallant one, for out of his thirty-five published pieces, twenty-five are devoted to "Woman!" and kissing, sobbing, and tear-shedding are the staple virtues. His poems are by no means destitute of merit, although sometimes very crudely versified. The nature of his themes leads him to appeal to the heart, which he does with tenderness, and not unfrequently with pathos.

The death scenes to which I have referred, happening within arm's-length of his windows, suggested to Shain's mind his ballad entitled "Emma," where the sweetheart of one of the criminals visits him in his cell the night before his execution.

> The workmen were busy at Death's fatal "stage!"
> Each hammer that fell echoed loud to presage
> The fate of her lover.

—He implores her thus, before a final parting in prison—

> Forget not the scenes of our youth,
> The haunts of our juvenile bliss;
> My shade shall descend and hover your friend;
> For in heaven such pleasure is.
> My crime, my dear Emma, was not from the heart,
> I feel that my God will a pardon impart;
> Beside Him we'll meet, and no more shall we part,
> Nor ever know sorrow like this.

The following "Tragic Ballad" is the most finished of Shain's published works:—

FAIR HELEN AND LORD WILLIAM.

> The village eyes for love and truth,
> Fair Helen fixed upon;
> The joy of all the virtuous youth,
> The fair maid's paragon.
>
> To parents she was dutiful,
> To every one sincere;
> To rivals she was beautiful,
> To all the village dear.
>
> Lord William, in an evil hour,
> Espied the luckless fair.
> Her fate—submission to his power;
> Her guerdon—sad despair.

Her father saw her altered form,
  Her visage pale and wan;
And though he felt a rising storm,
  Suppressed it as a man.

Apart her mother wiped the tear,
  Though smiles to her were shown;
For Helen was to her most dear,
  Of all her heart had known.

To soothe a father's rending care,
  Which time could ne'er remove.
A mother's tenderness to spare,
  And show her filial love,

Lord William, in his walk, she sought,
  The cause of her undoing.
Alas! poor Helen little thought,
  She sought her final ruin!

"At eve," he said, "on yonder beach,
  You'll meet me at the tide,
And I'll save you from slander's reach,
  For you shall be my bride."

"Oh! spare my life, Lord William, spare!
  'Tis all your Helen craves!"
A ruthless pair the female bear,
  And dash her in the waves.

The two had rowed, for murder hired,
  Till out of reach of hearing,
Where Helen in the deep expired,
  And he no witness fearing.

"You've done your part full well," he said;
  "She can tease me no more.
Now, would you wish your hire well paid,
  Row quickly to the shore."

She was his bride; for he cried "Save!"
  As they to land were sailing.
The villains met a watery grave,
  And none to help their wailing!

The house in which Mr. Shain dwelt was eventually destroyed by fire; not a bit too soon, for a more sunless, wretched place it is impossible to conceive. I then lost sight of him, but I presume the poetical vein was exhausted; for he never afterwards, so far as I know, appeared in print.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JAMES SIM.

> "Trifling mortal, tell me why
> Thou hast disturbed my urn.
> Want'st thou to find out what am I?
> Vain man! attend and learn:
> To know what letters spelt my name
> Is useless quite to thee;
> An heap of dust is all I am,
> And all that thou shalt be."
>
> THOMAS PRIOR

I HAVE had James Sim's poems in my possession for forty years, and have studied them carefully, but without being able to form any comprehension of his character. There is such a jumble of coarse vulgarity, heartless satire, and true pathos in his little book, that it is quite as impossible to form an opinion of the contents as a whole, as it is to mix oil with water. Sim was a working man on the estate of Ballathie, in the parish of Kinclaven, and seems to have had a great traffic on his own account, as well as that of his neighbours, with the shopkeepers of Perth, especially during the early years of the century. His book of poems must have yielded him considerable profit, for it does not contain more matter than the Shorter Catechism, and the price is 2s. 6d., and the number of subscribers, 375. The list of subscribers is more calculated to excite tender recollections in the heart of an elderly citizen of Perth than many of the poems. William Arnot, Peter Arnot, Dr. Henderson, David Burns, George Clark, John Sim, Thomas Paton, Robert Craigie, George Rintoul, James M'Lean, James Thomas, Sampson Duncan, were amongst the leading men of Perth in the year 1811, albeit some of them will scarcely be expected to figure in a list of patrons of the rural muse. But what must appear singularly characteristic to any one knowing the parties is this: Sim arranges his subscribers in parishes, and the first subscriber in the parish of Auchtergaven is Grizel Fenwick, Robert Nicoll's mother! When Robert came to be a man, he did not speak approvingly of his mother's investment; "but," he said, "we had to thole, for both my dominies were poets. James Anderson and George Porter, I thought many a day, were next to Pope and Dryden." It was not to be expected that Robert would approve of Sim's book, seeing that it contains elegies on the Rev. Mr. Bannerman, of Cargill, and the Rev. Mr. Scott, of Kinclaven, besides laudatory verses on Addington and Pitt, men who, by their position, had rendered themselves obnoxious to the dissenting Radicalism of the enthusiastic young poet.

James Sim, like most of his coeval poets, had a great traffic with the de'il. One night, when the great potentate was on his way to visit M'Commie, the miller at Newmill, "a sad rogue," Sim met him in the Haugh of Ballathie, and urged him hard to punish M'Commie. His couplet describing the meeting is perfectly matchless:—

When Hornie did present himsel',
I kent him by his seety smell!

Having recognised him, he reasoned first, and then threatened him:—

"Auld lad," quo I, "ye are nae blate,
To pitch your tent on our estate;
I rede ye gang some ither gate
Before the morn,
Than you, I'm sure, a greater cheat
Was never born."

Notwithstanding the quarrel, Satan goodnaturedly promises to punish M'Commie:—

I'll place him in the squeezer raw,
An' haud him there.

When the peace of 1801 was arranged, the loyal city of Perth was illuminated at the suggestion of the authorities; and among others that came from a distance to see the spectacle, James Sim came from Kinclaven as laureate for the occasion. He speaks approvingly of the general exhibition, but makes some marked exceptions:—

For you, Meal Vennel, I am wae
When on your cawsay I do gae;
Your cruisie lights they look sae blae
On this great night.
Might na ye brunt a wisp o' strae,
An' made a light?

* * * *

Meg Bayne cam' out to see the fun.
A' body thought Meg's glass was run,
For when the bonfire was put on,
They flung her in it.
She wad been brunt as sure 's a gun,
Just in a minute.

But through the flames Tam Wilson flew,
And did that modest maid rescue,
He never will hae cause to rue.

* * * *

He personifies Poverty, and then makes a merciless attack on him; but, like Frankenstein, he is conquered by the phantom of his own conjuration:—

Ye filthy meagre ragamuffin,
Despotic, ugly, varlet, ruffian,
As e'er was kenned upon the scriffen,
Since it was made,
Wi' pleasure I wad make your coffin,
Gin ye were dead.

When I sit doun to mornin' meal,
Potatoes, porridge, brose, or kail,
Or barley-bread and treacle ale,
Then comes your honour,
And cries, "Be sparin', or ye'll fail
To get a dinner.

These are smart enough verses of the Robert Ferguson school, but my readers will certainly join me in regretting that a man who was capable of composing a hymn like the following should have consumed his time scattering to the winds such versicles as those I have been quoting. They will also see the difficulty which I complain of, in estimating James Sim as a poet:—

A SOLILOQUY.

And must I die, and leave this earth!
Must I my soul resign
To that great God Who gave me birth,
Infinite and divine?

Must I before the judgment-seat
Of my Creator come?
Where every one, both small and great,
Receive their final doom:

Is heaven prepared for God's elect?
Are sinners sent to hell?
In one of those must I expect
For evermore to dwell?

Yes, true it is that I must die,
  And at God's bar appear,
Nor from his presence can I fly,
  He's present everywhere,
If I to heaven be doomed to go,
  His presence fills the Throne,
Where countless millions, bending low,
  Adore the great Three-One.
If I in hell be doomed to spend
  Mine endless years in pain,
There sovereign mercy's at an end,
  Strict justice then remains.
A fiery deluge God maintains,
  From vials of his rage,
That swell through all those dire domains,
  And never will assuage.
O thou, my soul, where wilt thou fly
  To shun those scenes of horror?
When God Himself's thine enemy,
  And every object terror.
Fly to the Saviour, and confess
  Thy sins which many be,
Pray that His spotless righteousness,
  He may impute to thee.
Lord, bring me to that happy place,
  Where doth Thine honour dwell!
Make me a trophy of Thy grace,
  Triumphant over hell!
And tune my heart, that I may sing
  That sweet celestial song
Which will cause heaven's wide arches ring
  Eternity along.

CHAPTER XXX.

JAMES DUFF.

> "If thou canst no charm disclose
> In the simplest bud that blows,
> Go, forsake thy plain and fold,
> Join the crowd, and toil for gold."
> SHENSTONE.

In the beginning of the present century, a newspaper, now the commonest of all common things, was rarely seen. *The Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was the one most circulated in the county of Perth. Five or six farmers would join together, and get it one after another; and, although the last of the circle got it after it was a week old, it was thought quite as good as new. The rise or fall of an administration did just as well at the end of a week as it does now within the hour. Then, in the villages, as many weavers would club together, and when "the papers" arrived every shuttle was suspended, and the oracle of the shop would perch himself on a high position, the rest falling in around. Once properly posted, and his throat cleared by a most stentorian cough, he would start off: "Seelance, gentlemen! Extrak of a letter from Geeber-al-taar!" After that was read and discussed, "Boneyparty at Fountainblue! March of the army from Egypt overland to India, under the command of Brigadier-General Baird." "Pitt and Lord Nelson" came in due turn. These men were not so well fitted for politics as they were disposed to them, but their great preceptor, "The Press," carried them to their present proud position, spreading their wings as it went on spreading its own; but, unfortunately, in some of its meaner auxiliaries, encouraging and goading them on to the unseemly antagonism at present existing between the employer and the employed.

James Duff was born before this upward tendency had begun to manifest itself, and he gave his assistance to its inauguration. He held on to his King and country on the one hand, while he haunted the "sma' stills" (then sending up their curling smoke in every glen) on the other, singing the praises of the hillside smugglers, who lived upon fraud, and defied the laws of the very monarch he so much extolled. In a poem entitled "Scotland's Comfort," he lauds the governing party in very set phrase:—

Now, fill up a bumper to Geordie,
  Our father, our friend, and our King;
And lang may he reckon we're wordie,
  To shelter us under his wing,
Lat Bonaparte, faction, and party,
  Gae knit themsels up in a string.
Sae lang's we've a groat to make hearty,
  We'll drink to our monarch an' sing.
    Singin' an' drinkin' an' a',
    Drinkin' and singin' an' a',
    We'll drink to our King an' his council,
    But Willie's the wale o' them a'.

And next page, lamenting the seizure of Jamie Bell's still at Ardeety, he goes on thus:—

Were I a king as I may be,
Could I get ower to France a wee,
I'd hang yon hempies on a tree,
Wha played the plisky.
And syne a premium I wad gie,
For sterlin' whisky.

Its strange to see each lord an' laird,
For gude Scots drink hae sic regard,
Yet winna gie a house or yard,
To them wha mak' it;
Nay, promise this an' that reward,
For rogues to tak' it.

Sir Walter Scott, in the free exercise of that privilege which he long afterwards claimed as a novelist, attributes the following motto, prefixed to the fifth chapter of "Old Mortality," to James Duff:—

Arouse thee, youth! it is no human call:
God's church is leaguer'd, haste to man the wall;
Haste where the Redcross banners wave on high,
Signal of honour'd death, or victory!

Searchers after Scott's authorities will have great difficulty in finding these lines in Duff's poetical works.

James once presented himself at the East Church door of Perth, and was refused admittance by the door-keeper. He retired to the Red Lion Inn, which then stood near by, and thus posted him on the window-shutters:—

See yon rude, unfeeling mortal,
Virtue's paths who ne'er has trod,
How unmeet to guard the portal,
Opening to the house of God.

Mark him how he treats the stranger,
Who would gladly enter in;
Stares him as if dreading danger,
Then denies him with a grin.

But if from a gilded pocket,
He can show a silver pledge,
Then his door is quick unlockit,
Then his friendship you engage.

Thus the gospel we must purchase,
Ananias-like of old.
Shame! that of St. Johnston's churches
Such a tale should ere be told.

God forbid that such a porter,
Ere at heaven's gate should be,
He would prove a poor comforter
To a sinner such as me.

This is smart enough, but it did not require a poet to write it. It might have been written by a man of much less pretension. Duff seems to have concentrated his talents for producing the following really clever song. It became very popular, and was for many years sung at the leading concerts, with applause :—

THE LASSIE WI' THE YELLOW COATIE.

Lassie wi' the yellow coatie,
Will ye tak' a muirlan' Jockie?
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie,
Will ye busk an' gang wi' me?
I hae meal and milk in plenty,
I hae kail and cakes sae dainty,
I've a but an' ben fu' genty,
But I want a wife like thee,
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie, &c.

Although my mailin' be but sma',
And little gowd I hae to shaw,
I hae a heart without a flaw,
An' I will keep them a' for thee.
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie, &c.

Wi' my lassie an' my doggie,
O'er the lea an' through the boggie,
Nane on earth was e'er so vogie,
Or sae blythe as we would be.
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie, &c.

Haste ye, lassie, to my bosom,
While the roses are in blossom;
Time is precious, dinna lose them;
Flowers will fade, an' sae will we.
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie,
Oh! tak' pity on your Jockie;
Lassie wi' the yellow coatie,
I'm in haste, and sae should ye!

Had James Duff written this song only, he might have taken his place among the lyric poets of his country; but he has drowned this little pearl by publishing oceans of puerility. It is singular that a man who was bred a gardener, should have so entirely overlooked the mistress of both his profession and his art. He never went to Nature, and hence could never succeed as a poet.

SECTION THIRD.

PERTHSHIRE SONGS

BY

PERTHSHIRE MEN.

PERTHSHIRE SONGS

BY

PERTHSHIRE MEN.

PROLOGUE.

"The merry old times are gone, all gone:
The days of poor grandpapa's notions:
The world's turned wise, and we've pierced the old skies,
And they say we're to bridge all the oceans:
And to climb the wild path of the thunder, and sweep,
Outstemming the eagle, the night-heavens deep.
Now we stand on the landmark of ages, and cast
A farewell on the winds, to the shades of the past,
Fare ye well! fare ye well! and God speed ye away
To limbo, your dwelling, for ever and aye.

ANONYMOUS.

THAT portion of the shades of the past which is useful for the business of life we do not readily consign to limbo. The steam-engine and the electric telegraph we owe to our more talented neighbours, and we nurse them and use them because they minister to our necessities; but we are not quite so tenacious of other things, which are equally creditable to man's growing intelligence, because they are not so easily turned to account. Lord Ellenborough wanted to make laws; James Watt wanted to make engines; Fletcher of Saltoun and Robert Burns wanted to make songs. The song-makers did not fare quite so well as the engine-maker and the lawgiver, because their commodities were not so easily utilised. There is no hardship in this, because it is the result of choice; but the hardship arises when the man of mind is pitted against the quack, and beaten by public award. The late Albert Smith narrated a circumstance in one of his lectures eminently illustrative of this: he called it "A Go-ahead Day with Barnum." The two went together to Stratford-on-Avon, and, looking at the dejected aspect of the place and the few straggling visitors, Barnum exclaimed, "If I had the General here, I would beat him all to nothing." And so he would. Shakespeare had no chance with Tom Thumb! It took some exercise of mind, some enthusiasm, to identify the great poet with the home of his early life; but the little American abortion was seen at a glance: and people will have novelty if it should come in ever so questionable a shape; and, unfortunately, that desire for novelty has a vulgarising tendency. The abandonment of our own unequalled national melodies in deference to the blackened clowns who have disgusted us year by year is bad enough; but even black is susceptible of becoming blacker. We were excusable when run away with by such airs as "Mary Blane" and "Lucy Neale;" but all that was tender in the outset has degenerated into mere grimace, rattling noise, and vulgar contortion. William Macready exclaimed, when he saw the stage of Drury Lane Theatre covered with elephants and horses, "Othello's occupation 's gone;" and when John Wilson found his own "Waly, waly up the bank," giving way to "Jump, Jim Crow," he cried in an ecstasy of disgust, "*Spernere vulgus!*"

Who is it to whom the smell of a rose in the hot summer sun, the sound of a well-remembered voice, or the singing of a once familiar song does not bring back recollections of early days? If there are any such, I have no hope of stirring them; but if all those who are fondly attached to the minstrelsy of home, and do not forget

> The valley and the village church,
> And the cottage by the brook.

will join me, we may go on for a short while together; and if they will set aside all prejudice, we will work our way into the companionship of the master-spirits of an age that has itself gone to limbo, but which has left behind it a thousand tracings of happy hearts, crowded halls, and humble cottage homes; sin, misfortune, and sorrow; songs, shadows of woods, and stretches of uncultivated moorland. Those who decline the journey must not sneer at these humble efforts to keep alive the association that links the past with the present, however feeble they may be. Let them judge tenderly of errors which brought their own retribution, and meekly of vicissitudes, to which all men are less or more liable, the philosopher as well as the poet, the moping ascetic as well as the ballad-singer; and if they are found to vary much throughout life, the time arrives when variation ceases, and one brief description applies to every life, "A warfare ending in death!"

This association is the food of literary and artistic life; and, although not very solid food, it keeps alive many attachments, sends many a pilgrim to the grave of his friend, and many devoted worshippers of genius to scenes once hallowed by the presence of the departed great, however remote the time and however faint the page that records it. There may be weakness in this, but it certainly leans to virtue's side. Opposed to all this, there exists in every community a class of men who combine to throw a wet blanket over all its social enjoyments—the very nightmare of life,—the clogging incubus that mars every intellectual project if it trenches on any of its preconceived standards of right and wrong. These gentlemen are, unfortunately, both numerous and influential; and although their opinions are, abstractly, of no value, they manage, by herding together, like bats in the twilight, to thwart and counteract much that would contribute to man's fair enjoyment of life. Their sentiments oscillate like a bar of music within certain limits—at one time down on the lowest note of the gamut, and at another up at treble pipes; but ever chill, ever freezing.

It is no doubt the individual duty of every good citizen to discourage the present excessive drinking and smoking usages of society. But if a man is lame we give him a crutch; if he is short-sighted, we give him spectacles; and if he is deaf, we give him an ear-trumpet; but if a man is a drinker or a smoker, the plan taken hitherto to cure him is not by moderate equivalents, but by forbidding every other species of fair enjoyment to which his more cultivated nature is prone.

The modern Levites have gone to Mount Sinai on a voyage of discovery, and have returned with an additional table of stone, on which is inscribed:—

I. Thou shalt have no tavern.
II. Thou shalt have no theatre.
III. Thou shalt have no dance.
IV. Thou shalt have no song.
V. Thou shalt have no National Church.

If these travellers had gone into Syria instead of journeying away into Arabia Petræa, they might have come to Mount Calvary, where they would have found a positive commandment, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." This commandment would have been easy of carriage—not being written on stone tablets, but on the tablets of the heart; and the stones might have been left for the Turks to mend the roads. Most men find that the nine negative Commandments of Moses are quite enough for their frail natures, without these modern addenda. We are left like distressed children, running about screaming, "What 'll I do? What 'll I do?" We have been told fourteen times what we are not to do, but there is an inexorable law in man's nature that defies compression: he will do something; his life is like a wicket-gate, when the theatre is shut the tavern opens, and *vice versâ*. He positively refuses to confine himself to wielding the hammer alone; he must and will have the lighter enjoyments of social life, as well as its sterner duties; he *will* sing songs as well as say prayers, and he is a meagre physiologist who has not found that healthful life must have both components.

Throw off the ascetic mask, open the theatre, open the ball, sing songs, send the Permissive Bill to the trunkmaker, and peradventure the consumpt of spirits will lessen by degrees, instead of increasing by annual millions. The stage and the poet's song are no demoralisers, but the reverse. The great moralist, Samuel Johnson, had a painter for his companion, a poet for his *protégé*, and an actor for his bosom friend; but popular feeling seems to move in cycles, and the leaders of the present generation look upon the immorality of the stage as a foregone conclusion. Every one knows how, in 1756, the Presbytery of Haddington punished Home for having written the tragedy of "Douglas," and his clerical associates for having gone to see it performed; but it should also be known as a collateral fact that, within a cycle of fifty years, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a resolution that the entire business of the Assembly should be done during the day, in order that the members might have an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Siddons in the evening.

During the Great Rebellion, Dr. Carlyle, of Inveresk, came over from the Continent in a small vessel, in company with a young person, who interested the Doctor much.

This young person, though dressed in gentleman's clothes, it afterwards turned out, was a young lady, Madame Violette, on her way, accompanied by her father, to become *danseuse* at the Italian Opera. Here was scandal for the gossips, and a dose to make the fashionable divine shudder; but he only expressed his surprise, and the young lady went on her way. Within five years, she became the affectionate and amiable wife of David Garrick, and the recipient of a marriage gift of £6,000 from the Countess of Burlington. Mrs. Garrick survived her husband forty years, rejecting many eligible matches; and when she died her will proved one of the most extraordinary examples of prudence, justice, benevolence, and affection that ever was dictated by man or woman.

In 1799 the Lord-Provost of Glasgow, who had been long separated from his wife, patronised the Dunlop Street Theatre, opened for the season under the management of Mr. Esten. Amongst the company was a Mrs. Cross, who had been "starring it" in the provinces, after a triumphant season as a singer at Covent Garden. When she appeared on the stage, the Provost rose from his seat, and exclaimed, "Stop the play till I speak with that lady." The curtain was let down, and when the manager conducted him to Mrs. Cross's apartments, he was astonished to see his fair *cantatrice* rush into the Provost's arms, exclaiming, "My dear husband!" The pair spent many happy years together after that singular meeting, the gentleman patronising the theatre by appearing frequently as a spectator accompanied by the lady, and it was his frequent remark in after life, "Others may profit by the ermine or lawn, but my saving has been the sock and buskin."

In thus pleading for the stage, the song, and the dance, I am neither finding fault with my neighbour nor apologising for myself, but deprecating the chance of being thought frivolous; and when my kind readers follow me through this third series, I will be entitled to plead these lighter efforts as an extenuation if at any future time I lay myself open to an accusation of heaviness.

CHAPTER I.

DAVID MALLET.

"The Shades of Endermay," &c.

"Let music sound the voice of joy,
  Or mirth repeat the jocund tale:
Let love his wanton wiles employ,
  And o'er the season wine prevail.
Catch, then, O, catch the transient hour;
  Improve each moment as it flies.
Life's a short summer—man a flower;
  He dies, alas! how soon he dies."
SAMUEL JOHNSON.

ONE hundred and seventy years ago, people living round the Moss of Curryour knew well a little barefooted, unkempt urchin, called Davie Malloch; they did not require to court his acquaintance; it was volunteered. The tallest tree in the woods of Drummond that contained a crow's nest was his intimate friend; and every burn that came down from the hill was familiar with his weather-beaten limbs. When compelled to leave these more cherished pursuits, and tend his father's cow on the road-side, his life became lonely and wearisome; and in order to obtain some variety, he had recourse to standing on his head, running on all fours along the top of a turf-dyke, or playing at a solitary game of "duck and drake." Little notice was taken of the wilful boy, as he scudded across the lea and through the heather, but if any far-seen power had whispered, "that little ragged urchin is destined to become the companion of princes and peers, and to bring the literary life of London to its wit's end," another look would have been taken at Davie.

The cottage in which he was born, like the homes of most Scottish poets, was clay-built and straw-roofed. An opening to the south, which could not conscientiously be called a window, was modestly designated a *bole*. The shieling stood on the debateable land between hill and glen, and the view from it away eastward, along the valley of the Earn, was well calculated to inspire any bosom with a love of Nature and a deep sense of her moods. Westward were mountain, moss, and moor; and eastward, river, forest, and glade; while at home the loneliness to a stranger was oppressive.

When young Malloch's boyhood was well advanced, his father removed to Crieff, where he opened a public-house near the Cross. His small means did not enable him to devote much to the education of his son, but he sent him to Mr. Ker's school, and there his proclivities began to develop themselves. His shinty was the best on Turrit-green; and when Lady Market came, in April, and the great kick-ball match came off, Davie Malloch headed the Crieff team as they wended their way to Innerpeffray. Dominie Ker attempted to exercise some control over him, but he had small success; yet Davie was his best scholar; and when the learned gentleman was appointed to the Chair of Humanity in the University of Aberdeen, Malloch accompanied him thither, and remained two years as a student of that University. In 1720 he removed to Edinburgh, and it was during his wanderings across country, between those two cities and his father's house at Crieff, that he conceived and executed two ballads which, for tender sentiment and elegant diction, are surpassed by few in the language. At the period of his history when these ballads were composed, his life bore no taint, but was fresh as the green Grampians and Ochils over which he so often trod. The inspirations of external nature, joined to the irrepressible tendency of a poetic mind, enabled him to begin where many eminent men had left off. "William and Margaret," written when he was under twenty years of age, was the sure indication of a great poetic life; but if the seductions of London society, and the evil example of a venal and unscrupulous state of the literary community, led him into the vortex of evil, and destroyed his originally Scottish nature, that is a source of deep regret; but so long as he remained a denizen of Scotland, he was an honour to it, and left a mark on its poetic history that will not be soon effaced.

Dr. Johnson in his life of Malloch, says that he "was by the penury of his parents compelled to be *janitor* of the High School at Edinburgh, a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he surmounted the disadvantages of his birth and fortune, for when the Duke of Montrose applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, Malloch was recommended, and I never heard that he dishonoured his credentials. Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation, so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch Malloch to English Mallet, without any imaginable reason of preference which the eye or ear can discover."

Dr. Samuel Johnson could not by possibility write with fairness of a Scotchman, and in the above quotation he has carried his prejudice to its extreme limit. What Scotchman or Englishman will believe that, when the Duke of Montrose applied to the college of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his sons, there could not be found amongst the *alumni* of that great University a qualified person, and that the Professors were driven to recommend the *porter* of the High School.

This blindness of Johnson is aggravated by his founding on his own self-constituted judgment, and thinking whatever he writes must be taken as authoritative. He tells us that Mallet's early credentials were unexceptionable: that so long as he remained in Scotland nothing disparaging could be said of him, but when he came to London he threw off his allegiance to Scotland, and changed his name and accent because he was ashamed of them, and that "Mallet was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend." In this attempt to vindicate his dislike of all Scotchmen, Johnson brings forward no evidence to show that he is justified in doing so, but holds the inferiority of the national character a foregone conclusion, treating with contempt the fact, that the life before him was an example to the contrary. David Mallet went to London a clever young Scotchman of unblemished character; but the moment he burst the native chrysalis and assumed the character of an Englishman, he began to descend in the scale of moral life, and sinking under the influence of Bolingbroke and Sarah Jennings, became a venal Cockney, and died rich, leaving nothing behind him that can be compared with the two ballads which he had written forty years before amongst the hills of Perthshire.

On leaving Aberdeen for Edinburgh, Malloch became tutor in the family of Mr. Home, attending the University at the same time, and thus he became known to the Professors, who recommended him to the Duke of Montrose. Immediately on his appointment he accompanied his pupils through the tour of Europe, and on his return settled with them in London. Here he became known to Aaron Hill, who was then conducting a periodical called *The Plaindealer*, to whom he gave his beautiful ballad of "William and Margaret," and within a week found himself famous. Hill was himself a poet of some standing, and a clever epigrammatist. He was some years patentee of Drury Lane Theatre, and was the deviser of many mercantile schemes; and I am informed that he eventually became a distiller at Pitlochrie, where he died in 1750. The famous prize couplet on "The Marriage Supper at Cana" was written by Aaron Hill:—

> The conscious water, awed by power Divine,
> Confessed its God, and blushed itself to wine.

Through Hill, and the Duke of Montrose, Mallet was introduced to Pope, and so long as the latter lived, they were fast friends. In the great poet's society he met with Bolingbroke, Frederick Prince of Wales, and other leading men of the day. Pope says of him: "I have not yet written to Mr. Mallet, whom I love and esteem greatly; nay, whom I know to have as tender a heart, and that feels a friendly remembrance as long as any one."

I cannot here follow Mallet through the sinuosities of his London life; I can only write of him as a Perthshire man, and the author of two Perthshire songs of a very high order—as the youthful denizen of the long hollow valley of the Earn, with its six bridges and hundred mansions—and leave to the great lion of Bolt Court the task that was always congenial to him, of raking up every little gossiping story that had a tendency to injure the character of his subject, if he happened to be born on the polar side of the Tweed.

The picturesque little river May rises near the summit of the Ochils, and, after a short but merry career, falls into the Earn below Dupplin Castle. Its sylvan beauties have been often painted and often sung. At one place it glides peacefully under the green bank; at another, dashes over the shelf of the rock, roaring, eddying, and bounding. One of its whirling freaks has been called "The Hummelbummel." In the olden time, the most direct way from Edinburgh to Crieff was to cross by the ferry-boat from Leith to Kirkcaldy, thence to Milnathort, whence a road led across the hills to Forteviot, past "the head o' the

May." During his frequent journeyings, the very old air, "The Birks of Endermay," together with the charms of the surrounding scenery, would naturally suggest to Mallet's mind visions of poetic grandeur, and lead him into the composition of this beautiful pastoral. Johnson says "William and Margaret" was his earliest production, but both Anderson and Chambers state that it was preceded by "a pastoral of great beauty," which was, no doubt, "The Shades of Endermay." The air is coeval with "Auld Robin Gray," and "Nannie wilt thou gang wi' me," and the three are similar in pathos and tender feeling. The following is a copy of the first edition of Mallet's pastoral:—

The smiling morn, the breathing Spring,
  Invite the tuneful birds to sing;
And while they warble from each spray,
Love melts the universal lay.
Let us, Amanda, timely wise,
Like them improve the hour that flies;
And in soft raptures spend the day,
Among the shades of Endermay.
  For soon the Winter of the year,
And age, Life's Winter, will appear.
At *this* thy living bloom must fade;
As *that* will strip the verdant shade.
Our taste of pleasure then is o'er;
The feathered songsters love no more;
And when they droop, and we decay,
Farewell the shades of Endermay!

In presuming that Mallet wrote his verses fromimpressions of the real scene, I am borne out by the fact that he takes no notice of the *Birks*, which he certainly would have done had he been guided by the name of the old air; but the verdant shades, the singing birds, and their evanescent term of pleasure, suggested the moral which forms the chief beauty of his verses.

The Rev. Alexander Bryce, of Kirknewton, composed three additional stanzas to Mallet's song, but they are much inferior. In his ultimate rhyme he adopts "The *Birks* of Invermay, which shows that his is a "carpet picture," while Mallet's is painted from nature.

WILLIAM AND MARGARET.

When all was rapt in dark midnight,
  And men were fast asleep,
In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
  And stood at William's feet.

Her face was like the April morn,
  Clad in a wintry cloud
And clay-cold was her lily hand,
  That held the sable shroud.

So shall the fairest face appear
  When youth and years are flown;
Such is the robe which kings must wear,
  When Death has reft their crown.

Her bloom was like the springing flower
  That sips the silver dew.
The rose was budded in her cheek,
  And opening to the view.

But Love had, like the canker-worm,
  Consumed her early prime;
The rose grew pale, and left her cheek,
  She died before her time.

"Awake!" she cried, "Thy true love calls,
  Come from her midnight grave.
Now let thy pity hear the maid
  Thy love refused to save.

"This is the dark and fearful hour
  When injured ghosts complain;
Now dreary graves give up their dead,
  To haunt the faithless swain.

"Bethink thee William, of thy fault,
  Thy pledge, and broken oath;
And give me back my maiden vow,
  And give me back my troth.

"How could you say my face was fair,
  And yet that face forsake?
How could you win my virgin heart,
  Yet leave that heart to break?

"How could you promise love to me,
  And not that promise keep?
Why did you swear my eyes were bright,
  Yet leave those eyes to weep?

"How could you say my lip was sweet,
  And made the scarlet pale?
And why did I, young witless maid,
  Believe the flattering tale?

"That face, alas! no more is fair,
  That lip no longer red;
Dark are my eyes now closed in death,
  And every charm has fled.

"The hungry worm my sister is,
  This winding-sheet I wear,
And cold and weary rests our night,
  Till that last morn appear,

"But, hark, the cock has warned me hence,
A long and last adieu!
Come, see, false man! how low she lies,
That died for love of you."

Now birds did sing, and morning smile,
And show her glittering head.
Pale William shook in every limb,
Then, raving, left his bed.

He hied him to the fatal place,
Where Margaret's body lay,
And stretched him on the green grass turf,
That wrapt her breathless clay;

And thrice he called on Margaret's name,
And thrice he wept full sore;
Then laid his cheek to the cold earth,
And word spoke never more.

The old story of dying of love has little sympathy in the outer world, though it forms the framework of many ballads; but we are not justified in concluding that it never did occur. William had treated Margaret cruelly; he had used every endearing epithet to gain her affections, extolled her beauty, and kissed her lips; he had sworn that she should be made his wedded wife, but he changed his mind, and left her to die. Actions for "breach of promise" were not so common in these old days, so Margaret had nothing for it but to die, and die she did! and when William heard of her death, he, no doubt, considered the affair finally wound up; but although he succeeded in jilting Margaret, her ghost brought him to book. Margaret's ghost was the calmest reasoner, the cleverest accuser, the most classic, the most forensic of all ghosts. When it came to William's bed, "Awake! it cried," and "bethink thee of thy fault." The trap is set: "Come and see how low I lie." He went, as he could not avoid his impending fate, and over her grave made the usual sacrifice.

This ballad is superior to most others of its class in dramatic form, and in purity of language. No quaint phraseology is introduced in order to give it a look of age; and, with the exception of one phrase rendered necessary by the exigency of the rhyme, it is in the simplest and purest English, and quite marvellous for an Aberdeen student of the year 1720.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL REID.

"The Garb of Old Gaul."

Belike 'tis but a rumour, come on,
There's a sixpence for you, let us have a song."
SHAKESPEARE.

GENERAL REID was the last of the Barons Rua, or Red, and with his generation died out the illustrious prefix. In former times it seems to have been tacitly accorded to the holder of territorial jurisdiction, however limited that jurisdiction might be; the solitary official in a Burgh of Barony was called the Baron Bailie, but there were barons pure and simple, who had as little connection with any known barony as they had with the Peerage. I apprehend that the baron of the last century is in our day represented by "the lord of the manor," but he has no bailie under him as of old. The Baron of Bradwardine did not condescend to the lower office, but kept a bailie in the person of Duncan Macwheeble. The imperious Baron of Bucklyvie must also have kept bailies under him, otherwise how could he forestall Forbes M'Kenzie by refusing strangers refreshment or lodging "after the sun gaed doun." A very small property in the neighbourhood of Glasgow furnished George Walkinshaw with a patent to appear before Prince Charles at Auchenbowie, with his charming daughter Clementina (afterwards Duchess of Albany) leaning on his arm. He was presented as the Baron of Baronsfield. Sir John Sinclair tells a romantic and very interesting story of the Honourable William Wyndham and Edmund Burke. The two gentlemen were on a pedestrian tour through the Highlands of Perthshire, and on the stone fence of a wood at the back of Dunkeld they found a young lady perched, reading a novel. They asked her many questions, and received smart and lady-like answers. Wyndham was fascinated with this wood-nymph, but went doggedly on his journey. A week or two passed, and Sir John, then member for Petersfield, was taken by Wyndham, in the midst of a debate, behind the Speaker's chair, and urged to institute searching inquiries respecting this heather belle. This was done, and the young lady turned out to be the daughter of Baron M'Laren, whose house is presently occupied by Admiral Jack Murray. The inquiries were too late, however, for the young lady was engaged to go out to India as Mrs. Dick, and the great senator was left to dream of the Scottish Highlands. A few miles eastward from the scene of this meeting, and on the north of the road leading from Moulin to Kindrogan, lies the little patrimony of Strathloch, once the property of the Robertsons, who were for centuries known as the *Barons* Rua or Red. They were descended from the Robertsons of Struan and Lude, and inherited their taste for music and poetry. General John Reid was born on this small holding, and when he succeeded he changed his surname from Robertson to Reid, although it was understood that the patronymic arose from the early ancestors having red hair.

It is considered that marrying *in and in* enervates a race; but, if it is so in the physical world, it certainly is not so in the mental. There "birds of a feather flock together." Reid lived on terms of intimacy with the poet-laird of Struan, and when he came to publish his volume of minuets, he dedicated it to Lady Catherine Murray, wife of the third Lord Nairne, and mother-in-law to Carolina Oliphant, fourth Lady Nairne. Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh, composed the beautiful sacred melody, "St. George's, Edinburgh," and the noble anthem from the "LII. of Isaiah;" Robert Archibald Smith, of Paisley, composed "Loudoun's bonny woods and braes," and "Jessie, the Flower of Dumblane,"—antithetical in their outer development certainly, but in affection and spirit the same. The consequence was that the Paisley composer was installed in St. George's as music-leader. General Reid had been dead fifteen years, but he had endowed a Chair of Music in the University of Edinburgh, and Dr. Thomson's son was the first to fill it. These clusterings of talent must promote the cherished object, and a faculty so rare and so fraught with pleasure to the race as that of the successful musical composer is worthy of all the encouragement which one man can give to the talents of his fellows.

John Robertson or Reid was born at Strathloch in 1721, and in his twenty-fourth year, during the fury of the Great Rebellion, became a Lieutenant in the Earl of Loudoun's Regiment of Highlanders. Music was his ruling passion, and from boyhood his study and practice. His flute-playing, according to Niel Gow, was something marvellous. By ear he was prompt and acute, and in the science an adept.

In these essays on the songs of Perthshire, I am naturally disposed to claim as much of "The Garb of Old Gaul" as, in my opinion, belongs to Perthshire, and before I have done, my readers will be able to judge whether or not my claim is well founded.

It appears that in "The Lark," a collection of songs published in 1765, the words of this popular lyric were attributed to Captain Erskine of Alva; and the subsequent editors of Scottish song seem to have followed "The Lark," as we see sheep passing through a hole in a fence, regardless of other holes that gape alongside. The following tabulated form will show the state of authorities, and the nucleus of my argument for the Perthshire nativity of the song:—

Mr. Whitelaw, in "Songs of Scotland," 1844, says: this song, which appears in "The Lark," (1765), and also in Herd's Collection (1769), was written by Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Erskine, Baronet, M.P., who commanded the Royal Scots in 1762.

Mr. W. Anderson, in "The Scottish Nation," 1870, follows:—In General Reid's collection of minuets published in 1770, "appeared the celebrated and well-known air, composed by him when Major of the 42nd to the words of 'The Garb of Old Gaul,' written by Captain afterwards Sir Harry Erskine of Alva, Baronet. It is there entitled 'The Highland or 42nd Regiment's March,' which it has ever since continued to be."

Mr. Ogle, in "The Songs of Scotland" (1871), says:—"'In The Garb of Old Gaul.'—Sir Harry Erskine, Bart., M.P. Born about 1720, son of Sir John Erskine of Alva, Bart. He became commander of the Royal Scots Regiment in 1762, and died at York in 1765. The tune

Colonel David Stewart of Garth, in his "Sketches of the Highlanders," 1821, says:—"The words to 'The Garb of Old Gaul' were originally composed in Gaelic, and the officers had all assisted at the translation. The names of these officers are recorded, but I am unwilling to mention one in preference to another. Mr. Maclagan, the chaplain, who was himself a poet, composed words of his own in Gaelic to the same music: also to the quick march of 'The Highland Laddie.'" Colonel Stewart joined the 42nd in 1789, and while the traditions of the regimental song were necessarily quite fresh, but to bear himself out in the above statement, he goes on to say:—"An intelligent officer, who nearly sixty years ago (1762), commenced a service in the 42nd Regiment, relates;—'I cannot at this distance of time recollect the name of the man who composed "The Garb of Old Gaul," but he was from Perthshire, as also John Du Cameron, who was Drum-was composed by General Reid, Colonel of the 88th Regiment, whose love for music led him to found the much abused Chair of Music in the University of Edinburgh."

Major when I joined, and who sang and repeated several of the man's poems, and says that he thought his manner of singing the Gaelic words of "The Garb of Old Gaul," preferable to the English. Before my time there were many poets and bards among the soldiers. Their original compositions were generally in praise of their officers and comrades who had fallen in battle, and many of them beautiful.'"

THE GARB OF OLD GAUL.

In the garb of old Gaul, with the fire of old Rome,
From the heath-covered mountains of Scotia we come ;
Where the Romans endeavoured our country to gain,
But our ancestors fought, and they fought not in vain.
    Such is our love of liberty, our country, and our laws,
    That like our ancestors of old, we'll stand in Freedom's cause ;
    We'll bravely fight like heroes bold, for honour and applause,
    And defy the French, with all their art, to alter our laws.

No effeminate customs our sinews unbrace,
No luxurious tables enervate our race ;
Our loud-sounding pipe breathes the true martial strain,
And our hearts still the old Scottish valour retain.
    Such is our love, &c.

We're tall as the oak on the mount of the vale,
And swift as the roe which the hounds doth assail ;
As the full moon in autumn, our shields do appear ;
Ev'n Minerva would dread to encounter our spear.
    Such is our love, &c.

As a storm in the ocean when Boreas blows,
So are we enraged when we rush on our foes ;
We sons of the mountains tremendous as rocks,
Dash the force of our foes with our thundering strokes.
    Such is our love, &c.

Quebec and Cape Breton, the pride of old France,
In their numbers fondly boasted, till we did advance ;
But when our claymores they saw us produce,
Their courage did fail, and they sued for a truce.
    Such is our love, &c.

In our realm may the fury of faction long cease ;
May our councils be wise, and our commerce increase ;
And in Scotia's cold climate may each of us find
That our friends still prove true, and our beauties prove kind.
    Then we'll defend our liberty, our country, and our laws,
    And teach our late posterity to fight in Freedom's cause ;
    That they, like their ancestors bold, for honour and applause,
    May defy the French, with all their art, to alter our laws.

There is nothing here characteristic of a man in Sir Harry Erskine's position, but it is precisely the language of the ranks—clever, but full of Highland gasconade. It requires little acumen to see that the couplet beginning—

> But when our claymores they saw us produce,

drew its parentage from the base of the Grampian Hills. It is redolent of Gaelic and heather, and certainly not of the Ochils. At any rate, its character might have led Messrs. Whitelaw, Anderson and Ogle to pay some little deference to the very circumstantial statements of Colonel Stewart. I am quite satisfied that these gentlemen knew of Stewart's statements; albeit they were ignorant of the gulf of absurdity into which their lordly contempt of him was plunging them.

In a trial for murder, it is absolutely necessary to have a *corpus delicti*, and here it will be found in the fourth verse of the song,—

> Quebec and Cape Breton, the pride of old France,
> . . . . sued for a truce,

and at Paris, on the 11th of February, 1763, Cape Breton was finally ceded to the British nation, and the conquest of Canada sustained. Here was ground for exultation—here was a subject for celebration in song; and a soldier of the 42nd composed one, and the Major set it to music. This must have been done between February, 1763 (date of the armistice), and October, 1765 (date of "The Lark"). Now, where was Captain Erskine during these two years? Such an absurd vision as his presence here never rose before men. There had been no Captain Erskine for very many years. It took Reid twenty years to creep up from Lieutenant to Major (two steps). How long would it take Erskine to mount from Captain to Lieutenant-General (four steps) in the same times?—possibly not forty years, nor thirty, nor twenty, but certainly ten years. Thus, a Lieutenant-General of 1762 suggests a Captain of 1752, seven years before Cape Breton was disturbed by the British. We are not only asked to believe that Captain Erskine wrote this song in 1773, but we are left to imagine how a man who had been, to our knowledge, six years a Lieutenant-General in command of a brigade, a baronet, and a member of Parliament, could become a Captain and the author of a regimental lyric like this. "The Garb of Old Gaul" was certainly not written by "Captain, afterwards Sir Harry Erskine, Baronet," and, in terms of Colonel David Stewart's statements, I am entitled to claim it, both in words and music, as a Perthshire song.

The price that Reid obtained for his patrimony of Strathloch would form a very small portion of his very large fortune, and a soldier with such a craze for music was not a likely person to accumulate riches. Yet he left sufficient means not only to endow a Chair of Music in the University of Edinburgh, but, when realised, to endow a Chair of Music in each of the Universities of the United Kingdom, if the trustees had thought proper to do so.

When men of great talent in art realise fortunes, they seem quite incapable of disposing of them, and generally leave them in the hands of an apathetic public, who cannot enter into the feelings of the donor, but who entertain sentiments wide as the poles from his. Reid, the talented musical composer, and Turner, the great landscape painter, resembled each other in many points of character,—entirely conscious of their own high standing, naturally vain of it, and desirous that it should be echoed to future generations. Vain desire, and equally vain hope! Turner said to Cook, the engraver, "I mean to have my dead body wrapped in my picture of 'The Old Temeraire.'" Cook replied, "You had better see it done." If the piles of proof engravings that Turner prized so much, and bequeathed to his countrymen, had been sold within ten years after his death, they would have realised many thousands; but he did not see it done, and what might have cheered many a lamplit eve, has been allowed to rot. Reid's fortune of eighty thousand pounds yields a single Professor's stipend, and gives name to an annual concert in Edinburgh, at which "The Garb of Old Gaul" is sung *without* his being there to see it done!

The man who counts over his gold, and destines its uses for a single year, then lays himself down on his deathbed in the belief that it will inevitably go as he has desired, has profited little by what he must have seen in whatever walk of life he has passed his days. If a man fixes his place of sepulture, and his orders are disregarded, he suffers nothing; but his executors have committed a breach of faith, and compromised the race. If any one of the ten thousand men who have left their fortunes to establish and endow institutions, were to come up from the dead, he certainly would not recognise his own child.

General Reid's great desire was to illustrate to coming generations the state of the musical world in the first years of the century; and at the annual concert given in terms of his will at Edinburgh, his own pieces take the lead, and when it comes to "The Garb of Old Gaul," the audience rise as they do to the Queen's Anthem. Everything musical, political, and theological has changed since Reid's days.

CHAPTER III.

ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, OF STRUAN.

"*Since Loyalty is still the same,*" and "*Come, my boys, let us waive our misfortunes awhile.*"

> "Nay, stay, Sir John, awhile, and we'll debate
> By what safe means the crown may be recovered."
> HENRY VI.

DURING the eighteenth century and far into the nineteenth, no class of men lived more apart from the common orders of society than the Highland Lairds. Their dignity was immeasurable. The position of Athole, or Breadalbane, or Airlie could be defined with mathematical precision, but who could set limits to the lofty grandeur of *The Macnab*, or *Lochiel*, or *Struan*, or *MacLean of Aros?* At Windsor, the Georges were amenable to every national caprice; the First Lord of the Treasury received you in Downing Street, and you could compass your man; the Archbishop of Canterbury would be found at Lambeth without formal hat or lawn sleeves; but a Highland chieftain in his altitudes was the consummation of all human magnificence. You could only touch the hem of his garment. The plaited philabeg, swelled chest, and curled lip, were no safe index to what was in suspension. When Francis, the last of the Macnabs, went out to his Canadian home, he heard of an upstart in his own neighbourhood, who presumed to subscribe himself *Macnab*. The laird thought that this presumptuous cateran might eventually mount the definite article, and, to check such a calamity, he despatched two gillies, with red beards and limbs to match, charged to the throat with this message, "Tell him that there be many Maister Macnabs, but I'll be cursed if there is any but one '*The Macnab!*'" He received a written answer, signed, "The other *Macnab!*" Fifty years ago, a Highland laird, whose few green acres reposed on the northern verge of Perthshire, went the way of all flesh. His family met in solemn conclave to suggest, scrutinize, and select the "pairties that were to be asked to our faither's purial." A highly-respectable Perth M.D. passed muster, like a camel passing through the eye of a needle; but when it came to the family grocer, "Exultimus! Exorcissimo te!" Struan himself manifests his strong sense of the comparative loftiness of the Highland character, where he describes the dwellers on the Scottish plains as "poor low-country water-rats," and the denizens of the cloud capped hills as "furious mountain-cats," ready to devour them.

Of a similar character, though somewhat loftier, is the story of Charles Nairne. This cadet of the Nairne family was an officer in the Scotch brigade in the service of the States, and, by some unaccountable freak of nature, he fell in love with the daughter of a Dutch tradesman, and actually promised to marry her. The entire connection were at the time living on the Continent, and, in narrating the sad event, a recent historian says, "A bombshell now dropped into the midst of the Scotch colony in France . . . . . The Oliphants, the Drummonds, and the Robertsons began to set every available engine at work to stave off the coming mishap. Their French cousins were besought to exert all the interest that could be brought into play," &c. &c. By dint of money and law, the poor girl was thrown off.

Alexander Robertson, the thirteenth laird of Struan of that family, was born in the year 1668, and succeeded his father when he had reached his twentieth year. He was considerably tinctured with the Celtic weakness I have been illustrating. The poetic vein that percolated through so many generations of Robertsons, Nairnes, and Oliphants, originated in him; but as it descended, although it did not gain in originality or fervour, it became more refined. The life of his remote cousin, Carolina Nairne, presented a perfect contrast to his. The chief was grand and lofty; he called himself "Strephon," and blazed like an intellectual comet through fourscore years; while the talented Peeress, the most modest of women, passed an equal number of years, earnest in literary cultivation, earnest as an accomplished poetess, and equally earnest in her desire to avoid recognition from the outer world.

Robertson was following his studies at St. Andrew's College, when his father died; and, although a mere youth, his active spirit led him to the profession of arms, and the catalogue of his military services has few parallels. He fought under Dundee at Killiecrankie, under Mar at Sheriffmuir, and under Charles Stuart at Culloden. He was twice tried, once imprisoned, and twice banished. His sister Margaret planned his escape from prison; his first sentence of banishment and confiscation was remitted by Queen Anne, the second by George the First, and in 1746 the Court of Oyer and Terminer failed to prove his connection with the last Rebellion.

When a few years of cessation from fighting and banishment occurred, this Celtic hero retired to his residence at Mount Alexander in Rannoch, and there cultivated the muses and decorated his house. I do not know the reason why the collectors of Jacobite songs have not inserted those of the Struan poet; perhaps they did not obtain sufficient popularity to waft them down to the age of toleration; or, what is more likely, they did not happen to fall in the collectors' way. Struan, who was present at Sheriffmuir, is certainly a better authority than any of those poets who wrote from hearsay. Barclay of Strageath says, "They ran, and we ran;" but Struan says, "Here's to the victorious Mar." When it is considered that these ballads of Struan's were written one hundred and sixty years ago, their manly sense and very superior versification will become apparent. Whether the poet thought that Mar had slain a sufficient number of Argyle's followers or not, does not appear, but he adopts a new theory in the history of warfare, by asserting that those who were slain were so effectually put to death that their future awaking became doubtful.

SINCE LOYALTY IS STILL THE SAME.

Since loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game,
To flinch it were a burning shame,
  Since Mar has gained a battle;
Let each brave true-hearted Scot
Improve the victory he has got,
Resolving all shall go to pot,
  Or James the Eighth to settle.

Let those unmanly men of fears,
With downcast looks and hanging ears,
Who think each shadow that appears
  An enemy pursuing,—
Let such faint-hearted soul begone,
The dangers of the field to shun:
We'll make Argyll once more to run,
  And think on what he's doing,

Can poor low-country water-rats,
Withstand our furious mountain-cats,
The dint of whose well-armed pats
  So fatally confoundeth,
When many hundred warlike men
Were so well cut and so well slain,
That they can scarce get up again
  When the last trumpet soundeth.

Come, here's to the victorious Mar,
Who bravely first conceived the war,
And to all those who went so far
  To shake off Union's slavery,
Whose fighting for so good a cause
As King and liberty and laws,
Must from their foes even force applause,
  In spite of all their knavery.

A volume of Struan's poems was published in Edinburgh about the middle of the last century, edited apparently by some old retainer, who had a due sense of the chief's dignity. The title-page furnishes an example of flunkeyism that would no doubt have disgusted the poet had it been printed in his day: for, with all his exclusive pride, he was evidently a sensible, talented man:—

THE HISTORY
AND
MARTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THE
ROBERTSONS OF STROWAN,
AND THE
POEMS
ON VARIOUS
SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS.
BY THE HONOURABLE
ALEXANDER ROBERTSON
OF STROWAN, ESQUIRE.

EDINBURGH.
Printed for and by ALEXANDER ROBERTSON,
Morison's Close; where Subscribers may call
for their Copies, price 2s. and 6d.

Amongst the singular features in Struan's character was a passion for decorating his house with poetical inscriptions. Over every gateway, door, and passage appropriate lines were written in gold letters, all characteristic and pat in their application. A certain Miss Alicia Mackenzie sent him a clever poetical suggestion, that a wife would consolidate all his scattered mottoes. She argues her case well, and, while admitting that a bad wife is certain destruction to a man's happiness, she adds :—

Tho' some have perished by unwholesome meat,
Can man that's flesh and blood forbear to eat.

But Struan did not act upon the hint. His epitaph upon Robertson of Lude is conclusive of his feelings towards the gentler sex as domestic managers :—

Here lies the wonder of the ball,
A son of Eve without a gall;
All Adam's offspring had been such,
Had he not trusted Eve too much.

I have not been able to discover what piece of news the poet refers to in the following clever bacchanalian song. History does not record any combination of Princes, with a design to place the Chevalier on the British throne. Some false report must have reached Mount Alexander, which raised the poet's sunken spirits, and awakened his Stuart enthusiasm :—

COME, MY BOYS, LET US WAIVE OUR MISFORTUNES AWHILE.

Come, my boys, let us waive our misfortunes awhile,
  Happy news now afford us relief:
Let a moment of joy all our sorrows beguile,
  And blot out an age full of grief.

All the princes whose right to their kingdoms is true
  Are combined to put James on his throne,
And by planting the crown on the head where 'tis due,
  With his are cementing their own.

Young James, with a princess both virtuous and fair,
  Will supply the defect of his line,
Making Atheists and Whigs, with their malice, despair,
  When wisdom and amity join.

May their issue be numerous as stars in the sky,
  And a scourge on the wretches entail
Who murdered the sire, and the son made to fly,
  And hinder his son to prevail.

Then here's to his health, and may heaven be his guide,
Whose justice all faction disarms,
And here's to that beautiful, beautiful bride
Who is blessed, ever blessed in his arms.

A contemporary authority says of Struan that "he was a man of extraordinary parts,—a sprightly genius, and extremely beloved by all who knew him. He had a mighty vein for poetry, which several pieces of his still extant show." These pieces number eighty-six, and include songs, odes, epigrams, epitaphs, psalms, and prayers; and in going over them carefully it would be difficult to point out anything weak or out of order. But there is a deep secret in the matter. To the first passion of man's nature he was an entire stranger. Love is the life and innermost soul of all lyric poetry, yet out of these eighty-six pieces there are not six lines devoted to it. A lyric without love is like a picture without colour—a bundle of dry bones. The secret of Robert Burns' success, as a lyrist, lay in the fact that he was for ever in love. Woman! mysterious, irresistible, adorable woman! However much demerit she has gained in the great poet's devious path, it was she who bequeathed to the world those impassioned verses that are sung at every little fireside, and echoed from the uttermost parts of the earth. Struan sacrificed nothing to the lyrical goddess: so, however faultless in form and aim his writings may be, they lack that indescribable something which flows from the heart that is moved.

CHAPTER IV.

NIEL GOW AND MRS. LYON.

"Farewell to Whisky."

"What needs there be sae great a fraise
Wi' dringin', dull, Italian lays?
I wadna gie our ain Strathspeys
For half-a-hunder score o' them."
REV. J. SKINNER.

"Is NIEL Gow also among the poets?" is a question that will suggest itself to many of my readers; and although I cannot claim for him any very conclusive title to be placed there, yet he was so highly accomplished in the sister art of music, and so thoroughly proficient as a violinist, and withal so admirable as a man, though not strictly an Arcadian, that we may allow him a corner within the Peloponnesus.

The era of the Gows extended over one hundred years. Niel was born in 1727, and John died in 1827, Nathaniel in 1831. During that long period they were quite as successful in giving character to our national music as Robert Burns was during his short career in giving vitality to our national lyrics. Niel, the father, first became known as a violinist in the year of the Great Rebellion, 1745, when he played in competition with nine others, amongst whom were his own tutor, John Cameron, and James Dow, the latter of whom afterwards became celebrated not only as a violin-player, but as a composer of dance music. In order to avoid any favouritism, they appointed John M'Craw, a blind musician, as the judge, who at once declared in favour of young Gow, saying with emphasis, "I would ken his bow-hand among a hunder players," thus defeating entirely the object they had in view when they appointed him judge. I once heard an intelligent old gentleman of the name of Cameron, from Stix, by Kenmore, describe Niel Gow's violin-playing, as the most wonderful of all human performances. "Some men," he said, "try to give spirit to dance-music by short jerking strokes, with a strong descending bow and a weak ascending, but his was a continuous stream of gorgeous sounds, *like an organ at full gallop*."

Music was the current coin of the Gows; they had recourse to it in all emergencies—in joy, in sorrow, in prosperity, and in trouble. The methods adopted by the different orders of society for expressing their estimation of departed worth are—

Various as the roads they take
In journeying through life,

the clergy by funeral orations and records of Synods and Assemblies; the poets by elegies, epitaphs, and epics "in memoriam;" but the Gow family, when a death occurred in their connection, flew to music; and if they wished to express their sense of gratitude or affection, they invariably had recourse to the fiddle. Rather singular certainly, but not quite so grotesque as the habit of the bass-singer whom Charles Matthews met in Ireland, who resisted all calamity by sounding his low G. If it was right, nothing was wrong. On a certain dark night the coach on which they were travelling was upset, and the passengers scattered about. They all turned up not much worse, except the musician, who could nowhere be found. Eventually, however, he was discovered at the bottom of a ditch, sounding his low G!

Amongst the finest of our very fine Scottish elegiac airs are the "Lamentations" by the Gows—Niel's, for his brother Donald, for auld Abercairney, and for his second wife; Nathaniel's, for his brother John, and for Mrs. Oswald of Auchincruive. Nathaniel was his father's youngest child, and being kindly treated by Margaret Urquhart, his father's second wife, he showed his gratitude by composing a charming air, which he named "Long Life to Stepmothers." The popular air, "Bonnie Prince Charlie," was composed by Niel the grandson, who died young. The well-known strathspey, "Lady Mary Ramsay," was composed by Nathaniel Gow; "The Braes of Tullymet," by John; "Miss Græme of Inchbrakie's Reel," by William; but the unequalled "Delvin-side," by the unequalled father.

I lived many years on terms of close intimacy with a near relation of Niel Gow's, from whom I got his five books of Scottish music, bearing Nathaniel's signature, and accompanied with a special injunction, that if it should ever come in my way, I would attempt to put the family right, both with Robert Burns and the author of "Farewell to Whisky." I rejoice in this opportunity of redeeming my promise, more especially as the task is not very herculean, and the sphere of action sufficiently wide to begin a tale that needs only to be told in order that it may be understood and believed.

The notes on Scottish song consigned by Robert Burns to the hands of his friend, Captain Riddel of Glenriddel, and exhumed by Cromek, are no doubt most interesting, and show great research; but they never received the poet's finishing touch, or he certainly would have purged them of error, more especially in a case where their authenticity was likely to be impugned; and it is flattering to the memory of the Gows, and creditable to the gentlemen themselves, that the disagreeable passages have been omitted in the collected editions of Burns' works, both by Allan Cunningham and Robert Chambers. The poet himself thought the notes unimportant, for they had been repeatedly asked from him by George Thomson; and, although in existence for some years, Thomson regrets, in the preface to his second volume, that the poet's death precluded all chance of their coming into his possession.

At page 274 of "Cromek's Reliques," this note occurs:—

> "There's a youth in this city."
>
> This air is claimed by Niel Gow, who calls it his lament for his brother.

Niel Gow was dead a year before the appearance of Cromek's book, and his son did not think it necessary to take any notice of the above, because Burns does not say that Niel Gow was really not the composer; but other two passages were not so easily got over, and Nathaniel Gow, on the title-page of his fifth collection, gives the following lengthy explanation:—

> NOTE.
>
> In the reliques of Robert Burns, published by R. H. Cromek, in the year 1808, speaking of "Macpherson's Farewell," pp. 235 and 236, it is said, "Gow has published a variation of this fine tune as his own composition, which he calls 'The Princess Augusta.'"
>
> Again, in the same book, "My tocher 's the jewel," p. 291, it is said, "This tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow. It is notoriously taken from 'The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre.'" It is also to be found long prior to Nathaniel Gow's era in Aird's selection of airs and marches, the first edition, under the name of "The Highway to Edinburgh."
>
> To the Public.
>
> Nathaniel Gow cannot for a moment suppose that Mr. Burns meant anything injurious to him or any of his father's family. The bard evidently laboured under some mistake, which, owing to his death, cannot now be accounted for; suffice it to say, that both assertions in the reliques are false. Upon turning up Niel Gow's Third Book, p. 32 and 33, it will be seen that the tune named "Princess Augusta" is unclaimed by him or any of his family; and, with respect to the other tune, "My Tocher 's the jewel," by looking into Niel Gow and son's Second Book, p. 18, it will be seen that it is also unclaimed by Nath. Gow or any of his family. Nath. Gow found the tune in Oswald's "Caledonian Pocket Companion," Book 3, page 28th, as a quick jig. It struck him it would be pretty if slow; and, it being without a name, he called it "Lord Elcho's Favourite." Mr. Oswald's book was published as long prior to Aird's era as Aird's was to that of Nathaniel Gow.

There can be no doubt that Gow is right in this, because in all the cases he refers to, the airs are inserted exactly as he states, and these were published, as already stated, before the "Reliques of Burns" by Cromek.

The last sentence is sufficiently caustic and severe on our great national bard, but Nathaniel Gow was certainly quite as well entitled to call *his set* of the last-named air

"Lord Elcho's Favourite" as Aird was to call *his* "The Highway to Edinburgh." Errors of this description were so repugnant to the nature of Robert Burns that his admirers will have difficulty in accounting for them. They will all agree with Nathaniel Gow, "that he meant nothing injurious;" and with me, that the crude "Notes on Scottish Song" were not intended for publication until further corrected.

Some years ago, Dr. Rogers published "The Modern Scottish Minstrel," at p. 119 of which he states that Mrs. Lyon, of Glammis, had left to a cousin of his her manuscript poems, amongst which appears "Niel Gow's Farewell to Whisky," which she states was "written at his request to a lamentation he had made." The following is Dr. Roger's set of the words, copied by him, together with the foot-note, from Mrs. Lyon's manuscript:—

NEIL GOW'S FAREWELL TO WHISKY.*

TUNE—"*Farewell to Whisky.*"

You've surely heard of famous Neil,
The man who played the fiddle weel;
He was a heartsome, merry chiel',
And weel he lo'ed the whisky, O!
For e'er since he wore the tartan hose
He dearly liket Athole brose!
And grievèd was, you may suppose,
To bid "Farewell to whisky," O!

"Alas!" says Neil, "I'm frail and auld,
And whiles my hame is unco cauld;
I think it makes me blythe and bauld.
A wee drap Highland whisky, O!
But a' the doctors do agree
That whisky's no the drink for me;
I'm fley'd they'll gar me tyne my glee,
By parting me and whisky, O!

"But I should mind on 'Auld Langsyne,'
How paradise our friends did tyne,
Because something ran in their mind,
Forbid—like Highland whisky, O!
Whilst I can get good wine and ale,
And find my heart and fingers hale,
I'll be content, though legs should fail,
And though forbidden whisky, O!

---

* In the author's MS. the following sentences occur prefatory to this song. "Everybody knows Neil Gow. When he was poorly, the physicians forbade him to drink his favourite liquor. The words following were composed, at his particular desire, to a lamentation he had just made."

"I'll tak' my fiddle in my hand,
And screw its strings whilst they can stand,
And mak' a lamentation grand
    For gude auld Highland whisky, O!
Oh! all ye powers of Music, come,
For 'deed, I think I'm mighty glum,
My fiddle-strings will hardly bum,
    To say 'Farewell to whisky,' O!"

I am very reluctant to write anything in contradiction of such an amiable and clever woman as Mrs. Lyon; but, in justice to the memory of Niel Gow, I am bound to say that the narratives contained in the second and third verses of the song and in the elaborate footnote are entirely fabulous. To represent him as a retributive abstainer at the instance of a conclave of doctors, while he was in good health and living a comparatively sober life, was not only cruel in itself, but the publication of it has mainly led to the popular falsehood that Niel Gow was a drunken man. It were matter of regret if the memory of a man—who for half a century was the delight and admiration of the nobles and educated people of Scotland, from the Tweed to the Spey—should, by the indiscretion of an individual who knew so little of him that she could not even spell his name, go down to future generations tainted by the unmerited blemish that he was a devout worshipper of Bacchus. No doubt Niel liked a wee drap Highland whisky, and took occasional sprees. But this by no means involves the question of debauchery and abstaining. The song itself is utterly devoid of merit; and had it not been accompanied by the most exquisite music, the present generation would never have heard of it. Robert Burns, who met Niel in his sixtieth year, says that he had "an interesting, honest face, marking strong sense, kind open-heartedness, mixed with unmistrusting simplicity;" and this is the man into whose mouth Mrs. Lyon has put the following piece of vulgarity:—

For, 'deed, I think I'm mighty glum.

The public quickly detected it, and substituted the line:—

I find my heart grows unco glum,

which, although neither elegant nor truthful, is a decided improvement on the original.

If Mrs. Lyon really composed the verses at the request of Niel Gow, she was bound to study her subject better.

Is it possible to come to a more thoughtless conclusion than this?—Because a piece of music is headed "Farewell to Whisky, by Niel Gow," that it was necessarily written in the first person. This is the confounding theory adopted by Mrs. Beecher-Stowe, and writers of her unscrupulous class. If Niel Gow had asked Mrs. Lyon to write verses to a tune he had composed, called, "The Highlandman kissed his Mother," would she have represented him falling back on second childhood, and performing this truly filial duty by the nurse's orders?

The circumstances which led to the composition of "Farewell to Whisky" are shortly and simply these. At the conclusion of the harvest of 1799 the crop was found so deficient that, by an Order in Council, the distillation of whisky from malt was prohibited throughout the United Kingdom. The harvest of 1800 proved more abundant, and the prohibition was removed. There are, no doubt, men living in Perthshire who will remember that 1800 was, in Scotland, called "The year of the dearth."

A second edition of "Niel Gow's First Book of Scottish Music" is dated at Invar, near Dunkeld, September 21st, 1801, and is subscribed by Nathaniel Gow for his father. On the first page appears "Farewell to Whisky, composed for this edition by Niel Gow." No explanation accompanied this first appearance of the air; but in 1809, shortly after his father's death, Nathaniel Gow published the fifth and last volume of Gow's music, by which time the song now attributed to Mrs. Lyon had found its way into print. At page 46, "Farewell to Whisky" is reprinted, with this explanation between the bars:—

> This tune alludes to the prohibiting the making of whisky in 1799. It is expressive of a Highlander's sorrow on being deprived of his favourite beverage.

Then below, on the same page, appears, "Whisky, welcome back again! a strathspey, by Niel Gow," with this explanation between the bars:—

> Alluding to permitting whisky to be distilled in 1801. It is a merry dancing tune.

It is obvious from all this, that Mrs. Lyon's verses, instead of being characteristic of Niel Gow, are mere caricature; and to complete the foolish picture, she says, in the first verse, "He dearly liket Athole brose," because she found, at page 22 of Gow's Third Book, a strathspey entitled, "Athole Brose; or, Niel Gow's Favourite," thus concluding, with womanly simplicity, that the brose, and not the strathspey, was Niel's favourite!

CHAPTER V.

NIEL GOW AND ROBERT BURNS.

"O Stay, Sweet Warbling Woodlark, Stay."

> "Time and Gow are even now.
> Gow beat Time, and Time beat Gow."
> EPIGRAM ON NIEL GOW.

THROUGHOUT the whole category of authors, poets, and musicians, I know of no two men resembling each other so much, both in character and fortune, as Niel Gow and James Hogg. Both rose from the ranks; each achieved fame, but neither achieved fortune. As a song-writer, James Hogg had few competitors; as a musician, Niel Gow had none. Both were highly gifted, and both highly conceited—honest, sturdy, unbending Scotsmen, peaceable as a rule, but "sudden and quick in quarrel." John Gibson Lockhart tells us that when he sang "Donald Macdonald" at the Edinburgh Burns' Club Dinner, in presence of Hogg without knowing that he was the author, Hogg wept like a child; and when Niel Gow first heard James Dow play "Farewell to Whisky," he pulled his bonnet over his eyes, and rushed to the door. Had Gow done nothing but compose that air, and Hogg done no more than write the song beginning, "Far over yon hills of the heather so green," each had done enough to keep his name alive until the day when Scottish music and song are forgotten. The parallel did not hold to the end, however, for poor Hogg's faculties gave way to some extent before he was fifty-five, and he died at sixty-four; while Niel Gow had all his faculties in vigorous retention till his death at eighty-four, having composed his last air, "Dunkeld Bridge," the year immediately preceding.

Any man who has formed his opinion of Niel Gow's character from the thousand and one stories that have been told of him, has gone very wide of the mark. Instead of the swaggering, drunken, boon companion they have been led to think him, he was exemplary, temperate, and straightforward; equally estimable as a man as he was proficient as a musician—an obliging neighbour, a kind husband, and an indulgent father. The mistaken estimate of his character arose mainly from the terms which his wit and talents obtained for him amongst the nobility and gentry of his day. The violin-player who walked arm-in-arm through the streets of Edinburgh with the Duke of Athole, and in familiar chat with Lord Melville and Lord Lynedoch, was no ordinary man; and he would be imperceptibly led to use liberties and crack jokes at which a less privileged person would be amazed. In after times the jokes were remembered, while the situation was forgot; and it became a vulgar fashion to father every rude saying or doing on Niel Gow.

Let a man be grave as a death's head, if his calling leads him to spend one half of his time amongst the gay and giddy throng, he will be occasionally led away from that sombre deportment imperatively demanded out of doors. He is the creature of impulse, and is naturally disposed to do as he sees others do around him.

In narrating a few characteristic stories of Niel, I shall adhere strictly to those which I have reason to know are true, discarding everything that would tend to exhibit him as other than what he really was.

On the 31st of August, 1787, a message came early to Niel Gow's cottage, requesting him to breakfast at Dr. Stewart's, along with Burns, the poet. The summons was promptly obeyed, and after breakfast the fiddle was called for. Niel played a number of airs of his own composition; and when he struck up "Locherroch-side," the poet expressed his delight, and a wish to possess the air, that he might write verses to it. His desire was complied with, and the verses written; but whether at the time or afterwards does not appear. Eight years thereafter they were sent to George Thomson, and the great poet certainly did not make light of our countryman's air, his verses and it being of corresponding excellence.

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

TUNE—"*Locherroch-side.*

O stay, sweet warbling woodlark, stay!
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing, fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that would touch her heart
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh! nought but love and sorrow joined
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief and dark despair,
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair,
Or my poor heart is broken.

At most of the country mansions Niel Gow was an occasional guest, but at no one of them was his presence more cherished than at Abercairney. The old laird was in his glory when he got Niel and Mr. Graham of Orchill started to the fiddle; and when the evening dance came on, it never gained proper spirit until, when changing from a strathspey to a reel, Niel gave a shout that made them bound like grasshoppers. In these old times Caroline Oliphant danced like Fanny Elssler, and Pensey Macdonald with the grace of Taglioni. On one occasion Niel paid a professional visit to Abercairney, where he remained some days. The house was full of company, dancing at night and occasionally listening to Niel's fascinating strains during the day. One very wet morning, in passing through the servants' apartments in search of an umbrella, he observed in a corner the bones of one of these useful travelling companions without a shred of cloth on it. His jocular mind suggested to him what he concluded would dispel a little of the depression incident to such a morning; so, pushing up the skeleton to its full pitch, he sallied out amidst the pouring rain, and, purposely passing the windows of the breakfast-room, where he knew the company were all assembled, he held the skeleton umbrella stiffly to the same angle as he would have done had it been covered, and seemed unconscious of the flood that was rising off his bonnet and shoulders like reek. A shout of laughter came from the company inside, and Abercairney, lifting one of the windows, cried, "Hillo! Niel; what is wrong?" "Nothing wrong, Abercairney; but I am *so* glad I brought my umbrella, for that's an awfu' mornin'."

On the same occasion Niel was one evening sent for after supper to play a solo, and, when the ladies had retired, Abercairney teased him severely about certain recent proceedings of his at Gordon Castle, where Marshall, his eminent coadjutor, was butler, and where they were alleged to have imbibed a little more than enough of the Duchess's Athole-brose. On retiring to the dancing-room, which was a good way off, Abercairney suggested that they should walk in couples along the lobby as far as the drawing-room door, with Niel at their head playing a quick-march. After they were all arranged, Niel resolved to have his revenge on Abercairney, and, running the thumb of his left hand two or three times across the strings of his fiddle at the finger-board, as a warning, he leaped in before them, and struck up "Bab at the bowster," dancing as he went, and singing loudly and well,—

We'll a' go to Katie Reid's house,
    To Katie Reid's house, to Katie Reid's house;
We'll a' go to Katie Reid's house,
    To Katie Reid's house of the green, jo.

Abercairney he was there,
    At Katie Reid's house, at Katie Reid's house;
Abercairney he was there,
    At Katie Reid's house of the green, jo.

The Laird of Monzie he rode on a tree
    To Katie Reid's house, to Katie Reid's house;
The Laird of Monzie he rode on a tree
    To Katie Reid's house of the green, jo.

We'll a' go to Katie Reid's house,
    To Katie Reid's house, to Katie Reid's house;
We'll a' go to Katie Reid's house,
    To Katie Reid's house of the green, jo.

By the time Niel reached the drawing-room door, his company had one by one fallen from the ranks disabled by fatigue and convulsions of laughter; but he capered, and footed, and fiddled, till he had finished his ditty, and reached the end of his journey.

When the ponds at Abercairney House were cut, a grand-uncle of mine named Cock was contractor at so much per cubic yard. Little knolls of the original soil, called "pirracks," were left with the green turf at the top, to mark the depth of the cut. One morning some wag among the workmen placed a piece of turf on the top of one of the "pirracks." Presently Abercairney, accompanied by Inchbraikie and Niel Gow, came round to look at the work. Niel quickly noticed the apparent artifice, and, drawing Abercairney's attention to it, the laird walked up to the "pirrack," and giving the piece of turf a kick that sent it spinning among the men, exclaimed, "None of your cursed fusileering, Cock!" The laird meant veneering, but in his passion he forgot the word. When Niel was leaving at this time he hinted to the laird that he was a little short of ready money. "I will lend you five pounds," said Abercairney, "but you must repay me when you get more flush." "To be shoore," said Niel. A year or two thereafter, when Niel was again at Abercairney, the laird thought he would try the effect of a crave on him—not expecting the money, but to see how Niel would take it. So, when they were just ready to start "Ghillie Callum," and the bow was bent, Abercairney walked up to him, and in loud tones cried, "Niel! when are you going to pay me the five pounds you owe me?" "I would be the last man in the world to mention it," said Niel, and away went the dance, "Malcolm Rossie o'er the Tay." Niel's fiddle would have drowned the hardest crave that ever was uttered.

In 1793 Niel went over to Edinburgh to play at the Caledonian Hunt Ball, and next morning he marched, with firm but heavy step, along Princes Street to the shop of Penson, Robertson and Co., and, hammering in, asked for a sight of some fiddle-bows. The party in charge first took a look at Niel in order to guess, if possible, the price which be would be disposed to give; then selecting one at 2s. 6d., he handed it to him. It was pushed back with contempt. A second shared the same fate, which rather ruffled the shopkeeper; and, to test his customer, he handed him one of the best bows in the shop, the price of which was twenty-five shillings. Niel looked at it, and requested a fiddle and some rosin. To this the shopkeeper demurred, saying, "We never allow our new bows to be rosined;" but, handing him a fiddle, he said, "That fiddle has just been played on, and there is sufficient rosin on the strings to enable you to judge of the bow." Niel took the fiddle in his hand , and casting his keen musical eye along the counter, he observed a copy of "Peas and Beans"—a tune he had just published—and asked the shopkeeper to hand it to him, which was done. These confident movements began to amuse the latter gentleman, and feeling certain that his customer could not possibly have seen this, the newest piece out, he said, rather sneeringly, "If you play that over without a pause or a mistake, I will make you a present of the bow." "Done!" said Neil, and played the tune in such a way that his friend was astonished, and in his astonishment forgot his bargain; but Niel reminded him by handing him over the bow, saying, curtly, "Put it in a piece of paper." The shopkeeper hesitated, saying, "You must have seen that piece before." "To be shoore," said Niel; "I saw it fifty times when I was making it;" and taking the bow in his hand, he walked out of the shop with the tails of his coat sailing behind him like the loose bunting of a first-rate man-of-war,

Armed with his new bow, Niel went direct to Hamilton, to play at a military ball. Next day two amateur violinists, named respectively Morton and Tennant, belonging to Strathaven, walked into Hamilton to have a *bout* with the famous Niel; and as they approached the inn, they met him walking along the street, with a step that made the pavement shake. Feeling that this could be no other than their man, one of them accosted him, and asked, in rather an off-handed way, if he was Niel Gow. On being answered in the affirmative, he exclaimed, "You are the very man we have walked all the way from Str'aven to see." "Am I?" said Niel. "The mair fules are ye, for I wadna walk half as far to see baith o' ye."

The popularity of this eminent Scotsman is demonstrated by the fact, that no less than four portraits of him were painted by Sir Henry Raeburn, for the nobility and gentry of the county of Perth. The one in the County Rooms is said to be the original; but I have doubts on that point, having always considered Lord Gray's superior. Those in the possession of the Duke of Athole and the Earl of Dalhousie, I have not seen. They were understood to be all painted by Raeburn's own hand; but, of course, the farther he went from the life, the spirit of the portrait would weaken, and it cannot be supposed that Niel would sit for them all. He certainly sat for the

Duke of Athole's, and that nobleman accompanied him to each sitting. Copies of the fine old brown mezzotint, by Say, are still to be met with; and I have often heard it characterised, by those who knew him, as "the perfection of a likeness."

Towards the close of the last century visitors to Dunkeld considered it their duty to see Niel Gow and hear his fiddle, and if he found any of them failing in their allegiance to him, he did not hesitate to make them aware of their mistake. Dr. Garnet tells us that, during his stay in Dunkeld in 1798, Niel found his way frequently into his company; and, although he was in his seventy-second year, he was fleet and fond of company and his fiddle.

The following highly characteristic story the writer had from the lips of the late Dr. Muir, for many years minister of Lecropt, and more recently the esteemed incumbent of St. James's, Glasgow. Mr. Muir, on obtaining license, made a tour of the Highlands as far as Blair Athole; and, having arranged to remain over the Sunday at Dunkeld, he went to the parish church in the forenoon. During the service he observed an old Highlander, with a broad forehead and thin hair, staring at him harder than might be thought well bred. On coming out he felt his elbow touched, and, on looking round, here was his old friend, who, without hesitation, addressed him thus—"I think ye're a stranger here, sir." "Indeed, I am," said the young divine; "I never was here before." "Where do you come from?" quoth his interlocutor. "I come from Glasgow," said the open-hearted young priest; "I was born in the Bridgegate of Glasgow." "Will ye tak' a bottle o' ale," said the old gentleman. "Oh no," was the reply; "I am a young probationer, and I do not approve of going to public-houses on the Sabbath-day." The old Highlander looked much perplexed; and, as the stranger began to move off, he drew himself up, and giving his plaid a hitch, said, "Ye come fra Glasco', d'ye?" "Yes" was the curt reply. "Then I'm the famous Niel Gow, well known in all these parts!" The reverend gentleman added, "Language could not describe the look of importance put on by Niel after he had made this announcement."

Niel Gow was considered the *beau ideal* of a Highlander. He was nearly six feet in height—erect, firm, and square-built and lithe and active in his movements. He was ever ready with his tongue and hands to speak or work for his friend; and when he died he left behind him considerable means for his family. Dr. M'Knight, his personal friend, thus concludes a short memorial of him, sent to the *Scots Magazine* in 1800: "His moral and religious principles were originally correct, rational, and heartfelt, and they were never corrupted. His duty in the domestic relations of life he uniformly fulfilled with exemplary fidelity, generosity, and kindness. In short, by the general integrity, prudence, and propriety of his conduct, he deserved, and he lived and died possessing, as large a portion of respect from his equals, and of goodwill from his superiors, as has ever fallen to the lot of any man of his rank."

SECTION FOURTH.

PERTHSHIRE SONGS
AND
THEIR AUTHORS.

PERTHSHIRE SONGS
AND
THEIR AUTHORS.

CHAPTER I.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

"The Banks of Allan Water."

> "Now, to see the living forms of men
> That were worshipped in their books,
> And to add to their eloquence of thought
> The magic of their looks.
> Perhaps I may sit at table,
> With Scott at my right hand,
> And talk, as to friends and brothers,
> With the gifted of the land."
> ANONYMOUS.

PERTHSHIRE men may well feel pride in the fact, that this most pathetic of all ballads is identified with their own home county, more especially as many attempts have been made to snatch it from them: some of them cool, some impertinent, but all of them mere idleness. Thirty-five years ago, a series of letters from Lewis to his mother was published, with biographical notices interspersed. The writer of these notices states that this song was originally "The Banks of Shannon Water," but that the author afterwards changed it to "Allan Water." I have not been able to trace any authority for this assertion, unless it be in the following inconclusive circumstance.

The author lived on intimate terms with the Sheridan family, and when, in 1801, the ballad first appeared in the opera of *Rich and Poor*, the music was attributed to Lady ——, who the public too readily concluded was

Lady Dufferin, both her Ladyship and Lewis being accomplished musical composers, and her home being on the banks of the Shannon; but it afterwards appeared that the Lady —— was not Lady Dufferin, but Lady Charlotte Campbell, daughter of the Duke of Argyll, the clever musician and novelist, afterwards known as Lady Charlotte Bury. Lewis paid repeated visits to Scotland, staying at Bothwell Castle, Dalkeith Palace, Blantyre House, and Inverary Castle; but, so far as is known, he never visited Ireland.

Twenty years ago, Mrs. Ward, the authoress of "The War in Kaffirland," contributed to *Bentley's Miscellany*, a paper which she styled "Coquet-side," in which she insinuates that "Lewis' beautiful ballad, 'The Banks of Allan Water,' was written on the Allan in Northumberland;"—thus recklessly ignoring the fact, that there is no such river as the Allan in Northumberland. The Alne, on which Alnwick Castle stands, is pronounced "Awn," and is a syllable short of the score of our ballad; and the East and West Allen, between which lies the classic Allendale, are spelt in the English form, "Allen." Lewis was not likely to allow his publisher to print Allen for Alne, to say nothing of the fact, that Allan is a Scottish name, and the song is both in air and sentiment eminently Scottish; and is manifestly one of a series with "Crazy Jane," written at Inverary Castle; "Bothwell's bonny Jane," written at Bothwell Castle; and

> No, I'll ha'e nane but Jeanie,
> The flower o' bra' Dundee,

written at Dundee.

Some years ago, the compiler of a valuable book, "The Scottish Nation," stated in a treatise on the name Allan, that the term meant "swift like a greyhound;" and, when applied to mental qualities, "illustrious." He goes on to say—"The primary meaning of the word, however, is sparkling or beautiful; and it is on that account the name of several rivers, particularly one in Perthshire, which waters the fertile district of Strathallan. It is the opinion of Chalmers that the Alanna of Ptolemy and Richard of Cirencester in his *Itinera Romana* (a work referable to the second century), was situated on the Allan, about a mile above its confluence with the Forth, so that the name has an ancient as well as a classic origin. The popular song of

'The Banks of Allan Water' is supposed to refer to a smaller stream of the same name, a tributary of the Teviot." Now, why is it supposed? Who supposes it? Why this eagerness to carry away the laurels from this most sparkling of rivers? The Teviotdale Allan is small, and had few millers or soldiers on its banks; whereas the Perthshire Allan had many mills, and a garrison in its immediate vicinity. The Teviot is not famous for grinding meal for the shepherd's porridge, but it has two capital dinner tributaries the Kale and the Ale.

These writers were certainly not cognisant of the fact, that, along with Sir Walter Scott, Lewis visited the Trosachs in 1799, and there and then Scott undertook to furnish him with a poem on Glenfinlas, as a contribution to "Tales of Wonder," published two years thereafter, which promise Scott performed, much to the delight of subsequent generations. Lewis also wrote a poem entitled "Glenfinlas," but it sank before Scott's. Many years afterwards, Sir Walter pointed out the spot which gave rise to Lewis' song to Sir William Allan, which excited so much the enthusiasm of the great artist that he painted no less than fourteen views of the Allan scenery. When resident in Edinburgh, and while visiting the south and the far east, the future R.A. was, ever and anon, to be found prowling about the woods of Keir and Dunblane Cathedral; and, after his death, the catalogue of his pictures (sold by Tait and Nisbet) contained the following items: No. 102, "Near the Bridge of Allan"; No. 104, "The Allan Water near Dunblane"; No. 106, "Road near the Bridge of Allan"; No. 107, "Stepping-stones on Allan Water"; No. 108, "Cottage near the Bridge of Allan"; No. 109, "Cottage on the Banks of Allan Water"; No. 113, "Trees and Schoolhouse, Bridge of Allan"; No. 146, "The Mill near Dunblane"; No. 501, "The Mill of Keir, near Dunblane." The last highly-finished picture was engraved by a young Edinburgh artist of the name of Flounders, accompanied by the quotation, "On the Banks of Allan Water." It must not be supposed that Sir William Allan's visits were induced by the vast and gay multitudes which for the last thirty years have annually assembled in this now fashionable neighbourhood, because in those days the mineral which forms the apology for so many pleasurable re-unions was not discovered. Many a time and oft the present writer has driven past the Bridge of Allan, when the now great town was represented by the toll-house, the hostelry at the west end of the bridge, and a farm-steading. The requiem of the miller's daughter is now often sung at the spot where she lived and died.

On the banks of Allan water,
When the sweet spring time did fall,
Was the miller's lovely daughter,
Fairest of them all.
For his bride a soldier sought her,
And a winning tongue had he.
On the banks of Allan water,
None was gay as she.

On the banks of Allan water,
When brown autumn spread its store,
There I saw the miller's daughter,
But she smiled no more.
For the summer grief had brought her,
And the soldier false was he,
On the banks of Allan water,
None was sad as she.

On the banks of Allan water,
When the winter snow fell fast,
Still was seen the miller's daughter,
Chilling blew the blast!
But the miller's lovely daughter
Both from cold and care was free,
On the banks of Allan water,
There a corse lay she.

This tale of woman's faith and man's falsehood is a song of the seasons. It began in the spring time of the year, and when the early summer came in, none was gay as the miller's daughter; but before July had closed his fervid beaming eye, she was courted, betrothed, and jilted. In brown autumn she smiled no more; and when "the fierce north wind, with his airy forces," came bitterly down from the top of Benvoirlich, and the little river was covered with winter, she lay cold as the ice on its surface. In these days of ours we hear a great deal of nonsense spouted about "woman's rights," but sensible people think that there is less occasion for extending those rights than there is for curtailing those assumed by man.

A young friend of mine, who seemed to entertain no doubt of the locality of our ballad, wrote me from London, in 1853, making the following enquiries:—"What sort of place is Bridge of Allan that so much is said and sung about? Is the mineral greatly esteemed? is it near the lakes? and do people live longer there than elsewhere?"

I was in a position to give him satisfactory answers to these questions, which was done as follows:—

"Bridge of Allan is the finest watering-place in the north *countrie;* the medicinal qualities of the spring are highly esteemed. I can vouch for its nasty taste. We have no lakes in Scotland; they are only to be found in Cumberland; but Lochs Monteith, Lomond, Katrine, Achray, Vennachar, Lubnaig, and Earn are within easy distance of Bridge of Allan; and although you call us Scotchmen drunkards, Loch Drunkie is not yet dry! The River Allan itself is sparkling as mountain dew, and well it may, for near its source in Gleneagles there is a pure water spring sufficient to supply half the breweries in London. Yes! people are long-lived there. Three years ago, I went, accompanied by a Perth artist, to a harvest-home in the Carse of Lecropt, half a mile from Bridge of Allan, where the dance was led off by a farmer's widow in her hundred and first year, with a neighbouring farmer in his hundred and second as her *vis-à-vis.* This might happen in Pall Mall East if you would dance Hulachan at the Italian Opera, and drink water at the Argyll Rooms."

I got an instant reply, couched in Lewis's words: "I *must* go to Scotland."

In 1822, when Mr. Pocock dramatised "The Antiquary," he introduced "The Banks of Allan Water" on purpose for Miss Stephens, whose singing of it accompanied by Mr. Horn, raised a shout of applause wherever she went. Lady Charlotte Campbell, long after the death of her devoted friend Lewis, rendered herself rather famous by her "Diary Illustrative of the Times of George the Fourth"—a subject upon which it was barely possible to write a decent book; but if she is the authoress of "Trevelyan"—as I have always believed her to be, although it has been attributed both to Lady Scott and Lady Dacre—that book is calculated to redeem many errors. Her ladyship's portrait, by Lawrence, is in the National Gallery at Edinburgh, and hangs in the first division. It is by no means a favourable specimen of that prince of portrait-painters.

It is to me an interesting fact that Samuel Warren, one of the greatest masters of situation and pathos that our times have produced, in his "Passages from the Diary of a late Physician," singularly enough, states two cases where the subject of his narrative is struck with sudden insanity, the catastrophe being invoked by singing Perthshire ballads. In the "Broken Heart," the distracted maiden, whose betrothed has fallen in battle, is asked to sing, and accompany herself on the piano, and guided by the depressed and melancholy state of her feelings, she begins, "On the Banks of Allan Water," but when she reaches the fifth line, "For his bride a soldier sought her," the mental fabric gives way, the brilliant voice and nimble fingers refuse their office, and she becomes a hopeless maniac. Then, in "The Baronet's Bride," the insane husband—whose name is Charles—breaks loose from control, and, rushing to the house where his wife is sheltered, sings below her window, "Charlie is my darling."

In Scotland, the Miller and his daughter enjoy a full share of the poet's devotion. "The Lass o' Patie's Mill," "Mill o' Tiftie's Annie," and "The Maid o' the Mill," have long been popular; and we have been told a thousand times that "There was a jolly miller once lived on the River Dee;" and of another "Dusty miller, who had a dusty coat," and how "he wan a shilling ere he spent a groat."

During Robert Burns's era, and many years after it, "melder-day" was an important day with the Scotch farmer. Mrs. Shanter, in full recognition of *woman's rights*, tells her husband,—

That ilka melder wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;

and when the great French war broke out, the miller and the farm-servants danced the old strathspey, singing,—

The mill, mill, O !
And the kill, kill, O !
And the coggin' o' the wheel, O !
The sack and the sieve,
We a' man leave,
And go round wi' the soldiers' reel, O !

CHAPTER II.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

"Poor Anne."

> "No! the mild influence of Spring,
> Clothing the mountains all in green,
> Creating round a joyful scene,
> No change to you can bring."
> SIR HUMPHREY DAVY.

THE tale of English literary life does not contain a more singular or interesting passage than the short memorials of Matthew Gregory Lewis. He was born in London on the 9th July, 1775, and died on his passage home from Jamaica, on the 4th of May, 1818. His father was Deputy Secretary-at-War—a wealthy, but apparently a tyrannical man. He lived apart from his wife and son, allowing them each £1,000 per annum. The talent of the younger Lewis procured for him the patronage and friendship of the highest in the land, and before he was twenty years of age his name was as familiar to the public ear as that of his great contemporary, Lord Byron. His imagination was fertile, and he gave it full bridle in "The Monk," "The Castle Spectre," "Alonzo the Brave," and many other of his wild, but fascinating productions; and notwithstanding the familiar adage, that a man is known by his works, Lewis while treating lightly in his writings every recognised principle of common morality, was in conduct amiable, affectionate, and circumspect; devoted to his mother and sisters, generous to his friend, patient of a capricious father, and the indulgent and kind owner of five hundred slaves.

Lewis's cottage at Barnes was the resort of a literary coterie which, in this remote age, has given way to the Stock Exchange! Byron, Sheridan, Shelley, Hobhouse, Kemble, Scott, Moore, Macintosh, Macready; the Dukes of Clarence, Argyll, and Buccleuch; Lords Grey, Melbourne, Erskine, Douglas, and Holland; and Ladies Charlotte Campbell, Anne Hamilton, and Anne Cullen Smith were his frequent guests, and represented his external camp of a thousand famous soldiers in the field of politics, literature, and song. His house was gorgeously furnished, and his entertainments were the envy of his contemporaries. He had his seat in Parliament, and his box at the Opera; yet, in the midst of all this, he writes to his mother, "I must go to Scotland"; and journeying six days in the Duke of Argyll's carriage, he came to Edinburgh; and, after entertaining Sir Walter Scott to dinner at his hotel, the two went away to the banks of Allan Water, where Lewis dropt a pebble, over which the water finds its way, but the pebble still remains; and where Scott laid the foundation of a name that is matchless in the annals of his fatherland.

Scott introduced Lewis to John Leyden, who also furnished a poem to "Tales of Wonder;" and, at the village inn, Scott narrated two tales, one of which formed the ground work of Lewis's drama of "The Captive," and the other took form in his touching song of "Poor Anne."

The former was never published, but two verses tell the tale; and the latter we quote entire:—

THE CAPTIVE TO HER GAOLER.

"A tyrant husband forged the tale
Which chains me in this dreary cell.
My fate unknown my friends bewail,
Oh! gaoler, haste that fate to tell.
Oh! haste my father's heart to cheer;
That heart at once 'twill grieve and glad
To know, though kept a captive here,
I am not mad! not mad! not mad!

* * * * *

"My brain, my brain! I know, I know!
I am not mad, but soon shall be.
Yes, soon! for lo! yon—while I speak—
Mark yonder demon's eyeballs glare!
He sees! now, with a dreadful shriek,
He whirls a scorpion high in air!
Horror! the reptile strikes his tooth
Deep in my heart, so crushed and sad.
Ay! laugh, ye fiends! I feel the truth!
'Tis done! 'tis done! I'm mad! I'm mad."

POOR ANNE.

Written at Callander in presence of Sir Walter Scott.

The heart of Anne young Henry won,
But love much sorrow wrought her,
For Henry was a monarch's son,
Poor Anne—a shepherd's daughter.

He said, "A queen must be my bride."
  Of Anne his last leave taking,
She kissed his hand, but nought replied,
  Poor girl! her heart was breaking.

He who her simple heart had won
  And love and sorrow taught her,
Would he had been a shepherd's son,
  Or she some lordling's daughter!
His parting step she fondly eyed,
  But not one word was spoken;
Then down she laid her head, and died,
  Poor girl! her heart was broken.

"Crazy Jane" and "He loves, and he rides away," by Lewis, were first sung by Mrs. Bland, and afterwards by Miss Kitty Stephens. The late Alfred Bunn tells in his "Retrospections," that, being present at a party at Lewis' cottage, "some one named music: Ah! and there was music, since she (Lady Charlotte Campbell) was prevailed upon to sing, and the high-born and fairest of Caledonia's daughters breathed the simple song of 'Allan Water,' and other Scottish airs, to many a spell-bound heart. The vocal talent of Lady Charlotte and Scottish music will long be talked of together." Mr. Bunn adds that Templeton had been engaged to sing at Lewis's *Soirée Musicale*, but had in some capricious way absented himself.

I have heard the late Mr. D'Almaine tell a highly characteristic story of Bunn and Templeton. Off the stage the latter gentleman could not be brought to speak anything but broad Scotch. He found that, like Bass' pale ale, it would "keep in any climate," and he never dropped it. On one occasion when he was accompanying Madame Malibran under Bunn's management, he had been at rehearsal, and, sitting snug in his parlour, a message came to him that he was wanted at the theatre instantly. On reaching the manager's room he was informed that Malibran had intimated her resolution not to sing any more with him. Templeton was struck with amazement, and, accompanied by Bunn, rushed to the lady's apartments, soliciting an explanation. At first she pouted and declined answering them; but, being hard pressed, and the manager pleading his inability to put a singer in Templeton's place at once, she turned round to Templeton and calmly said, "Monsieur, me think you are going to kiss me." Templeton was staggered; but, instantly recovering, he looked in the face of the fair young *cantatrice* and exclaimed, "Gude God, madam! I would as sune think of kissing my grandmother!"

Shortly before Lewis's death, Edmund Kean came to Scotland on a professional tour, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Johnston. They appeared in Glasgow three successive nights in *Lear;* and I remember well how Johnston's personification of Mad Tom so completely eclipsed Kean's Lear, that the great tragedian had for a time to submit to a younger brother's share of the uproarious applause. Some indiscreet friend of Kean's sent the following verses by Lewis to a Glasgow paper; they were understood to apply to Johnston's frail better-half, and were much bandied about by the partisans of Kean,—certainly without his connivance, for his acting needed no strategetical aid to maintain its superiority against all comers:—

"What's in a name?" old Shakespeare cries,
And brings a proof potential,
To show that in mere names there lies
No difference essential.

But thy fond practice, fair Annette,
The bard's position parries,
Else wherefore is thy fancy set
So strongly on the Harrys?

As husband Henry J——n first
Chastely thou didst prefer, Ann;
But soon the marriage banns were burst,
To fly to Henry C——n.

As Helen fair, but ah! more frail,
Ere long thou fled'st thy Paris;
And as thy favourite next we hail
Triumphant Henry H——s.

But soon from him thy ready charms
By golden trump are summon'd,
Presto! we find thee in the arms
Of happy Henry D——d.

Not long, I ween, erratic fair,
With thy fourth Hal thou'lt tarry;
But if a fifth to take thee dare,
There is but one—*Old Harry!*

During a protracted visit to Inverary Castle, Lewis established a family newspaper, which he called *The Bugle*. The editor was invested with all the pomp and circumstance of office; had his letter-box and waste-basket; and every Saturday morning *three* copies had to be laid on the breakfast table. This little journal could boast of having for its editors—they were frequently deposed—Lord Melbourne, Tom Sheridan, the Duke of Bedford, and the Duke of Argyll. Many years ago, a quotation was given from it in *The New Monthly Magazine*:—

Lady —— (to Mr. Lewis) "Have you read this strange new work called 'The Monk?'"

Lewis. "I do not think I could have patience to do so."

Lady ——. "The author must be a most extraordinary, a wonderful man. Confess, now, wouldn't you like to meet him?"

Lewis. "Why, as to that, madam, I rather think I should find his company a bore; in short, I would not meet him for all the world."

The most extraordinary chapter in Lewis's life is the chapter of his death, taken in connection with his literary career. His passion for the marvellous and horrible followed his final ceremonial, as if guided by his own magic command. He went on a second voyage to Jamaica, in order to ameliorate the condition of his slaves, with a view to their speedy emancipation; and, on his return, the ship was becalmed in the fiery furnace of the dog latitudes. Poor Lewis was seized with yellow fever, and, after dreadful suffering, expired amid the tears and sympathies of his fellow-passengers. His last words were, "Oh! England, England! Oh! mother, mother!" Sixteen years after his death (1834), a young lady, who had been his fellow-*voyageur*, sent a description of his death and burial to the *Court Magazine*, from which I cull the following striking particulars.

"Baptista or Tita—who had been his humble friend and faithful servant, even unto death, and who afterwards performed the same offices at the death-bed of Lord Byron—carried Lewis's body on deck, and covered it with the ship's colours. A slight shell of deal boards was nailed together; and, after the body was deposited in it, they wrapped a sheet round the whole, enclosing four eighteen-pound shot, to cause it to sink. The Burial Service being read, the remains of the poet and estimable man were committed to the deep. At the first plunge the coffin disappeared entirely; but, rising again, the sheet that had been fastened round it became loosened, and the air, introducing itself between its folds, inflated them, and buoyed the coffin up so that it floated and scudded along the sea like a boat with its sails full set, illustrating the old ballad,

> And aye as the ship sailed she sailed also.

Some minutes after the coffin had been dropped, a lady observed its return from her cabin window. The whole passengers were struck with consternation. Around the ship the coffin-bark danced like a fearful mockery; then, heaving heavily over the surf, as if still unwilling to part from the living world, it bent its course until it became a mere speck, hastening towards the shores of the Havanna."

In taking leave of Matthew Gregory Lewis, I would draw attention to the care bestowed on his simple ballad. All ballads are, in their pristine form, necessarily interwoven and complex, and nothing but the highest polish will reduce them to the touching tenderness of the "Banks of Allan Water."

"The Soldier's Return," by Robert Burns, preceded "Allan Water" only a few years; and Lewis sets up a tale so very antithetical, that it smacks of intention. How fascinating is character? It enables the poet to adorn his hero with all the charms of which his nature is susceptible; whereas the ornamented villain is like a gilded charnel-house, full of rottenness and dead men's bones. The soldier who returned to Mill Monace was thus welcomed—

> Sae wistfully she gazed on me,
> And lovelier was than ever,
> Quo' she, "A soldier once I lo'ed,
> Forget him shall I never."

While he who deserted Mill Allan is treated with a contempt which marks the careful sentiment of Lewis's ballad :—

> But the summer grief had brought her,
> And the soldier false was he.

Mark how he is despised. Not *her* soldier, but "*the* soldier." Nothing more is said of the faithless hero. The use of the definite article is here such a concentration of contempt, that further notice would only weaken it. The Ayrshire soldier was a good soldier, the Perthshire one a coward. But however much we despise the man, we must not lose sight of the song, "until we get a better;" and as we are whisked down the narrow valley of the Allan, and on through the gay Terpsichorean groups that now dance upon its banks, let us drop a tear for "The Miller's Daughter," and console ourselves by remembering that here, seventy years ago, as well as now,

> The sweet spring-time did fall.

And if our toes are handsomely slippered, let us avoid the footprints of the false soldier; and instead of the jigging of the mill and the wail of the broken heart, we may hear some faithful ruralising Benedict singing behind the fence,

> This sweet wee wife o' mine.

CHAPTER III.

JAMES HOGG.

"The Bower of Tay," &c.

> "What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time,
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more,
> Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before, and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason,
> To fust in us unused."
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

ALTHOUGH the Jacobitism that had long been gaining ground in Scotland culminated on the field of Culloden, it took many years to replace it by fealty to the House of Brunswick. During those years many Jacobite songs were written, but few of them published. But when George the Fourth, during his stay in Edinburgh, removed the ban, by restoring the Nairne Peerage, and declaring the Stuart proscription at an end, the flood of Jacobite literature, that had long been pent up, burst over the land. Although the sword had been returned to its scabbard, tender remembrances of the unfortunate Prince who had last unfurled the standard of the Stuarts still hovered on the breeze, and there arose to the era poets and poetesses, who nursed the half-suppressed ardour, by crying, with Antony,—

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

Perthshire was not only the scene of several Jacobite battles, but took foremost rank as the home of Jacobite song. Lady Nairne wrote most of her national lyrics at Gask; William Glen wrote "Waes me for Prince Charlie" at Gartmore; and James Hogg "Cam' ye by Athol," at Kincraigy, on the Tay. During the early years of the century, Hogg was a frequent visitor at Kinnaird House, the residence of his patroness, Mrs. Chalmers Izett, and, as the most natural thing possible, became acquainted with Niel Gow. Their meetings were of the most cordial description,—music and song their general discourse,—and the fruit of their intercourse is marked by the impress of both men. The musician drew the poet's attention to some Gaelic verses to which he had composed an air, and which he intended to publish; but they agreed that they were rather rude for the public ear, and Hogg proceeded to amend them, which he says he did without disturbing the sentiment. From this mutual aid arose one of the best of our Jacobite songs—a song which John Wilson generally prefaced by stating that he had sung it in London upwards of forty times, and each time it had brought him "some money and abundance of tears."

Far over yon hills of the heather so green,
  An' down by the corrie that sings to the sea,
The bonny young Flora sat sighing her lane,
  The dew on her plaid, and the tear in her e'e.
She looked at a boat wi' the breezes that swung,
  Away on the wave, like a bird of the main,
An' aye as it lessened she sighed and she sung
  Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again!
Farewell to my hero, the gallant and young!
  Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again!

If I could identify this song sufficiently with the county of Perth to warrant me in placing it here *in extenso*, I would gladly do it, because I consider it by far the most graphic description of the Prince's desolate position, and his short connection with the Macdonalds of Milton, that is to be found either in prose or verse; but I must "stick to my text."

The Shepherd was endowed with a fertile imagination, a fine musical ear, and an acute sense of the nicety required in adapting words to music, which together, gained him a high position as a song-writer. But in his more lengthy poems and tales, and in his intercourse with the world, he lacked that discerning judgment that would have enabled him to grapple with complicated difficulties. He does not dip into the supernatural like Scott, but plunges into it headlong. He grasps a character strongly at first, but allows it to degenerate into mere shadow. A foreigner reading the whole of his tales and poems would be forcibly led to conclude that "Cheviot's mountains blue" are absolutely peopled with witches, warlocks, and spunkies: and that there is nothing but elves, brownies, and fairies "all down Teviotdale." Norna of the Fitful-head might have occurred to Hogg, but the strength of ten such minds would not have sustained the grandeur of her character to the end. Scott dashes aside all puerilities. Hogg indulges in them, and is overwhelmed. In anything that could be felt and expressed at once,—in the rapid succession of figures in a song, or well-considered but short pathetic utterances, he took the lead of Scott, Lockhart, and Wilson; but his mind could not grasp the beginning and ending of a long story any more than it could the two ends of a complicated business transaction. This led him into constant trouble, and rendered him the butt of his clever compeers.

Sir Walter Scott was the Shepherd's constant friend, but he evidently did not expect much of him; for it will be remembered that when Laidlaw returned from introducing Wilkie to him, Sir Walter inquired how he was received. "This is no' the great Mr. Wilkie?" "It's just the great Mr. Wilkie, Hogg," replied Laidlaw. "Mr. Wilkie," said the Shepherd, grasping his hand, "I cannot tell how proud I am to see you in my house, and how glad I am to see you are so young a man." Sir Walter did not say, "That is like Hogg," but, "The fellow! it was the finest compliment ever paid to man."

During a considerable episode in his career, the great Edinburgh triumvirate kept the Shepherd in leading strings, and with marvellous simplicity of heart he submitted to them; but in spite of their plausibly-concerted plans, he occasionally broke loose, aud dashed at them with tongue and pen—pouting, strutting, and kicking. Seldom, however, did he allow many suns to set over his wrath, and his apologies were loud as his accusations. When Sir Walter Scott died, Hogg wrote a memoir of him, which was published in a thin 24mo. It was written in a kindly but somewhat ostentatious spirit, the writer stating in as many words, "Nobody knew Sir Walter Scott so well as I did," to which Lockhart rejoined, "God help the vanity of the man!" The poor Shepherd was by this time in his dotage, and, thinking himself superseded, he took this method of being avenged. But Lockhart was the destined Boswell of his day, and he did not allow his originally great stock of equanimity to be disturbed.

The Ettrick Shepherd was long a popular man in Edinburgh, but it would have been better for the local minstrelsy of Scotland that he had never entered it. He was torn by suggestions from one, and advice from another; by loose bargains with publishers, and encounters with merciless critics. He was best when at home tending sheep and composing songs in his own Ettrick Forest, or scampering about the Lakes of Cumberland with Robert Southey and Lord Byron. The Perthshire Highlands ranked high in his esteem, for in no less than three of his songs he gives them the preference over his own home-country. When being slowly driven from Perth to Kinnaird House, he could not help being charmed by the occasional greetings of the noble Tay, as it wound past him in sombre majesty,—now sparkling in the sun, now reposing under the dark shadows of overhanging woods and the more distant hills, and ever and anon advancing from the rocky outlet, and retreating into the apparently impervious forest, spreading to the root of the rugged Birnam, or flowing under the smooth and "cowslip-covered bank."

THE BOWER OF TAY.

Wear away, ye hues of Spring;
  Ye blooms of Summer, fade away:
Round the welcome season bring
  That leads my steps to Highland Tay.
Dear to me the day—the hour,
  When last her winding wave I saw,
But dearer still the bonnie bower
  That lies aneath yon greenwood shaw.

Aye we sat, and aye we sighed,
  For there was one my arms within;
Aye the restless stream we eyed,
  And heard its soft and soothing din:

The sun had sought Glenlyon's glade,
Forth peered the evening's modest gem
And every little cloud that strayed
Looked gaudy in its gowden hem.

The playful breeze across the plain
Brought far the woodlark's wooer tale;
And gambolled o'er the mellow grain
In mimic waves adown the dale.
I saw the drops of dew so clear
Upon the green leaf trembling lie,
And, sweeter far, the crystal tear
That trembled in a lovely eye.

When lovers meet, 'tis to the mind
The Spring-flush of the blooming year;
But oh! their parting leaves behind
A glow to memory ever dear.
Ettrick's fairy banks are green,
And Yarrow braes are mooned with gray,
But gloamin' fall was never seen
Like that I viewed in bower of Tay.

After one of his Perthshire excursions and a meeting with Niel Gow, the Shepherd's fiddle was in request, and in a short introduction to his song, "Athole Cummers," he gives the following amusing account of what led to its composition. I do not know where he found the term "Cummer;" it is certainly not a Perthshire word, unless it be as a vulgar pronunciation of "kimmer:" perhaps he found it more serviceable as a rhyme, but it is certainly an uncouth term.

ATHOL CUMMERS.

"One evening in the winter of 1800, I was sawing away on the fiddle with great energy and elevation; and, having executed the Strathspey called 'Athole Cummers,' much to my own satisfaction, my mother said to me, 'Jemmie are there ony words to that tune?' 'No, that ever I heard mother,' 'O man, it's a shame to hear sic a gude tune an' nae words till't. Gae awa ben the house like a gude lad, an' mak' me a verse till't.' The request was instantly complied with."

Duncan, lad, blaw the cummers;
Play me round the Athol cummers;
A' the din o' a the drummers
Canna rouse like Athol cummers.
When I'm dowdie, wet, or weary,
Soon my heart grows light and cheery,
When I hear the sprightly nummers
O' my dear, my Athol cummers.

When the fickle lasses vex me,
When the cares o' life perplex me,
When I'm fley'd wi' frightfu' rumours,
Then I lilt o' Athol cummers,

'Tis my cure for a' disasters,
Kebbit ewes and crabbit masters,
Drifty nights and dripping summers—
A' my joy is Athol cummers!

Ettrick banks and braes are bonnie,
Yarrow hills are green as ony,
But in my heart nae beauty nummers
Wi' my dear, my Athol cummers,
Lomond's beauty nought surpasses
Save Breadalbane's bonnie lasses;
But deep within my spirit slumbers
Something sweet of Athol cummers.

During his repeated visits to Strathtay, Hogg became conversant with the unlettered Highlander's mis-pronunciation of the English language, and with the self-complacent grandeur of his character: and he has ridiculed them in his songs of "Hersel' pe aughty years an' twa," and "Honest Duncan." Although Hogg fell far behind Alexander Rodger in this kind of composition, the satire in these two songs is exquisite. The pride of country contrasted with the assumed self-abnegation in the valorous Duncan, however little characteristic of the Highlander generally, is vividly so of the class which has been represented by "The Fairshon" and "The Macnab." I have only room for two verses of—

HONEST DUNCAN.

"Now, wha are ye wi' tartan trews?
Or where hae ye been reiving?
Nae doubt, to cleed your naked houghs,
In England ye've been thieving."
"She no pe heed you, shentlemen,
Ta whisky mak you trunken:
But when I'm in the Athol glen,
They ca' me honest Tuncan."

"An honest man in Athol glen;
We fear there's ne'er anither.
Nae wonder ye're sae lank an' lean,
Where a' are knaves thegither."
"Hu shay, Cot tam, say tat akain,
Of her you might be speakin';
But try misca' my countrymen,
I'll smash you like a breakin."

CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT TANNAHILL.

"The Flower o' Dumblane."

"E'en such is man, who lives by breath,
Now here, now there, in life and death;
The bubble's burst, the look's forgot;
The shuttle's flung, the writing's blot;
The thought is past, the dream is gone;
The water glides, man's life is done."
SHARPE'S ELEGANT EXTRACTS.

MEN of strong local feelings cherish a theory that certain localities produce certain classes of men, and adduce as evidence the case of the lower animals and of vegetable life; but these men have not yet arrived at a satisfactory solution of the *modus operandi:* whether it is terrestrial, atmospheric, or academic: whether we are to look for our embryo great men in carse or moorland—in the sluggish atmosphere of large towns, or amidst the mountain breezes—in the vicinage of the sparsely-peopled uplands, or that of great schools of learning. In pursuing this interesting physiological study, it may be fairly set up as a problem: how, within the last hundred years, the group of undulating hills and heathy slopes that nestles under the shadow of Tintock, and away to the shores of the Solway, has sent forth into the world more men of mark than ten miles round Oxford, Cambridge, or Edinburgh:—James Currie, John Gibson Lockhart, Edward Irving, Thomas Carlyle, and Dr. Livingstone, not to go back to Allan Ramsay, and Joanna Baillie, are names sufficient to move the inquiry, without going farther.

These men all found their way south—-another proof of restricted local production. Cleveland, when he penned his ill-natured couplet on the Scotch—

Had Cain been a Scot, God would have altered his doom;
Not forced him to wander, but confined him at home,

—forgot that Scotland is the "Normal School" of England,

and supplies her with men of letters, orators, philosophers, and travellers; nay, from two spots of her green Ochils, within little more than the range of a boy's catapult, she has lately sent her a renowned general officer, a President to her Royal Academy, and an Archbishop of Canterbury!

The "gude toun" of Paisley has not been behind in sending into the world men of genius and capacity. Her three Wilsons do not only rank high as poets and travellers, but were unrivalled in their day in literary versatility. As a lyric poet, Robert Tannahill only yields to Burns and Hogg; and had he lived as long as the latter bard, it is not unlikely that he might have taken precedence of him. The simple eloquence of his descriptions, their absolute truthfulness, the touching allusions to well-known scenes in combination with tender episodes of love, form the charm of all lyric poetry; and his wary hand and musical ear enabled him to weave them into tissues of lowly Scottish poesy that bespeak hard lines for Scotland the day they are forgotten.

It was about the year 1800, when the wail over the grave of Robert Burns began to resolve itself into inquiry as to what he had written, that a stripling, sitting on a loom in one of the quiet streets of Paisley, fired by the example of Burns, and the successful author of "Watty and Meg," and stimulated by a love of art inherent in his nature, began his career as a lyric poet by writing on his loom what he saw from his shop-window:—

Keen blaws the wind o'er the braes o' Gleniffer.

And, again, when Spring, with her chaplet of bays, came cheerily in:—

Gloomy winter's now awa,
Saft the westlin' breezes blaw;
'Mang the birks o' Stanley shaw
  The mavis sings fu' cheerie, O.

In nearly all collections of Scottish songs, those adopted from Tannahill are headed by "The Flower o' Dumblane" and "The Braes o' Balquhither." No song in the dialect has taken a higher place than the first named, and few have kept it so long and so well. It was sung in succession by Paton, Stephens, Tree, Wilson, Templeton, and Sinclair, and by Milne of Montrose, and Taylor of Perth; and I have no doubt that our townsman, Mr. Kennedy, will have carried it to the antipodes.

THE FLOWER O' DUMBLANE.

The sun has gane down o'er the lofty Benlomond,
  And left the red clouds to preside o'er the scene,
While lanely I stray in the calm summer gloamin',
  To muse on sweet Jessie, the flow'r o' Dumblane.
How sweet is the brier, wi' its saft faulding blossom,
  And sweet is the birk, wi' its mantle o' green;
Yet sweeter and fairer, and dear to this bosom,
  Is lovely young Jessie, the flow'r o' Dumblane.

She's modest as ony, and blithe as she's bonny;
  For guileless simplicity marks her its ain;
And far be the villain, divested of feeling,
  Wha'd blight in its bloom the sweet flow'r o' Dumblane.
Sing on, thou sweet mavis, thy hymn to the e'ening,
  Thou'rt dear to the echoes of Calderwood glen:
Sae dear to this bosom, sae artless and winning,
  Is charming young Jessie, the flow'r o' Dumblane.

It would be highly gratuitous in me to introduce any disturbing element into the story of "Jessie, the Flower o' Dumblane," as many of Tannahill's biographers have done; indeed, I would rather encourage the fond belief that the heroine was a real personage. Neither would I make anything of the frivolous circumstance that Benlomond cannot be seen from Dunblane; because the hero of the song had strayed in the "calm summer gloamin'," and he would not stray far when he would see Benlomond between him and the sunset. And why should we peril the interest of these two exquisite verses by inquiries as to whether, looking from Dunblane, the sun sets in summer "o'er the lofty Benlomond," or whether Jessie's lover had strayed into a latitude that made it do so. The license allowed to poets generally should be liberally bestowed on writers of song. William Paterson, long guard on the coach between Glasgow and Perth, repeatedly pointed out to the writer, in 1821-2, a lady, apparently about forty years of age, who lived in a house then standing at right angles to Kinross's hotel, as the heroine of the song. She was a tall, handsome, pale-faced, ladylike woman, and wore a black velvet cap, or hood, peaked down in the front after the fashion of Queen Mary's day, and was so frequently seen sewing at her window that passers-by concluded that she was a dressmaker; but Paterson was provokingly reticent on that point. Robert Chambers says that the poet met

Jessie at a merry-making in Renfrewshire, and in imagination followed her to Dunblane. The late Mr. Barham, in one of the "Ingoldsby Legends," first published in No. 64 of *Bentley's Miscellany*, makes a highly grotesque allusion to this interesting lyrical heroine. After disposing of the other *dramatis personæ* of "The Merchant of Venice," he says of Shylock's daughter:—

In an M.S. then sold
For its full weight in gold,
And knock'd down to my friend, Lord Tomnoddy, I'm told,
It's recorded that Jessie, coquettish and vain,
Gave her husband, Lorenzo, a good deal of pain;
Being mildly rebuked, she levanted again,
Ran away with a Scotchman, and, crossing the main,
Became known by the name of the "Flower of Dumblane."

Mr. Whitelaw, editor of one of our best collections of songs, being a west countryman, is annoyed at Tannahill going to Dunblane to see the sunset over Benlomond, and says coolly, "He never was in Dunblane, but from his favourite braes o' Gleniffer had often, doubtless, seen the sun go down o'er the lofty Benlomond." No, Mr. Whitelaw, never! Early in April the sun can be seen from the country round Dunblane setting over Benlomond, but never since her orbit was fixed has she been seen from Gleniffer braes going down over Benlomond, unless indeed in Tannahill's day she kept on her visible journey till eleven o'clock, instead of setting on the 24th of June, at 8.19, as in our benighted times.

How pleasant to turn from all this editorial trumpery to the poet's beautiful apostrophe,—

Sing on, thou sweet mavis, thy hymn to the e'ening,
Thou'rt dear to the echoes of Calderwood glen."

THE BRAES O' BALQUHITHER.

Let us go, lassie, go,
  To the braes o' Balquither,
Where the blae-berries grow
  'Mang the bonny Highland heather;
Where the deer and the rae,
  Lightly bounding together,
Sport the lang summer day
  On the braes o' Balquhither.

I will twine thee a bower,
  By the clear siller fountain,
And I'll cover it o'er
  Wi' the flowers o' the mountain;

I will range through the wilds,
  And the deep glens sae dreary,
And return wi' their spoils,
  To the bower o' my deary.

When the rude wintry win'
  Idly raves round our dwelling,
And the roar of the linn
  On the night breeze is swelling,
So merrily we'll sing,
  As the storm rattles o'er us,
'Till the dear shieling ring
  Wi' the light lilting chorus.

Now the summer is in prime,
  Wi' the flowers richly blooming,
And the wild mountain thyme
  A' the moorlands perfuming;
To our dear native scenes
  Let us journey together,
Where glad innocence reigns
  'Mang the braes o' Balquhither.

This song has the genuine Highland ring about it, albeit it is town-made. The images are well chosen, and follow in rapid but natural succession. The picture of connubial bliss is heightened by the accumulation of external troubles. The idle wind raves, the linn roars, and the storm rattles, but inside the dear, cosy shieling, the Arcadian dream is kept up by the happy pair chorusing in defiance of wind and weather.

Balquhither is one of the Highland districts of Perthshire, known as the country of the Macgregors, the birthplace of Buchanan and Campbell, the Scottish poets, and the burial-place of Rob Roy. It stretches from the head of Loch Earn to that of Loch Lubnaig, and embraces Loch Voil and Strathyre. Strangers may form some idea of the picturesque grandeur of the parish of Balquhither when they are told that it reposes under the shadows of Scotland's chiefest mountains—Benmore, Benvoirlich, Benledi, Benlomond, Benvenue, and Benan cluster round it; and whatever circumstance led Robert Tannahill to choose it as the scene of his song, he did it in a semi-prophetic spirit, for within seven years thereafter the whole surrounding country became immortalised as the scene of Scott's "Lady of the Lake."

The story of Tannahill's life is well known. His intimacy with R. A. Smith and Robert Allan, the Kilbarchan poet, and their joint contributions to Scottish song, in continuation of its advent so successfully inaugurated by Robert Burns, are matters of history. Tannahill was an accomplished musician—an exquisite singer and flute player; in manners gentle and unobtrusive; small in stature, and somewhat delicate in constitution. Like his contemporaries, Byron and Scott, he had a mis-shapen foot, which cost him much regret. He was little moved by the tender passion, though open-hearted and affectionate. His early success as a poet did not excite his vanity, but the world's growing indifference he could not brave; and, sinking before it, he became, in a desponding moment, the victim of his own deed.

The avenues which lead to suicide are numerous as those which lead to natural death—amongst others, hereditary taint, overworking the brain, and that morbid sensitiveness which arises from a too slender knowledge of human nature. Hugh Miller knew his fellow-men well;—he was neither moved by their approval nor daunted by their caprices;—but he overtasked his mental capacity, and sank in the struggle. Robert Tannahill, on the other hand, studied the more gentle aspects of man's character—his loves and his gay convivial moments,—and so long as he was flattered, and the meed fairly due to his standing as a lyric poet was conceded to him, he enjoyed life like other men; but indifference or neglect sank deep into his soul, and imperceptibly bore him on to his last fatal resolve. If he had foreseen the lamentation that was raised by his death, the widespread popularity of his songs, and the enthusiasm of his fellow-townsmen on the occasion of his hundredth anniversary, it would have stayed his proud purpose and induced a relish of life: but all was dark. Constable had refused his book even at a nominal price; he felt that he could produce nothing better: the future became a blank, and the die was cast. His last words to the Ettrick Shepherd, "Farewell! we shall never meet again," were no haphazard prediction, but the conscious promptings of a resolution deliberately taken.

The ills of life did not press heavily on Robert Tannahill; he lived in comfortable, though humble, circumstances; he was respected—nay, beloved—by those who knew him; but he had conjured up a poetic goal, which he must reach or perish in the attempt, and every incident that tended to impede his onward way cut into his feelings like a two-edged sword. As the hopes went down, the unhappy alternative rose up,—reason lost her counteracting power, and the estimable life, that a few kindly words might have saved, was immolated at the shrine of mistaken ambition. How sincerely we regret that no one met the resolute man on his way to death; for it would have awakened in him the grandest test of the human heart—that feature of its nobility which has undergone no debasement—its active sympathy with distress. It may safely be asserted that there was not a man or woman amongst that community of sixty thousand that would not have rushed to their poet's protection, and, at great personal hazard, have saved him from his own uplifted hand; but, with that cunning so characteristic of temporary insanity, Robert waited the fall of evening, and while his poor sick mother, for whom he had promised so much, was asleep in another apartment, he stole from his bed, and, cowering like a guilty thing, crept away under the shadows of the glimmering oil-lamps, to the deepest pool in the little river, and, deliberately taking off his coat, made that agonising plunge which separated him for ever from his admiring countrymen, and soiled a page of human life that might otherwise have been opened with pleasure and profit.

In no part of this sad transaction did Tannahill act with desperation or frenzy; he had familiarised his mind to what he conceived to be his inevitable doom, and went through it with dramatic precision. He appealed from the judgment of man to the judgment of God. He shrank from the world's cold shoulder because he felt it, and sought the colder grave, where he would not feel. The little river received him kindly, and covered all his troubles; it washed over him in gentle surges on its way to the ocean, unconscious of the meek but guilty spirit that had bubbled up from his bosom. The dark night hid for a time from his friends the confirmation of their worst fears; but when the grey May morning dawned, the discarded coat was found, and before the click of the loom announced the awakened community, the lifeless body of him whose flute-notes had so long heralded the morn, lay cold on the humble bed, and his spirit had escaped from the thraldom of disappointed hopes and the indifference of a self-interested world.

CHAPTER V.

WILLIAM REID.

"Kate o' Gowrie."

"He went into a rich bookseller's shop.
Says he, 'We are both of one college,
For I myself sat like a cormorant once,
Fast by the tree of knowledge.' "
RICHARD PORSON.

Of all the productions of man's fertile brain, nothing is more liable to vicissitude than a popular song, especially if it is thrown on the world like a homeless waif, and left to be augmented or diminished as the capricious judgment or defective memory dictates. "Kate o' Gowrie" was published in 1797, in the columns of an obscure Glasgow periodical, but it could not be restrained within its native locality; its great merit sent it meandering from lip to lip, until it echoed from every homestead in the destined country of its coy, reluctant heroine.

An' o' it was a lovely sang
That through sweet cherry valley rang.

A few years after its birth, it found its way to Gask House, from whence Kate first came out as "The Lass o' Gowrie," and the wife, eventually, of one of the great Earls of Gowrie. The Gask set had thirty years of oral existence, wandering up and down, seeking confirmation, its paternity denied, until, like a stray beauty, it found its way into the hands of Ellen Paton, the little Falkirk songstress, who sang it in such a way that its original author did not know his own child. He said of it, in his humorous way, "It is like the beggar's wrapall, so clouted and patched that I hardly know the masterpiece." The verses sung by Miss Paton, Miss Stephens, and Mr. Wilson, are the first, second, and fifth of a set said to have been arranged by Mr. Donaldson, of Glasgow, while Miss Paton was his pupil. Mr. Taylor, of Perth, sang an abridgment of the Gask set.

KATE O' GOWRIE.

TUNE—"*Locherroch-side.*"

When Katie was scarce out nineteen,
Oh, but she had twa coal-black een!
A bonnier lass ye wadna seen
In a' the Carse o' Gowrie.
Quite tired o' livin' a' his lane,
Pate did to her his love explain,
And swore he 'd be, were she his ain,
The happiest lad in Gowrie.

Quo she, "I winna marry thee
For a' the gear that ye can gi'e;
Nor will I gang a step ajee
For a' the gowd in Gowrie.
My father will gi'e me twa kye;
My mother's gaun some yarn to dye;
I'll get a gown just like the sky,
Gif I'll no gang to Gowrie."

"Oh, my dear Katie, say nae sae!
Ye little ken a heart that's wae;
Hae! there's my hand; hear me, I pray,
Sin' thou 'lt no gang to Gowrie;
Since first I met thee at the shiel,
My saul to thee's been true and leal;
The darkest night I fear nae deil,
Warlock, or witch in Gowrie,

"I fear nae want o' claes nor nocht,—
Such silly things my mind ne'er taught;—
I dream a' night, and start about,
And wish for thee in Gowrie.
I lo'e thee better, Kate, my dear,
Than a' my rigs and out-gaun gear,
Sit down by me till ance I swear,
Thou 'rt worth the Carse o' Gowrie."

Syne on her mou' sweet kisses laid,
Till blushes a' her cheeks o'erspread;
She sighed, and in soft whispers said,
"Oh, Pate, tak' me to Gowrie!"
Quo' he, "Let's to the auld folk gang,—
Say what they like, I'll bide their bang,—
And stay a' night, though beds be thrang;
But I'll hae thee to Gowrie."

The auld folks syne baith gied consent;
The priest was ca'd; a' were content;
And Katie never did repent
That she gaed hame to Gowrie.
For routh o' bonnie bairns had she;
Mair strappin' lads ye wadna see;
And her braw lasses bore the gree
Frae a' the rest o' Gowrie.

This, the first of the Gowrie songs, was written and published by William Reid, a prosperous and talented bookseller of Glasgow. In those days the booksellers of the Western Capital had their aristocracy as well as those of London and Edinburgh. John Murray, of Albemarle, and William Blackwood, of Edinburgh, were represented by Dunlop and Wilson, and Brash and Reid. These were succeeded by William Turnbull, and Turnbull by Robertson and Atkinson. The latter firm kept up the literary character of the succession well, the second being a poet of no mean standing, and the first the editor and publisher of "Whistlebinkie," "The Laird of Logan," &c. &c., and the quiet rallying-point or pole-star to the wags of the west.

Reid's back-shop was frequented successively by Robert Burns, John Galt, and Alexander Rodger; as John Murray's was by Byron, Moore, and Hobhouse; and Blackwood's by Wilson, Hogg, and Moir; and occasionally a red-robed youth, whose father was minister of the College Church, might be seen, with his countenace sharp-set, slipping into this bibliopolic sanctuary. Here the author of "Valerius" and "Peter's Letters" imbibed much of that love of literature which, joined to a finished education, enabled him to take his stand as one of the first men of that brilliant age. Within that very circumscribed sanctum, William Reid listened to Robert Burns, while he recited, in melting cadences, "John Anderson, my jo;" and before the sound of the poet's voice had died away, and while the inspiration of awakened feelings was full upon him, the clever, pawkie bookseller composed four stanzas, which, for fourscore years, have gone hand in hand with the original. The following verse by Reid is about the best of the eleven into which the song has now expanded. The poet's theology is the theology of song:—

John Anderson, my jo, John,
  When Nature first began
To try her canny hand, John,
  Her masterpiece was man;
And you amang them a', John,
  Sae trig frae tap to toe,
She proved to be nae journey-wark,
  John Anderson, my jo.

In this classical back-room hung a coloured engraving, about twenty-two inches by fifteen, which Mr. Reid set great store by, and was proud and always ready to show to his friends. It was titled, "Glasgow in 1805." The view was taken from the Cross, looking towards the Tron Church steeple. In the foreground were many of the notables of the day, amongst others, Captain Paton, immortalised in Lockhart's "Lament for Captain Paton." He is seen tripping across the street from Francis Reid's land to the Tontine, and picking his footsteps with his rattan. I have seen a view of Dundee so precisely similar that I am led to conclude that they form part of a series illustrating the principal towns of Scotland, published early in the century. Perth may have been omitted in deference to the grotesque series of Perth worthies drawn by Francis Robertson, bookseller.

From some angle of this great galaxy of Glasgow bibliopoles comes the following piquant illustration of the troubles of shopkeeping; whether from William Reid or David Robertson, I am unable to say. Many years ago, it was sent to me by my friend, Mr. Donald Maclaurin, of London, headed exactly as follows:—

> *From the Otago Witness.*
>
> A merry Glasgow bookseller and stationer gives a rather odd account of the profits of the retail trade in his line, "Indeed, it is but a poor trade the sellin' o' stationery. I'll just gie ye a sample o' what sort o' trade it is, what wi' loss o' time, and what wi' aething and what wi' anither. A muckle stupid sumph enters your shop, and says, 'Gies a bawbee's worth o' paper.' 'Is it post paper ye want?' 'Ou aye.' 'Is it long paper or short paper ye want, gudeman?' 'O yes.' 'Bless my soul, do you want it short or long?' 'No.' 'See, man, is't this kind or that ye want?' 'I'll tak this, for it's the biggest!' Weel ye wad think ane had done wi' the fallow after a' that fash, and mair than five minutes lost. But na, he's at ye yet. 'Men' that pen,' says he, handin' out an auld stump to ye that the de'il himsel' could hardly mend. An' when ye've dune that he follows it wi', 'Pit a wee drap ink i' that bottle.' You put the ink in the blockhead's bottle a' for naething, an' syne he pokes out his great big, horny hand, an' says, 'I'll thank ye for a wafer!' Now, only think o' a' that fasherie, an' sic a loss o' time, forbye the wafer an' the ink for naething, an' a' about the sellin' o' a' bawbee's worth o' paper."

There is a slight dramatic inconsistency in Reid's "Kate o' Gowrie." The heroine is in the first verse identified as a veritable resident of the Carse, whereas in the second she refuses to go to it on any terms. Lady Nairne naïvely tries to remedy this by bringing her over the hill from Strathmore on a visit to her cousin, who lives with his father and mother at their mansion in "yon green field beside the shaw." But her Ladyship still propagates the error by styling her "The Lass o' Gowrie." Reid's hero, Pate, took an exceedingly business-like view of the desired arrangement. He thought Kate worth all his rigs, horses, and harness, nay, good value for the whole Carse o' Gowrie. Lady Nairne follows this up by making Kitty saucy and reluctant until she saw the Carse spread out before her as she came down the Glen of Evelick. Her description of the scene is a piece of magnificent landscape painting:—

> The sun was setting on the Tay,
> The blue hills melting into grey,
> The mavis and the blackbird's lay
> Were sweetly heard in Gowrie.

No one of Scotland's songs has had a greater amount of talent employed upon it than "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw," in its present state. The first and second stanzas were written by Burns in his vigorous manhood, and in one of the happiest moments of his life. He saw before him the immediate prospect of bringing his much-loved Jean to her nuptial home; and while following the plough over the gravelly holms of Ellisland, his soul yearned towards her. Mary Campbell, Clarinda, and Jenny Cruikshanks were all cast aside, and his fancy's flight was ever with his Jean. Then Marshall, the butler at Gordon Castle, the composer of so many beautiful Scottish reel-tunes, and the personal friend of Niel Gow, supplied the exquisite air. After the great poet's death, William Reid added the third and fourth stanzas, beginning "Upon the banks of flowing Clyde;" and although they had, to some extent, the effect of alienating the song from its native Nith, they have kept their ground well. In the end, John Hamilton, a music-seller and teacher of Edinburgh, and predecessor of Nathaniel Gow, came forward with a fifth and sixth stanza; and, much as we may desire to protect the interest of our unrivalled poet, it is impossible to deny these verses a place at the very head and front of all Scottish lyric poetry. They contain the whole story of Burns' love for Jean Armour, conceived in terms, and expressed in language, glowing, tender, and devoted:—

> The powers aboon can only ken,
> To whom the heart is seen,

is a reference of the utmost grandeur—an appeal to the court of last resort. It is in the style of Uncle Tom, who "prayed right up."

Reid followed Burns more successfully in "John Anderson, my jo." The four double verses of the lengthened song written by him were highly popular in the west of Scotland even while the Ayrshire bard was still alive.

"Fair modest flower," is a faulty song of Reid's, but it contains one remarkable verse:—

> But doubly blessed shall be the youth,
> To whom thy heaving bosom warms;
> Possessed of beauty, love, and truth,
> He'll clasp an angel in his arms.

The firm of Brash and Reid was dissolved some years before Reid's death, and the business taken up by his son, William Reid, in partnership with Mr. Henderson, who had been an assistant; but they did not succeed, and when the business was on the wane the partners attempted to eke it out by selling tickets for Lyon's Paisley coaches. This hurt the worthy old bookseller's feelings, and he was heard to say that, instead of an inquiry for a copy of Shakespeare or Milton, it was nothing but "Is yere insides a' out?" However, the old bookshop eventually degenerated into a coach-office. During the short time they were in business, Reid and Henderson published for their brother bookseller, Thomas Atkinson, his poem, "The Sextuple Alliance;" and the *Glasgow Courier*, disapproving of the venture, began a review of the work thus:—"O, Reid and Henderson! Reid and Henderson, O!" The poem contained brilliant passages, however, and met with a fair amount of patronage.

The most singular thing about William Reid was the fact of his being a poet. Instead of the wasted visage, the lackadaisical air, the down-turned collar, and upturned eyes, he was ever rosy, good-humoured, and contented. He bore the ills of life with meekness, laughed like a citizen of the world, and was sedate as a Christian gentleman. He sold books in the Saltmarket and in the Trongate on the remunerative principle; but Richard Griffin came down from Cheapside, and the book-trade went into convulsions, becoming as poor as "the sellin o' stationery." This worthy citizen of the Trongate died in the winter of 1831, in the 67th year of his age.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT BURNS.

"The Birks of Aberfeldy."

"The man, the brither."

How pleasant it is to be back amongst the old familiar faces! The shadow of the great Scottish bard has once more fallen across my path. Robert Burns, about whom I have presumed to write so much—the theme of a thousand cogitations; the majestic ploughman, who went on his life journey, singular in no relation of life, because intensely human; the enemy of no man, except such as put themselves forward as the exponents of an obnoxious principle; the scourger of hypocrisy; the humbler of arrogant pride; the representative of a nation's literary character, and the boasted pride of all her sons. Although we cannot now discover new facts concerning him, we can discover new features in his character. The twenty years of his career as a poet were the era of deposit; but the fourscore years that have elapsed since his death have been years of contention, years of detraction and defence—the era of adjustment.

No friend of the poet's has claimed for him an immunity from the weaknesses incident to fallen humanity; but his enemies set up a standard whereby they judge him; and, in contempt of every principle of equity, each has a standard of his own. Generally, they debit him with an immense load of wickedness; and they credit him with his "Cottar's Saturday Night," "A Prayer in the Prospect of Death," and "Man was made to mourn," showing a heavy balance against him by characteristically ignoring the fact that, before making an honest balance, they are bound to give him credit for as much latitude as they allow to the rest of the world and covertly claim for themselves.

It is nothing as a fact, but superb as a joke, that many a merchant standing at his desk, and many a weaver sitting on his loom—both wisely laying up money for future contingencies—will treat with mean insolence the efforts of a man differently constituted, who takes a wider and less selfish view of human affairs, and tell you that Robert Burns wasted his time and talents writing songs, when he ought to have been attending to his farm. But these gentlemen forget that Robert's work took, according to his own prediction, one hundred years to mature itself, and then became imperishable as the human family; whereas in their case, when the gravedigger makes his final *salaam*, the world has done with them for ever. The mind of man takes pride in its own excellence, and posthumous fame is the poet's coveted reward. Otherwise, what did George Canning mean when he said, "I would rather be the author of 'Gray's Elegy' than Duke of Northumberland"? and what did the late Lord Campbell mean when he stated at a public dinner in London, "I would rather be the author of 'The Pickwick Papers' than Chief-Justice of England and a peer of Parliament"?

Our great bard could not descend to the little money-making schemes of men who put great value on its possession and the charm of being toadied, but soared into a higher region, where, like the Swiss *châlet*, he was above the snow-line. He did not crystallise the liquid gold as it went burning through his hands; but, with that loftiness so characteristic of true genius, spurned from him everything that could be construed into a desire to sing for subsistence. He scattered pearls before the world, and its admiration was his guerdon. In that world he had a stake, apparently small, but destined to expand as years went on, until it stood up as the highest lyrical authority, the model of all aspirants, the apex of the pyramid that began its ascent with Allan Ramsay, and that has again declined to its base.

Amongst the Scottish poets, Robert Burns enjoys preeminently the posthumous sympathies of his fellow-men. It would be highly unfashionable however to speak of him, either from the pulpit or the platform, simply as our great national bard: the adjective must be compounded. Unfortunate, wayward, or unhappy, must be interjected; and why? He was neither singularly unfortunate, wayward, nor unhappy; and how very few of the men who cannot speak of him without an apology, would, if the truth were known, be found writing to a dear but distant friend:—

"To-night at the sacred hour of eight, I expect to meet you at the Throne of Grace." When he left the Duke of Athole's family at Blair Castle, and went on his northward journey, did he—as is the too common custom—indulge in critical remarks on them? No! But next day he left his carriage at the Fall of Foyers, and, going into the wood by himself, prayed devoutly for "The little angel band." When, in company with Ainslie, he crossed the Tweed at Coldstream, his attention was drawn to the fact that he was now on English ground; but his mind, ever on the strain, took no hold of the new land, but bounded back to his dear-loved home, and throwing aside his hat, he prostrated himself on his knees, and, raising his arms aloft, uttered from his own liturgy the famous apostrophe to Scotland:—

Oh Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
  For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
  Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
  And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
  Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle,

Then, with an expression of countenance singularly rapt, he raised his eyes to the blue firmament, and uttered in tones of deep devotion,—

Oh thou! who poured the patriotic tide
  That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
  Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
  (The patriot's God peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
  Oh! never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot and the patriot bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!"

Yet this is "the lad we daurna name," in extra-devout life, without first considering how it may be received.

The poet's faults and errors have been so very well heralded that nothing is left for me to narrate; and it is not my province to set up any abstract theory of a life that has been so much canvassed; but as I have attempted to give short biographical notices of the more important writers of Perthshire song, it will not do for me, now that I have nearly reached the final step of the ladder, to recoil from mounting it, however perilous the attempt; and when I am able to look back on the body of men to whom I have ventured to become memoirist, it will be gratifying to see such a man as Robert Burns among the rest.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 28th of August, 1787, a hackney coach, containing two gentlemen, came out from the old town of Stirling, and, wending slowly through Strathallan and over the moor of Orchill, drew up at the door of old "Gang Warily," in the good town of Crieff. After dinner, they went to Aberuchil Castle, and, when the Visitors' Book was examined, the names of Robert Burns and William Nicoll were found to be inscribed therein. After being coolly received at Aberuchil, they returned through the grand valley of the Earn to Crieff, where they had supper and bed. Next morning they continued their journey through the Sma' Glen and Glenquaich to Kenmore; thence, on the 30th, to Aberfeldy, where they dined, and adjourned to the Fall of Moness. Here, the beauty of the scenery, together with the remembrance of an old Aberdeenshire air, excited the poet's eye and ear; and before they reached the inn, he had composed a song which bids fair to last as long as the birks grow, or the water falls:—

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

TUNE—"*The birks of Abergeldy.*"

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
To the birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's.
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
An', rising, weet wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

One of the most picturesque features of this terraqueous globe is the phenomenon of obstructed running water: it is the poet's constant theme and the painter's never-failing resource. Whether it be in the rocky Fall of Moness, the "crystal tide of Bruar," or the foaming flood of Foyers, Burns' descriptions are equally felicitous. There is no finer apostrophe in the language than the first line of his song,

Flow gently, sweet Afton;

nor a more forcible description of the constant tumbling of water over a precipice than

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foamy stream deep roaring fa's;

nor a truer picture of its meanderings in search of an outlet than

Whyle's cookit underneath the braes
Below the spreading hazel.

After spending a day at Dunkeld, Burns paid his famous visit to Blair Castle—a visit in every respect one of the most satisfactory and longest remembered of any that his short career of ease enabled him to pay. At Blair Castle he was introduced to Sir William Murray of Auchtertyre; and, after returning to Edinburgh, through Perth and past "Endermay," he left Edinburgh again for Perthshire early in October, accompanied this time by Dr. Adair, and leaving the choleric Nicoll at home.

After a few days spent at Harvieston, Burns arrived alone at Auchtertyre, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by Sir William Murray and his lady, remaining three days in their delightful society. In the midst of that elysium of giant oaks, hills with serrated outlines, and lakes desolate and bleak as the Sea of Azof, he was introduced to Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, his host's fair cousin of eighteen, known at home as "The Flower of Strathmore." If the poet had taken a walk a few miles down the river, he would have met Carolina Oliphant, "The Flower of Strathearn," then singing to the echoes of old Gasconhall. His hands were full; yet here, in the midst of polished but familiar life, he encountered the fair young aristocrat whose charms, like the more homely lass at Irvine, fairly "upset his trigonometry." It was my good fortune to meet in after life with "The Beauty of Strathmore," as I met "The Beauty of Strathearn," and I confess having tried covertly to conjure up visions of the poet and the lady strolling about the braes of Auchtertyre —she listening to conversation that never failed to fascinate, and he basking in rays to which his heart ever turned with as much certainty as the needle turns to the pole. The lady's amiable and kind-hearted sister, now some years deceased, told me some charming reminiscences of Burns—how she met him at Sir James Hunter Blair's, when she was "young, and perhaps rather handsome," and how she blushed and shrank from the gaze that followed her on being placed next the poet, and of his manly and easy bearing, and how his eyes "glowed like live coals when his own songs were sung."

This visit to Auchtertyre has always welled up in my mind as the beauty spot of the poet's life. Away up in Glenturrit, young, healthful, and prosperous, in company with the best and fairest of the land, set down to dinner on the right hand of the handsome and accomplished daughter of the great Earl of Cromarty, a Jacobite grafted into a Whig family, the group formed a subject of much interest to such a man as Robert Burns.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

TUNE—"*Andro and his cutty gun.*"

CHORUS.

Blythe, blythe, and merry was she,
  Blythe was she but and ben;
Blythe by the banks of Earn,
  And blythe in Glenturrit Glen.

By Auchtertyre grows the aik,
  On Yarrow banks the birken shaw:
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
  Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

Her looks were like a flower in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She trippèd by the banks of Earn
As light's a bird upon a thorn.

Her bonnie face, it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.

The Highland hills I've wandered wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I ha'e been;
But Phemie was the blythest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.

The reference to the Border river here is easily accounted for. The poet had just been along its banks, and he had wandered o'er the Lowlands and Highlands to Gordon Castle, which *great* journey, he thought, fairly entitled him to draw a parallel between the maidens of the classic Yarrow and those of the sylvan Earn; and he hesitates not to give the latter a decided preference. Be not offended, ye countrywomen of Mary Scott. Robert Burns was as little competent of judging female charms as Dandie Dinmont was to choose a walking-stick, who, when he went into the wood in search of a good hazel, found them as he went on getting better, and better, and better.

CHAPTER VII.

ROBERT BURNS.

"*By Allan Stream*," and "*Strathallan's Lament*."

"We'll lay the lyre upon his urn,
And, while the moonbeams deck the plain,
Mayhap his spirit may return,
And sweep the trembling chords again;
And we may hear the fairy strain
Float on the night breeze down the dell.
Delusion all, it is in vain—
And now, sweet Bard, again farewell!"
WILLIAM GLEN.

ANY moderately attentive reader of this series of essays must have seen that their object is threefold,—to draw attention to certain songs, strictly connected with the county of Perth, although written by distant poets; to vindicate the right Perthshire has in them wherever that right has been disputed, and to give short but characteristic notices of their authors. Hitherto I have escaped disputed allocations, except in the single case of "The Banks of Allan Water;" but now I am a second time reluctantly compelled to deal, in strong terms, with an authority that stands deservedly high in all matters connected with the songs of Scotland. During his life Burns was nervously jealous of any interference with his text, but he was himself the most careful of editors; and any different readings introduced by his commentators are generally either the suggestions of their own fancy, or a desire to appear wise. Allan Cunningham, speaking of Burns, says: "Many instances, not only from poetry, but from history, might be adduced to prove the accuracy of the most accurate of all poets." Yet no one of his many editors has taken such unwarrantable liberties with him as Mr. Cunningham himself.

The following is not only one of Burns' finest songs, but one of which he was justly proud. In a letter to George Thomson, dated 1793, he gives this elaborate description of what led to its composition.

> I walked out yesterday evening, with a volume of the Museum in my hand; when, turning up "Allan Water," "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c. as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air; and, recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's "Tea Table," where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is "Allan Water;" or, "My love Annie's very bonnie." This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which, I presume, it formerly occupied' though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cu of your fancy:—

BY ALLAN STREAM.

By Allan stream I chanced to rove
While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi;
The winds were whispering through the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listened to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthfu' pleasures many;
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I lo'e thee, Annie!

O happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!

Her head upon my throbbing breast,
  She, sinking, said "I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal imprest,
  The sacred vow,—we ne'er should sever,

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose brae,
  The simmer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheery, thro' her shortening day,
  Is Autumn, in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
  Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
  Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too (not else) you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else.

God bless you!

The above introduction one would think sufficient to defy all cavil, but the exquisite lyric could not pass through Allan Cunningham's hands without arousing some jealous feeling, and he is positively angry with Burns for writing a song on such a subject. Following Burns' letter, quoted above, in Cunningham's edition of the poet's works, is the following lengthy note:—

[The fancy of Burns took a flight northwards in conceiving this song. Benledi is a mountain westward of Strathallan, some three thousand feet high, and Allan water gives its name to the strath. The Poet might have found all that he wanted in his immediate neighbourhood; Criffel or Queensberry rise loftily enough, and Annan Water is sufficiently pure for all the purposes of song: moreover, the old lyric from which he took the idea belongs to the district:—

"O Annan Water's wide and deep,
  And my love Annie's wondrous bonnie;
Shall I be laith to weet my feet
  For her whom I love best of onie?
Gar saddle me my bonnie black,
  Gar saddle soon and make him ready,
For I will down the Gatehope-slack
  And a' to see my bonnie lady,"

Another ancient strain has a similarity of thought and language—the lover seems to be a cautious person:—

O Annan Water's wading deep,
Yet I am loth to weet my feet;
But if ye'll consent to marry me
I'll hire a horse to carry thee.

The Annan is a beautiful river with alternate pool and stream, and liable, like all mountain waters, to sudden floods. Burns was often on its banks; amongst its woods he sought for smugglers, or wooed the muses, as circumstances required.—Ed.]

This foolish and ill-natured note puts Allan Cunningham in an absurd position as the editor of Burns. If the poet, as here suggested, had written a song about Annan Water and the contiguous hills of Criffel and Queensberry, would that be any reason why he should not write one about Allan Water and Benledi, where he spent so many happy hours, "roving" with his appreciative friend, Mr. Ramsay, of Ochtertyre? The River Annan may be limpid as the Leven, rolling as the Amazon, or dashing as the Niagara, but that in no way affects the Allan; and it is surely no reason why Burns should not write a song descriptive of the scenery on its banks to the old air of "Allan Water," and as an improvement on the song, "Allan Water," already written. It is intensely amusing to find Cunningham depreciating Benledi by calling it "a mountain *some* three thousand feet high," trying if possible to bring it down to the level of Criffel or Queensberry, whereas it is larger and loftier than half the Galloway hills rolled together. Besides, the mere search for euphony was enough to make the poet's fancy "take a flight northward." Criffel—or Scriffel, as John Ainslie calls it—would have broken the jaws of old Lablache himself. Burns had enough to do with Stinchar and Pulskeoch, and came for a change to our majestic Benledi; and who can say that the beautiful name did not aid in producing the beautiful song. Let us be thankful that no nonsense of Cunningham's has tarnished the exquisite couplet:—

And aye the wild-wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I lo'e thee, Annie!

The songs of Burns are like a garland of diamonds,—rows of lustrous jewels grouped together; with ever and anon a gem of dazzling brightness, which sparkles and coruscates over the rest like the lights on a picture. Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Mrs. Jameson unite in considering the following verse addressed to Clarinda the consummation of all poetical romance, an existence of pain and pleasure distilled into one burning drop:—

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

True poetry has a two-fold essence—the thing expressed and the manner of expressing it. When Burns was on his death-bed, Jessie Lewars attended him as if she had been his daughter, and the poet's accessible heart was speedily touched. It was impossible for him to see the gentle-footed girl moving like a ministering angel around his couch without conceiving that grateful attachment to her that was the first impulse of his nature; and, low-spirited and weak as he was, he took means to express in song the state of his feelings. He felt the difficulty of his assumed position, and the imminent danger he had to encounter; but what would have baffled the resources of any ordinary man, the bard achieved in four simple lines:—

Although thou maun never be mine,
Although even hope is denied,
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessie.

I do not think there was anything abstractly real in this declaration, but the poet had been long in the habit of singing the unceasing devotion of man to woman, and of doing it in the first person. Here his heart was touched, and he wrote with such earnestness that his lines have a semblance of truth. The single idea is couched in these four lines in terms that it is impossible to outrival. In impassioned simplicity I think them superior to the four first quoted, the great authorities notwithstanding.

No Perthshire families suffered more by their steadfast adherence to the cause of the exiled Stuarts than the Drummonds of Strathallan and the Nairns of Strathord. They sacrificed life, property, and home; and while others cautiously divided their adherence between the contending parties, they gave an unbroken and unswerving aid to their adopted sovereign and his family. The two houses were long united by ties of marriage and by mutual devotion to the cause of right against might. The war-cry, to resist oppression, never came to them in vain: they were not mere political adherents, but belonged to the order of "foremost, fighting, fell," and when Culloden day came, they were *too* well represented. William, fourth Viscount Strathallan, commanded a division of the right wing of the Prince's army, and fell in the terrible onslaught. With the single exception of the charge of the British Light Brigade at Balaclava, no incident of modern warfare can be compared to the reckless daring of that brave but ill-advised assault. It was the last struggle for the perishing cause of the Stuarts, and, like most of their recent deeds, it was more adventurous than wise.

The Battle of Culloden was so brief that its history could be written on the back of a florin. Under some misapprehension, the right wing of the Highland army rushed forward on Cumberland's artillery, hundreds falling as they went. The English suffered little until the decimated Highlanders got to the rear of their cannon, when a terrible hand-to-hand carnage ensued. It is said that one Highlander hewed down fourteen of Cumberland's artillerymen, with his single broadsword. But the left wing of the Prince's army hesitated, through some question of precedence, and those engaged, seeing this, became disheartened, and left the field. So ended the battle, and it was with a lacerated heart that the semi-Jacobite poet strode over the cluster of green mounds, which to this day mark the burial-place of these devoted men. He must have been aware of Lord Strathallan's fate, and it is absurd to suppose that the famous "Lament" applied to him, although both Cunningham and Chambers say that it did. William, fourth Viscount of Strathallan, never was attainted; for, although out in the "Fifteen," no proceedings were taken against him, and he was under the turf at Culloden before his name was included in the Act of Attainder, 1746. Even then, so doubtful was the attainder, that Andrew Drummond, whom I remember as "General Drummond of Machany," petitioned for restoration, because in his father's case the Act was invalid; but Parliament thought otherwise, and the restoration was delayed till the reign of George the Fourth, when the title was revived in the person of the late Peer.

On the 14th of April, 1746, James Drummond, in consequence of his father's death at Culloden, became fifth Viscount Strathallan, and remained so till he was attainted by the next parliament as James Drummond, son of William, fourth Viscount. It must be his case that the poet's pathetic lament refers to, for he was driven into poverty and exile, dying abroad twenty years after the battle of Culloden. The late Viscount was his nephew:—

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.

Thickest night o'erhang my dwelling!
  Howling tempests o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
  Still surround my lonely cave!

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
  Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
  Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engagèd
  Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly wagèd,
  But the heavens denied success.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
  Not a hope that dare attend:
The wide world is all before us,
  But a world without a friend.

It was in the year 1746 that the heart of Scotland received its deepest incision. A young noble driven from his inheritance, hovering between the cave and the scaffold, comparing his fellow-men to the howling tempest, haunting the crystal streamlet, of which he is the unmerited curse, and, in his frenzy, even calling in question the justice of Heaven, was a fit subject for the poet's verse; and a century of years now began, during which their Jacobite minstrelsy would be found to come nearer the heart of Scotchmen than was long thought consistent with the new order of things. France teemed with melodies of Old Scotland, and the people of St. Germains thought her expatriated nobles a race of idolaters. But these Frenchmen forgot, if they ever knew, that David's love for Jerusalem was one of the passions of his life; and so anxious was he to avoid any halting in that love, that he prescribed a punishment for such a sin that would be felt severely in more modern times. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning," and "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"*Mary of Tombea.*"

"'Tis sixty years since."

THE literary career of Sir Walter Scott may be likened to the flight and song of the lark. In the morning of life he hovered in volition, balancing on the wing like an uncertain fledgling, whetting his pinions, and measuring the area of his flight; and when he found himself equal to the upward journey, he ascended watchfully at first; but, on reaching mid-air, his wings careered with the velocity of the whirlwind, and his well-trained voice poured forth a flood of lore that his admiring countrymen could barely keep pace with. Then, getting beyond a cloud, he continued to ascend loftier and yet loftier—partially obscured to the eye, but ever present to the ear—luxuriating in upper air, scattering pearls, seeing dreamy visions of earth far away, resting for a time on a pivot of triumph, and revelling in the consciousness that he had only to breathe away a very thin film to obtain for himself a deathless name. Pausing for an instant, he began to descend in the same vertical orbit, carolling loud as ever, fluttering to conceal the weakening power, and, finally, with graceful bounding, he came to earth at "The Feast of Masques," where, heart-full and wayworn, he stood to his feet, and said, "I am the Author of Waverley!"

No man that ever waked into life did more to develop the latent character of a people than Sir Walter Scott. He made Scotchmen proud of their country and of themselves. That pride was enhanced in them by the consciousness that their poetical position had been achieved for them by one of themselves. Though you give a people energy and industry, you do not necessarily give them riches; but if you create in them a love of letters, they will become intelligent: and if you give them self-importance, it becomes a strong incentive to avoid national declension.

Sir Walter Scott's preference for Perthshire was purely one of devotion to its picturesque character and romantic legends. He wrote no history of our county. He made no inquiry into the geological structure of its mountains or the natural product of its valleys, the position of its agriculture or the development of its commerce. But he took up the manners and love-making of certain remote periods of its existence, and, with his golden pen, did more to establish its latent excellence than all the historians, geologists, botanists, frog-eaters, and buyers and sellers of modern times.

Strangers have visited us—not in thousands, but in millions,—who certainly would never have crossed the Tweed had it not been for Scott; and the truth is not far to seek, that in many cottages in the Scottish glens, and in many cheerful homes within her Highland borders, if there had been no song there would have been no supper. Hotels have been erected where nobody lived, and ordinaries established where the moorcock was lord. These southern tourists, when they returned to Belgravia or the Boulevards, did not gossip of Scotland and the Scotch, but of Scotland and Scott.

Encouraged and fired by the success of "The Minstrel" and "Marmion" Scott's active mind suggested to him the Perthshire drama that was to eclipse them both; and in the summer of 1808 he left his own romantic Edinburgh, and, passing through the picturesque fortalice of Stirling, he naturally became enamoured of the masquerading escapades of James the Fifth emblazoned on its historical walls; and feeling deeply the fate of this, the last royal inhabitant of Stirling and of Falkland, he took up the most formidable feature in the young monarch's character, and led him away into the deepest gorges on Loch Katrine side, peopling, from his own fertile imagination, with disguised nobles and frenzied Highlanders, a region where peaceful Nature had hitherto reigned supreme; converting green, sequestered valleys into scenes of gallantry, jealousy, revenge, and blood; carrying the very atmosphere of Holyrood and Snowdoun into the hazel copses of Benvenue. James was of an adventurous spirit, and the way in which he was tosssed about when young tended to aggravate that spirit; but he was a youth of noble bearing and dauntless bravery: and in adopting him as the hero of his tale, Scott obtained scope for the chivalry of his own nature and a master spirit fit for the stirring drama of Ellen Douglas and Roderick Dhu.

When studying for "The Lady of the Lake," the poet took up his residence at Cambusmore, whence he sallied forth, inspired by a sort of literary knight-errantry, storing his mind with imaginary heroes and heroines, arranging stage effect, associating real names with fictitious deeds of venture in such an ingenious way that the reading world was seduced into the belief that everything was real, and spoke of "Ellen's Isle," "Lanrick Mead," and "Coilantogle Ford" as familiarly as if they had been off the Lawnmarket, the Trongate, or Cheapside. Even at this distant day, when the blazing furnace bounds through Balquhidder, Strathyre, and Tombea, the "Dark Benledi," as it throws its shadow over the pass, cannot fail to excite recollections of the illustrious Scotsman who for thirty years guided the literary tastes of all who read the English language at home and abroad. If the outside world has learned anything from what this illustrious Scotsman has written, it has learned this: that his countrymen are laudably ambitious of maintaining their position amongst the nations of the earth, as well for the beauty of their daughters and the chivalry of their sons, as for their picturesque scenery and sublime songs.

There is scarcely any good in this life but has its concomitant evil. Sir Walter Scott's style is simple and captivating, but he composed with such facility, and became so absorbed in the fascinations of his own adventurous mind, that he could not pause to finish; and the onward impetus dulled the edge of caution, and rendered him occasionally weak and diffusive. The songs in "The Lady of the Lake" are like gems set in metal a shade inferior. There are passages in "Marmion" that strike out like sunbeams when a man walks round his garden in the cool of the day. He has, in the "Lady of the Lake," consecrated to Perthshire a song which, in a certain class of merit, has few equals amongst his lyric productions. "Mary of Tombea," for pathos and finish, cannot be outrivalled; it is, to the "Lady of the Lake," what the episode of Haidee is to "Don Juan"—the sparkling, concentrating gem.

Mary had just been married with great ceremony to Norman, heir of Armandave, and as the bridal party were leaving the chapel of St. Bride, Angus of Duncraggan dashed through the flooded Teith, carrying in his left hand the trumpet of war and in his right "The Cross of Strife," repeating the words of the priest,

Woe to the wretch who fails to rear,
At this dread sign, the ready spear!

The poet thus describes the bootless struggle of indecision in Norman's mind, and the whirlwind of Highland pride in which he "glanced away":—

And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve, and feeling strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

SONG.

NORMAN OF ARMANDAVE AND MARY OF TOMBEA.

The heath this night must be my bed
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
    Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
    It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow;
I dare not think upon thy vow,
    And all it promised me, Mary!
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
    His foot like arrow free, Mary!

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
    Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
    To my young bride and me, Mary!

Clan-Alpine's warriors did not return from conquered foes, but were scattered and driven into their own fastnesses. Mary of Tombea was sent, with others, to an island on Loch Katrine, until the fight was over; and the poet leaves his readers to infer that Norman found his way into the arms of his Mary, and in the end participated in the royal immunity.

There is so much genuine feeling, so much tenderness in these reiterations of the winning name, that the reader is naturally led to enquire if it had no real inspiring first cause. Every love-song of Burns' had a genuine heroine, which rendered them real-hearted and fascinating. Love will not be described by artifice. This master-passion of the human mind must be felt before it is sung; and as Robert Burns had a corresponding Mary to "Mary in Heaven," it will be interesting to ascertain if Walter Scott had a corresponding Mary to "Mary of Tombea."

In one of his early rambles into Perthshire, Scott met at Pitkellony, William and Mary Ann Erskine, children of the Rev. William Erskine, Episcopal minister of Muthill. William went to the bar, and eventually became Lord Kinnedder. Mary, after her father's death, lived with her brother at Edinburgh, and the talented young advocate became deeply attached to her; but he temporized, and Mr. Colquhoun, also an advocate, and Sheriff of Perthshire, carried off the much-envied Mary. This lady subsequently became well known as the confidential correspondent of Carolina Oliphant, from whom she received the first draft of "The Land o' the Leal," as a hymn of consolation on the death of one of her children. It does not therefore, appear any very hazardous journey to walk down Glenartney, and identify Mary of Tombea with Mary of Pitkellony. An early, but long deceased, friend of mine lived on intimate terms with the Erskine family so long as they remained at Muthill. He spoke with enthusiasm of Scott's visits to them, and asserted that his marriage to Miss Carpentier was facilitated by his losing Mary Ann Erskine. But this must have been an error, for although Lockhart admits his attachment to Mary Erskine, it is to the daughter of some mysterious northern baronet that he attributes Scott's early disappointment. Besides, Walter Scott's courtship and marriage of Miss Carpentier were deliberate and affectionate, and in its conduct prudent beyond cavil.

It was some years after the publication of "The Lady of the Lake" ere the public interest concentrated round the Trossachs. The area of exploration was broader; but in the summer of 1817 you would have heard the question put on every respectable street and in every assembly of Edinburgh and Glasgow, "Have you been to Perthshire?" and an affirmative answer was conclusive of your gentility: but pity the vulgar wight who had to answer "No!" Coaches were running daily from the Black Bull, and Gibb's, of Edinburgh, and from the Black Bull and Tontine of Glasgow, with the inevitable quarto stuck upon the coach-box, and Stobie's map of Perthshire lashed behind. Frequently a large telescope, by Dolland, adorned the roof inside, as if these stupendous rocks would open up before the piercing eye of science. Perthshire men felt pride in the fame of their home-country; Benledi, Benvoirlich, and Glenartney—objects, to them, familiar as running water—were spoken of with as much poetical veneration as the less-favoured people of a long previous age spoke of the mountains of Samaria and the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees. No doubt Walter Scott wrote "The dark Benledi," the "Lofty Benvoirlich," and "Glenartney's hazel shade;" but to their recollections they were more suggestive of cold winds and peaks of April snow. The enthusiasm augmented, however, day by day; and the rugged and shapeless masses that close in the east end of Loch Katrine were gazed at with as much wonder as if they had been merely a collection of the raw material of which the globe was originally formed. Waterloo was forgotten, the Rhine abandoned, and for thirty years Scotland reigned supreme. Induced by the increasing annual invasion of sightseers, Lord Willoughby built the little inn at Ardkenokronkdan, now merged into the Trossachs Hotel, and placed a number of pleasure-boats on the lake for their accommodation. Visitors were generally taken round "Ellen's Isle," thence along under the dripping fringe of Benvenue,—better known in these days as Bencochan,—and across to the farm of Brenachoil, now the Letter, and back through the mazes of rock, wood, and water that form the north-eastern margin of Loch Katrine.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"Blanche of Devan," "We are Landless," &c.

> "You sit above, and hear vain man below
> *Contend for* what 'tis you alone doth know."
> JOHN DRYDEN.

SCOTLAND, picturesque old Scotland, her mountains, her legends, and her people were the objects of Scott's early study. He became deeply versed in the tangled web of her history, and passionately attached to her as his own, his native land. But, like a great artist, he knew the value of a fresh eye and a maturing judgment. He conjured and re-conjured, wrote and laid aside. Years of mental exertion and months of hesitation passed over him with little done; but eventually he felt his own strength; and, grasping his reins, he drove a team of History, Poetry, Romance, and Tale, such as no Scotchman had ever driven, peopling abbeys with monks and abbesses, castles with knights and ladies fair, and towns with citizens and craftsmen, fictitious in themselves, but true to all their circumstances in life; while ever and anon the familiar tale of some character in real life would burst forth, giving vitality to the narrative, and leading to the conclusion that what is so very true to nature, and so ingeniously interwoven with incidents fondly recollected, must be true in fact.

When the keys of Mary's prison-house were fished up from Loch Leven, the interest in such a ratification of Scottish history became deep and widespread; and a few years thereafter, when "The Abbot" appeared, detailing minutely when and how they were deposited there, Mary Stuart, and Douglas, and Catherine Seyton, and Roland Græme, became not only the cherished companions of every closet, but the theme of elaborate discourse on the street, in the tavern, and at the market-place. The anxiety to know the author of "Waverley" became a passion. At no period of the long-protracted mystery did the *furore* rage with greater intensity. Men in high literary position looked wise, insinuating that they were in the secret, but morally bound, &c.; while some less considerate enthusiast would rush into the columns of the *Caledonian Mercury* or the *Glasgow Herald* with an announcement that he had discovered "the Great Unknown" to be John Galt or Mrs. Grant of Laggan. One stout gentleman wrote to the *Standard*, offering incontrovertible evidence that Miss Ferrier was the author of "Waverley." Still, in the midst of all this, there was a mysterious under-current of Walter Scott kept constantly moving about; and when hours and whole evenings had been spent in fruitless discussion, the first and final words were "Walter Scott;" indeed, during George the Fourth's stay in Edinburgh, if he passed a collection of people on the street—two, or two hundred—the universal exclamation was, "Oh! there is the author of 'Waverley!'"

From the first appearance of "Waverley" in 1814 to the famous Theatrical Fund dinner in 1827, a feeling of suppressed jealousy existed between the citizens of Edinburgh and Glasgow about the identity of the "Wizard of the North," which on exciting occasions blazed forth with vehemence equal to that with which the five Greek cities contended for Homer.

In 1817, when "Rob Roy" made its appearance, the wiseacres of the West concluded without hesitation that John Gibson Lockhart—whose father was then minister of the College Church, around which a good deal of the story is concentrated—was the author of "Waverley," and a long article in the *Courier* winds up thus: "We are day by day more satisfied that the author of "Waverley" dwells in our midst, for no man who had not been born and bred in Glasgow could so minutely describe its lanes and avenues, and depict so vividly its manners and local peculiarities, as has been done in the new novel of 'Rob Roy.'" The Edinburgh *literati* adhered to Scott, or at least to their own more classic locality, and traced with cunning hand the identity of passages in "Rob Roy" and its predecessor, "The Lady of the Lake." Hot discussions arose between the press of the two claiming cities, but within twelve months "The Heart of Midlothian" dashed the theory of the western cognoscenti to pieces, and, with scathing irony, the *Caledonian Mercury* reproduced the words of the *Glasgow*

Courier, only substituting Edinburgh for Glasgow, and "The Heart of Midlothian," for "Rob Roy." Glasgow resented this by saying: "No doubt the early portion of 'The Heart of Midlothian' refers principally to scenes in and around Edinburgh, but the author cannot finish it without coming back to his native west (!), and winding up his story amidst the Dumbartonshire hills, describing scenes and characters which are only to be found where Clyde runs westward to the sea."

Amongst the anti-Scott theorists of the West, Mr. David Prentice, of the *Glasgow Chronicle*, was the most persevering. He literally forced on Mrs. Grant the authorship of "Waverley," and when she wrote to him denying it, he replied in the most provoking way, applauding her modesty and self-denial, and, without flinching an inch of the ground he had taken up, coolly remarked that any lady ought to be proud of the authorship instead of being ashamed of it. This sent the worthy lady into tears, and forced on her friends the disagreeable alternative of putting an effectual stop to Mr. Prentice's repeated averments.

All this must have been both gratifying and amusing to Scott, but he held fast his integrity. His name was on every lip, and he heard his praises sounded at second hand where personally he was utterly unknown. Douglas Kinnaird applied to him for an epilogue, but he declined; and Elliston, the lessee of Drury Lane, urged him to write a five-act comedy, but he paid no heed to the demand. His hands were full. "Ivanhoe" had just appeared, and "Kenilworth" was in the press, besides a second and third edition of some of the earlier tales. To keep all the ships already afloat in sailing trim required a skilful hand; and while new keels were being laid and new launches announced, little attention could be paid to the salutations of strange sail. In addition to all this, he felt that he had conjured up an existence that was threatening to overwhelm him. He saw humble pedestrians following on his trail—gay equipages dashing through labyrinths of wood and water, in search of spots that receded before them like the congenial *ignis fatuus*. He heard people quarrelling about the site of Davie Deans' Cottage, and the precise *locale* of the Castle of Tullyveolan; and on one occasion he sat inside the mail coach from Peebles to Edinburgh with a cockney who was on his way to explore the Hole of Uamvar. History is silent as to whether he found it!

The war which Roderick Dhu proposed to wage with the royal forces, like all the resistings of outlawry, could only be carried on by exciting the clansmen's worst passions,—by instilling into them the most vengeful and demoniac spirit. Personally he was exasperated by the refusal of Ellen Douglas' hand, and he took every means to transfer what he thought an insult to himself, to his clan generally. The anathemas pronounced on the head of every recusant clansman were like the curses of Mount Ebal. No situation formed a successful plea for absence. Norman was spirited from the side of his bride on their way home from church, and young Duncraggan from the side of his father's bier, while they were singing Duncan's famous Coronach :—

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.

The font reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.

The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the corrie,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!

the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,—
Thou art gone, and for ever.

Although a formidable enemy to the laws of civilised life, Roderick Dhu is invested by the poet with so many gallant attributes as a warrior and chief of his clan, that his fate might be judged hard in the broad equilibrium of romance; but to obviate this apparent injustice the episode of Blanche of Devan is introduced, where Roderick, in one of his marauding excursions, meets a wedding party, and with cruel hand, kills the bridegroom and carries off the bride.

The captive maiden becomes insane, and despising restraint, goes singing about Loch Katrine side, ever mindful of her nuptial day, and nursing in her deep-rent bosom the too natural desire for revenge. King James found her perched on a cliff, and when she saw his suit of "Lincoln green," it raised in her bewildered mind images of her lowland Devan and her murdered bridegroom. She saluted "The Knight of Snowdoun," and told him her tale of anguish in the following beautiful song. The King's spirit is fired, and Roderick Dhu's fate is sealed:—

BLANCHE OF DEVAN.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
  They say my brain is warp'd and wrung
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
  I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray—
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
  They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn they said,
  And my true love would meet me there,
But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drown'd in blood the morning smile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.

Fitz-James was for the time under the guidance of Black Murdoch, a henchman of Roderick Dhu's, who did not like Blanche's allusion to his chief as her seducer, and threatened to silence her:—

"Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised his bow;—

The knight struck in heroically:—

"Now, if thou strikest her but one blow.
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitch'd a bar!"

Blanche proceeds with her narrative, after exclaiming, "Thanks, champion, thanks!"

"Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue,"

Then she bursts forth into song:—

"For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trill'd the Lowland lay!

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed,
Hunters watch so narrowly."

Murdoch of Alpine saw that the knight's suspicions were excited, and he darted off, aiming a shaft at Fitz-James, which missed him, but pierced poor Blanche of Devan to the heart. This deed furnished the young King's fiery cross. He dipped a tress of her hair, and one of her bridegroom's, which she gave to him, in her blood, vowing revenge, and he stayed not his hand till he had slain both Murdoch of Alpine and Roderick Dhu.

This noble poem may, without violation of truth, be called one of "The Waverley Novels." The same chivalrous cast of character,—a plot neither startling nor intricate,—the same throwing in of historical incident to give salt to the narrative,—and the same incessant undercurrent of flowing minor detail, leading to the catastrophe as the tiniest rivulet inevitably leads to the sea. Blanche of Devan is reproduced in Madge Wildfire, James Fitz-James in Edward Waverley, and Malcolm Græme and Roderick Dhu in Vich Ian Vohr and Rob Roy. We may be told that we now know the fact, and can speak complacently; but it was certainly no great feat of critical judgment to attribute "Waverley" to the author of "The Lady of the Lake," even when it first appeared sixty years ago, or to discover that Evan Dhu, who died under the hand of the common executioner at the gate of Carlisle, was the remote younger brother of

Roderick Dhu, who died of his wounds in Stirling Castle, two hundred years before; and that Davie Galletley, who sang a warning song to Waverley as he threaded the proscribed ruins of Tullyveolan:—

Follow, follow me; Brave should he be,
That treads by the night the dead man's lea.

was of the same lineage as the crazed maiden who cautioned Fitz-James by singing—

He had a foot, and he could speed,
Hunters watch so narrowly.

Titian could not form an outline but the eye of the cultivated virtuoso would detect it. The majesty of Vandyke, the sullen grandeur of Salvator, and the ecstatic vision of Turner, are familiar to the student in art; and there were men living in Scotland sixty years ago, to whom the terse couplets of Campbell, the grand clenching rhymes of Byron, and the finely-modulated sentences of Scott were familiar as their friends' handwriting.

The play of *Rob Roy* kept its place on the stage longer than any of the Waverley dramas. William Macready was the first to personify the marauding hero; but he speedily saw it was not suited to his dignified style, and retired in favour of Mr. Murray. But the great attraction was Mackay's "Nicol Jarvie." No Scotch character has in our day been put upon the stage to compare with it. He played it in the Glasgow Queen Street Theatre for one hundred consecutive lawful nights, to brimming houses. When King George came to Edinburgh, "His Majesty's servants" were ordered to perform the national drama of *Rob Roy*. After receiving "the most finished gentleman of Europe" with three rounds of vociferous cheering, the new-made baronet appeared, when a perfect hurricane of plaudits burst forth. Sir Walter, as in duty bound, took no notice of them; but whether they were offered to him as the new baronet, or the author of "The Lady of the Lake," or the suspected author of "Rob Roy," did not appear. The most stirring incident of the evening was the singing of "We are landless," which was rapturously encored:

MACGREGOR'S GATHERING.

The moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day;
Then gather, gather, gather Grigalach
Gather, gather, gather, &c.

Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo!
        Then haloo, Grigalach! haloo, Grigalach!
        Haloo, haloo, haloo, Grigalach! &c.

Glen Orchy's proud mountains, Coalchuirn and her towers,
Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours;
        We're landless, landless, landless, Grigalach!
        Landless, landless, landless, &c.

But doomed and devoted by vassal and lord,
Macgregor has still both his heart and his sword!
        Then courage, courage, courage, Grigalach!
        Courage, courage, courage, &c.

If they rob us of name, and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame, and their flesh to the eagles!
        Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Grigalach!
        Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, &c.

While there's leaves in the forest, and foam on the river,
Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!
        Come then, Grigalach, come then, Grigalach,
        Come then, come then, come then, &c.

Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt,
        Then gather, gather, gather, Grigalach!
        Gather, gather, gather, &c.

The partiality which Scott in his early days imbibed for Perthshire never forsook him. Next to his own Border land, it is most frequently the *locale* of his tale and the theme of his song. Every romantic defile from Glengyle to Dunsinane, every bleak region from the "Braes o' Doune" to the Muir o' Thorn he has made famous in story; and, in explanation, he says, "Perthshire forms the fairest portion of Caledonia." In addition to the two gentlemen I have named, Scott had many applicants for the assistance of his generous pen. Where speculation appeared to be the motive, he treated them loftily as a rule; but when backed up by personal friendship or obvious honesty of purpose, he never presented a deaf ear. About 1808, Matthew Gregory Lewis applied to him for a contribution to his projected book, "Tales of Wonder," and Scott sent him "Glenfinlas." In 1816, his friend, Alexander Campbell, solicited his aid to "Albyn's Anthology," and he granted him several pieces, including "Pibroch of Donuil Dhu;" and in 1823, Joanna Baillie laid before him a case of distress in the literary world, and proposed publishing, by subscription, a collection of original poems, and gifting the profit in relief. To this Scott at once consented, offering to contribute, and subscribe for ten copies. The affair was gone into, and 2200 copies sold, Scott's "Macduff's Cross" taking the first place. Miss Baillie, in her introductory advertisement, says that she felt herself "supported and honoured beyond what has ever yet fallen to the lot of any editor." But what I would direct attention to is the fact that, when Scott had to draw on his imagination for supplies to meet all these demands, his mind bounded back to the county of Perth. In the prelude to "Macduff's Cross" he says:—

> ——— That rough-hewn block of massive stone,
> Placed on the summit of this mountain pass,
> Commanding prospect wide o'er field and fell,
> And peopled village and extended moorland,
> And the wide ocean and majestic Tay,
> To the far-distant Grampians.

In the last chapter of "Rob Roy" Sir Walter Scott takes his final farewell of Western Perthshire, leaving the peaceable possession of that land of mountain and flood to the Grahames and the Drummonds, and his readers to regret that the possessions of the Macgregors do not now extend to Lanrick-mead.

CHAPTER X.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

"The Lay of Poor Louise," &c.

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee."—Isaiah.

Some writer, I forget who, after finishing a page of fierce magniloquence, explains, "This was written during a thunderstorm;" and an artist, I do not remember which of them, when he had finished a great landscape, wrote on the back—deprecating adverse criticism, "Painted on the spot." A cockney poet too, in hymning the midnight salutations of the owl, stuck tenaciously to nature, spelling the brute's name "Howl;" and everybody has heard of that other painter who painted the monarch of the jungle in glowing colours and most savage mood, but feeling uneasy about his own strict adherence to nature, wrote below, "A Lion," lest any connoisseur should so far lack discernment as to think it a bear! It was the death-blow which Scott dealt to that class of marauders on the realms of literature and art which formed the most attractive feature of "The Waverley Novels." The simple, flowing, yet manly narrative, the unaffected grace of style, the rigid avoidance of complication or ambiguity, and the ever-recurring instances of dramatic power, came upon the reading public fresh as a May morning.

When the author of "Waverley" began his career as a novelist, he chose Perthshire as the scene of his operations. Like a skater on doubtful ice, he moved timidly, not daring to name localities otherwise than vaguely; but when he came back fourteen years afterwards, he had reached the point of fearing nothing, and tells us how, in his youthful days, he came riding down "The Wicks of Baiglie," and saw Perth stretched out before him like a map, and that "since that hour, and the period is now more than fifty years past, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, when much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection. It is, therefore, natural that, whilst deliberating on what might be brought forward for the amusement of the public, I should pitch upon some narrative connected with the splendid scenery which made so much impression on my youthful imagination."

The influence which that youthful ride had on the poet's future career is abundantly demonstrated in the effects it produced. For a quarter of a century it lay on his mind like the first outlines of a picture, waiting to be filled up. Fielding, and Smollet, and Goldsmith were all dead, and "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Roderick Random," and "Tom Jones" were fast giving way to the tawdry mysteries of "The Minerva Press." A false and vicious taste was rapidly insinuating itself into the realms of fiction, and an inflated style was taking the place that sober English had long held. Scott saw with regret that his country's literature was being demoralised, and, like Burns and Lady Nairne with its songs, he set himself to inaugurate a new era. In the spring of 1814 he opened his desk, and drawing forth the manuscript that had vexed *him* in former days, he assumed the incognito which vexed *so many* in after days, and forthwith the following advertisement appeared in the Edinburgh papers:—

> Just published, in three volumes 12mo, price 24s.
>
> WAVERLEY
>
> OR,
>
> 'TIS SIXTY YEARS SINCE.
>
> ---
>
> *Under which king, Bezonian? Speak, or die.*

The announcement created little disturbance at first, but when the reading world began to dip into the new novel, it became obvious that a fresh spirit was at work; and when "Guy Mannering" followed, the authorship of "Waverley" became the grand question, and every literary Scotsman was in his turn the Bellerophon who rode the mysterious Pegasus.

"The Fair Maid of Perth," although written in the gloaming of life, it is a pleasure to pronounce one of the best of "The Waverley Novels." In interest it falls behind "Guy Mannering;" in passion, behind "The Bride of Lammermoor;" and in pathetic incident, behind "Ivanhoe;" but in historical consistency it is unrivalled. The author carries his readers back five centuries, and with daring hand weaves a web of Scottish tartan, taking history for his warp and fiction for his woof, yet in no single instance losing sight of the manners and fashion of his adopted age. Katie Glover, in her primitive devotion; Simon, in his stately citizenship; Henry Gow, with his riveting hammer and clenching hands; and the affectionate, charming Louise, are all beings of a distinct habitat and of an age long, long consigned to the frail memory of carved stones and mouldy parchments. Yet they all stand up before us,—Katie with her silver snood and velvet bodice; Simon with his short cloak and well-set limbs: the smith with his square features, broad chest, and dark complexion (the Gows are all dark, so much so, that some one remarked that "They must have eaten a smiddy"); and the pretty, semi-Greek Louise, with her short skirts and red stockings, joined to the historical Duke of Rothesay and his facile parent, Robert the Third, with their race of idle, swaggering and bloodthirsty nobles,—forming altogether a group deeply interesting and admirably sustained.

The introduction of "The Glee Maiden" into the "Fair Maid of Perth" gave the author an opportunity of exhibiting his lyric tendencies, first in "The Lay of Poor Louise," and second, in "Tender and True."

THE LAY OF POOR LOUISE.

Ah, poor Louise! the live-long day
She roams from cot to castle gay;
And still her voice and viol say,
Ah, maids, beware the woodland lay,
Think on Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! the sun was high,
It smirch'd her cheek, it dimm'd her eye,
The woodland walk was cool and nigh,
Where birds with chiming streamlets vie
To cheer Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! the savage bear
Made ne'er that lovely grove his lair;
The wolves molest not path so fair,—
But better far had such been there
For poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! in woody wold
She met a huntsman fair and bold;
His baldrick was of silk and gold,
And many a witching tale he told
To poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! small cause to pine
Hadst thou for treasure of the mine;
For peace of mind, that gift divine,
And spotless innocence, were thine,
Ah, poor Louise!

Ah, poor Louise! thy treasure's reft!
I know not if by force or theft,
Or part by violence, part by gift;
But misery is all that's left
To poor Louise.

Let poor Louise some succour have!
She will not long your bounty crave,
Or tire the gay with warning stave—
For Heaven has grace, and earth a grave,
For poor Louise.

TENDER AND TRUE.

Oh, Bold and True,
In bonnet blue,
That fear or falsehood never knew;
Whose heart was loyal to his word,
Whose hand was faithful to his sword—
Seek Europe wide from sea to sea,
But bonny Blue-cap still for me!

I've seen Almaine's proud champions prance,—
Have seen the gallant Knights of France,
Unrivall'd with the sword and lance—
Have seen the sons of England true
Wield the brown bill, and bend the yew,
Search France the fair, and England free,
But bonny Blue-cap still for me!

The last chapter in the life of Sir Walter Scott has no parallel in the diversified history of man. As time wore on he had ample forewarning that a complication of troubles awaited him; but, confident in the rectitude of his own intentions, he hoped against hope; and when the long-warded-off catastrophe came in the guise of a peremptory demand for one hundred and two thousand pounds, he was found equal to the emergency. Hurst and Robinson, the Ballantynes, and Constable succumbed. Scott did not; and although he was for the time penniless, he fell back upon those resources which had hitherto proved the ready mainstay of his life. He would not compound. No one dared to propose the sale of Abbotsford. What was to be done? None but himself dreamed of the mine of untold gold that lay hidden in the recesses of his profoundly-stored mind. He was not yet fully recognised as "The Wizard of the North," but he was himself quite alive to the power he still possessed of working that golden mine; and although stricken in years and shattered in fortune, the will was strong and the field ready. To his task he went, sword in hand, and struggled with greater courage than ever Wellington fought a battle,—with more spirit in difficulty than Clarendon, more chivalry than Raleigh, and more self-reliance than John Bunyan; achieving for himself a deeply-cherished purpose, and for his country, greater reputation and emolument than had ever been achieved for her by a whole Parliament of her heaven-born ministers. Who told Englishmen of Scotland's green hills and purple lakes? Who invited Germany, and France, and Italy to the bleak regions of the European Far West, and compelled them to come? Who brought D'Arlingcourt, and Von Raumer, and N. P. Willis to Scotland? Who excited the jealousy of the German people so greatly as to induce them to start an opposition, and to publish, under the title of "Walladmor," such a servile imitation of "Waverley" that it was translated into English, and published with Scott's name on its title-page? I do not "pause for a reply."

For five years Scott laboured incessantly to redeem his position, and succeeded marvellously; but the valuable life was yielding, and the dying poet tried the effect of a foreign land. No benefit came; and when he laid his head on his pillow for the last time, he had the satisfaction of knowing that, when he had breathed his final breath, his debts of every description would be paid, and his darling Abbotsford free.

Seated on a platform, Sir Walter Scott was the personification of an intellectual Scotchman. The lofty forehead, shaggy eyebrows, and long firm upper lip, so characteristic of the dwellers on the wintry side of the Tweed, were developed in him with remarkable precision; and although in these circumstances a man of great presence, his lameness was, unfortunately, of that description which derogates so much from man's physical nobility, that his friends and admirers were filled with regret on its account whenever he appeared on the street. The chivalrous author of "Marmion," the spirited godfather of "Young Lochinvar," ought himself (thought they) to be able to walk the streets with the indomitable tread of Gordon Cumming, or the leonine grandeur of the Earl of Home, instead of labouring under an infirmity that compromised him in his own feelings, and unfitted him for the more active business of life.

These tracings of a great and incorruptible life are addressed, by one who knew Sir Walter Scott, to all those who had not that privilege, not under a prophetic conviction that a greater man may not speedily arise, but apprehensive that such a combination of talent, uprightness, and unbending integrity of purpose, is the phenomenon of widely-dated ages. If man will take an example from his fellow-man, let the writings of Sir Walter Scott, his devotion to his country and to his friends, his resolute following up of whatever he undertook, and the placid way in which he prepared himself to leave a world that, to him, had long been a scene of cloudless sunshine, be set up as landmarks for coming ages; and when the Dark Valley of the Shadow of Death begins to close in around us, may we all be able to say, with him, "I have kept the faith," and so far to merge our own impending fate in the interest of those we love and leave behind as to counsel them, in his last words, "Be good, John; be good."

CHAPTER XI.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Supplementary.

> "Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
> Of that which once was great has passed away."
> WORDSWORTH.

I HAVE been overwhelmed by criticisms, adverse and otherwise, on these papers on Scott; and, although the greater portion of the former are frivolous in the extreme, there are some which I feel bound to notice.

It ought to be kept in mind that I had termed what I wrote "Personal Recollections," and, although my memory had occasionally played me false, it might have been allowed to pass. During the progress of these essays, Lockhart's "Life of Scott" was utterly avoided, because it would have been an insult to my readers to have offered them a mere *résumé* of a book which everybody had read or could command. What I offered them were cherished reminiscences of Scott's early love for Perthshire, enhanced by the charm that threescore years impart to every pleasant incident of life, and apposite, because of the man's continued presence in spirit amongst us, and the unrelinquished hold his books have taken of the public mind.

I am accused, I think inconsiderately, by a gentleman, whose opinions are of value, of stating that Sir Walter Scott saw Perth from the Wicks of Baiglie, whilst I knew, or ought to have known, that it cannot be seen from thence. At the outset I invoked no controversy, and endeavoured to avoid this popular vulgarism, by simply saying that Scott tells us how, "In his youthful days, he came riding down through the Wicks of Baiglie, and saw Perth stretched out before him like a map." In this I took no notice of the abstract fact for the reason I have given, and now I am blamed for not doing so; but the matter being thus thrust upon me, I meet it without hesitation.

Primarily, is there a man in the county of Perth who, without making the slightest inquiry, will brand the following exquisite narrative, coming as it does from the pen of Sir Walter Scott, as an entire falsehood? Few, if any, will go that length. Yet there are plenty who will tell you that "Perth *cannot* be seen from the Wicks of Baiglie," thus denying the circumstance on which the whole narrative turns:—

> One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or perhaps the world, can afford, is, or rather we may say was, the prospect from a spot called the Wicks of Beglie, being a species of niche at which the traveller arrived, after a long stage from Kinross, through a waste and uninteresting country, and from which, as forming a pass over the summit of a ridgy eminence which he had gradually surmounted, he beheld, stretching beneath him, the valley of the Tay, traversed by its ample and lordly stream; the town of Perth, with its two large meadows or Inches, it steeples and towers; the hills of Moncrieff and Kinnoul faintly rising into picturesque rocks, partly clothed with woods; the rich margin of the river, studded with elegant mansions; and the distant view of the huge Grampian mountains, the northern screen of this exquisite landscape. The alteration of the road, greatly, it must be owned, to the improvement of general intercourse, avoids this magnificent point of view, and the landscape is introduced more gradually and partially to the eye, though the approach must still be considered as extremely beautiful. There is still, we believe, a footpath left open by which the station at the Wicks of Beglie may be approached; and the traveller by quitting his horse or equipage, and walking a few hundred yards, may still compare the real landscape with the sketch which we have attempted to give. But it is not in our power to communicate, or in his to receive, the exquisite charm which surprise gives to pleasure, when so splendid a view arises when least expected or hoped for, and which Chrystal Croftangry experienced when he beheld for the first time the matchless scene.

The above quotation is given *in extenso*, not only because it embraces the point at issue, but because it is an impartial specimen of the style of Sir Walter Scott,—its winning sobriety,—its graceful, forward motion and simple aim,—its collected and never-broken endeavour. The reader never requires to go back and pick up a lost thread; but on, on, charmed, fascinated, led into labyrinths of beauty, but lacking mental perception to judge whether they pertain to the tale itself or to the way in which it is told. Scott wrote to be understood, not to mystify; yet so waspish is public taste that some men prefer mysterious platitudes to the purest English, for no other apparent reason than that they wish to be thought admirers of what they really do not understand. Nature, from which all beauty comes, is ever simple. Art speaks loftily of her schools, of her orders of architecture—of Gothic, Doric, Ionic, and Composite,—of the Colosseum at Rome and the Amphitheatre at Pola,—of the pyramids of Egypt and the stones of Venice; but there is more beauty in a wren's nest than in a thousand such combinations. To be beautiful, it is not necessary to be grand. Grandeur has the same relation to beauty as size has to strength. It may embody it, but not necessarily. Whether grand or simple, Scott's style was always beautiful.

"The Wicks of Baiglie . . . . a species of niche," he says, through which Perth was reached from Kinross. Now, if Baiglie is a niche, or cavity, or mouth, the origin of the name is the mere application of the Scottish phrase, "The wicks of the mouth:" that is, the extreme sides or ends. The use of the plural confirms this; and I confess my inability to arrive at what Mr. David Morison styles "The Wicks of Baiglie strictly so called," because this niche or aperture must embrace the entire span, from the bottom of the valley to the tops of the hills on both sides, before it reaches the Wicks, rather an indefinite boundary to be strictly mapped; and it would be difficult to conceive a more contemptible quibble than wantonly to assert that Scott was wrong in saying that he saw Perth from "The Wicks of Baiglie" merely because it cannot be seen from the old Edinburgh Road, which comes down the hollow of the valley. Besides, the road which Scott came down in 1786 is called "The Wallace Road," and is considerably west of the old Edinburgh Road,—the latter, in all likelihood, not being made ninety years ago. If any man who is inclined to believe in what I have already styled a popular vulgarism will take the trouble to come down this Wallace Road, and immediately before debouching on Strathearn, diverge two hundred yards to the left, as Scott did, he will see Perth before him, little changed, at that distant point, from what it was when seen by the youthful Chrystal Croftangry.

There is a timidity in Scott's description of these roads, which, no doubt, arose from the fact that he was writing in 1828 about what occurred in 1786, and in the full knowledge that during the intervening forty-two years great changes had been made on the approaches to Perth from the south, yet anxiously solicitous about making it appear that his belief in the matchless beauty of these approaches remained, under all circumstances, unabated.

Finally, although I claim for Perthshire a deep share of the poet's interest, Abbotsford was his home. He had set up his altar on the banks of the Tweed with the Eildon Hills for his Helicon, and his own classic border-land—Ettrick, Yarrow, and "all down Teviotdale"—for the immediate surface of his shield. Here, like Pelops of old, he dispensed his hospitalities with a liberal hand,—promoted the interests of his friends,—reared a palace that, like Rome itself, was not built in a day,—collected art,—wrote poems and romances,—ate, drank, and was merry. But amongst his many writings, he wrote accommodation bills, which are the very bane of human life,—"the worm that dieth not,"—the engulfing, bottomless pit from whence few return again, neither do they "take further hold of the paths of life."

When gold was coming into his treasury in sackfuls, and his sons and daughters were rising up around him, the founding of a family became the all-absorbing object of Scott's life. To have the future Scotts of Abbotsford categorically named with those of Buccleuch and Raeburn, had an overwhelming charm to a man of his temperament, and in his latter days he had a fair prospect that his fond wish would be realised; but from many a well-laid foundation the superstructure has melted away like snow before the sun. The name of Scott has been bandied about from Lockhart to Hope; and, after the lapse of a century or two, the owner of Abbotsford may have as much difficulty in tracing his descent from the author of "Waverley" as Louis Napoleon had in tracing his from the Roman Cæsars.

SECTION FIFTH.

PERTHSHIRE BALLADS.

PERTHSHIRE BALLADS.

CHAPTER I.

BESSIE BELL AND MARY GRAY.

> "Sleep on, sleep on! your couch is made
> Upon your mother's bosom.
> Yea, and your peaceful, lonely bed
> Is all with sweet wild flowers inlaid,
> And over each earth-pillowed head
> The hand of Nature strews them.
> Sleep on!"
> ROBERT NICOLL.

No domestic legend of modern times has taken a more tenacious hold of the public mind than that of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, and, as a natural result, the few materials that have come down to us in companionship with their graves, have been misconstrued and diluted in every possible way. The legend, with all its accumulations, may be thus narrated:—Two young ladies, Elizabeth Bell, daughter of the laird of Kinvaid, and Mary Gray, daughter of the laird of Lednock, lived on terms of great intimacy, and their homes being contiguous, their companionship was close and uninterrupted. In the year 1666 they had reached womanhood, and during their youthful ramblings through the beautiful woods of Lednock, they had become familiar with all their intricacies and romantic windings. The plague was committing terrible ravages in Perth and its neighbourhood; and these embowering thickets suggested to their alarmed feelings the propriety of sheltering themselves from the dreadful infection. In this mood they selected the most secluded spot, and with turf built a little hut and covered the roof with *rashes*, which they found in abundance at the river side. But however much religious fanaticism or false national expediency may incite the isolation of woman, it is certainly not her normal condition; for, although "self-preservation is the first law of nature," she will not willingly shake off the many pleasant intercourses of the outer world, and she will dare more for a lover than she will dare for any law of man's making or any cherished resolution of her own. The lover came and the plague came, and death itself came.

This, together with the following lines, is all, either written or oral, that has come down to us:—

O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They were twa bonnie lasses;
They biggit a bow'r on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it o'er wi' rashes.

They thought to lie in Methven Kirk,
Amang their noble kin,
But they were laid on Lednock brae,
To beik fornent the sun.

But Allan Ramsay, desirous of filling up the hiatus in the ballad, draws upon his imagination and brings forward the lover in deep lamentation, because, although he is in love with both girls, he can only marry one of them. In the course of four double verses he tries to explain how and why he became so hopelessly involved, and this puerile disquisition, in which there is not the slightest allusion to the circumstances which led to the building of the bower and the association of the two self-banished maidens, has passed for a century as the lay of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray. "Cobbling up" old ballads may do very well where there is no real history jeopardised; but, in this instance the practice has acted perniciously: besides the lines are singularly unworthy of the author of the "Gentle Shepherd." It would be a very fair inference that the lover in the companionship of the two fair girls would have a feeling towards his sweetheart's devoted associate intenser in its nature than that which he entertained towards the rest of her sex; but this inference, however natural, cannot sustain a theory which sets at naught the first and ruling principle of the unseared human heart. This "cobbling," even where the original is sternly kept in view, is exceedingly dangerous. In architecture, a mullion end or two will guide the student to the detail of the most intricate gothic window, although the original has been under the earth for centuries; because he is guided by an unerring principle: but, in patching up an old ballad, no line or verse, or number of verses, can direct the mind in judging of what has gone before or what has followed after.

From the site of Lynedoch House a broad walk fringed with rhododendrons and laurels leads to the north-west; and at a distance of a few hundred yards, through a high stone wall into the traditionary region. Immediately beyond this wall, and at the bottom of a precipitous bank, the river Almond takes a westward bend, forming the little peninsula of Dronach-haugh, the scene of so many tender associations, where the graves of the "Twa bonnie lasses," with their landmarks of stone, iron, and turf are reposing in noiseless submission. They "thocht to lie in Methven kirk;" but no! that was forbidden. Their friends thought they should "beik before the sun"; but even that is denied them: no blink of sunshine reaches that lonely place. The great spruce fir trees that encircle it with their drooping branches shoot away up like rockets, piercing to the very clouds, rendering the spot sunless as a churchyard vault.

A few hundred yards farther northward the interested explorer comes to Lednock burn, on the sloping bank of which the speculative bower is said to have been biggit, and where an attempt has been made to raise a cairn. As he returns, visions of a burial procession with the white trappings of the early doomed will rise before his undisturbed imagination, and when he descends to the place of sepulture, he will naturally inquire of himself, Who laid them in their graves? Who carried their coffins? Who unfolded their winding-sheets? Who smoothed down their stiffening limbs? Who invoked the Majesty of Heaven over the earthly remains of the two devoted anchorites. Ah! poor fragile earth-born woman! ere the hour-bell has tolled twice, disease—terrible disease transmutes thy fair form into an object of loathing and instinctive repulse. There is nothing here to stay these besetting reflections; every breath is laden with rottenness. Mounds of ashen-coloured leaves that the baffled winds have been coiling up for years; great tufts of rank grass that feed on their own decay; fat stems of fern; mouldering heaps of broad-leaved docks form the reeking charnel-house of this valley of the shadow of death. Here there is little trace of the human foot, yet the race of "metre ballad-mongers" will "sometimes venture in where angels fear to tread." Mary Scott's grave, on Yarrow; Fair Helen's, on Kirkconnel lea; and Bessy Bell and Mary Gray's by the Almond side, the lovers of our national ballad literature claim a prescriptive right of visiting. In this lone spot there is really little to disturb; here the wood-pigeon coos on his branch without fear; the raven is nonchalant as a cage-bird; he turns up his eye with a knowing twinkle, indicating astonishment at your confidence. The hare, elsewhere timid, here gives its ears a twitch or two, and hirples on. These are the limited signs of life in this vale of seclusion. The wind of the outer world venturously comes soughing through the trees, and the tortuous, little river chafes and gurgles through its rocky bed; but in this woody mausoleum there is nothing to disturb the feeling that, with all your vitality, you are in close communion with the dead.

The legend of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray is like one of Turner's great landscapes—not loaded with obvious detail, but endlessly suggestive. The imagination can luxuriate in the probable incidents of the little drama, as it can in vistas of its own conjuration; but we must not allow our love of pathos or romance to put in peril our cherished experiences of kindred love. We have no authority whatever for the poetical piece of imagery that these two young ladies set up house in a wicker-built hut on Lednock brae, and were left to perish from hunger or disease, or any of the endless contingencies to which such a mode of life would lay them open. We are told that "they biggit a bower on yon burn-brae," but modern innovation has made it that "they built *themselves* a bower, where they resided for some time." It would be a pity to urge any inquiry that might militate against the pathetic old legend; but to clear it from apocryphal emendations will rather strengthen it. The cruelty of the old uncle is necessary to the story of "The children in the wood," and so is that of Regan and Goneril in the tragedy of *Lear;* but the negative cruelty implied in the distortion of this ballad is not necessary, the disease being quite enough. "Had she a father? had she a mother? had she a sister? had she a brother?" are questions which naturally arise, and they can only be answered by admitting that she had, because if Mary Gray had no kindred living at Lynedoch House, why did she leave it to avoid contagion? Lynedoch House had in itself no greater attractions for the plague than Lynedoch bower; and if there was a mother, would five minutes' walk stay her foot, or the most imminent peril altogether stay her tender hand? Food carried from Perth by a lover, whilst the parents were living in affluence within half-a-mile, and while there was no disease at either place, gives an air of cruelty and inconsistency to the legend. Whatever gave rise to the first movements of the ill-starred maidens, it cannot be doubted that, when the destroying angel came, every tender solicitude on the part of their relations would be awakened, and their last moments assiduously tended. To be seized by the plague was not necessarily sudden, though all but certain, death; and here deliberative judgment must have been exercised after the disease had seized its interesting but resigned victims, for we are told of their last desire: "They thought to lie in Methven Kirk." It is no evidence of the want of sympathy on the part of relations that Dronach-haugh was chosen as the place of sepulture, because, by tacit consent, all plague-smitten dead were buried away from the shelter of the churchyard wall, and from the feet of the sympathising pilgrim that might inquire after them many days thence.

These disturbing features have led to a short but careful inquiry into this page of domestic history, and the result is contained in the following *rationale*:—

The estate of Kinvaid, now the property of the Duke of Athole, lies embosomed on the north of the extended estate of Lynedoch, now belonging to the Earl of Mansfield. The old castle of Kinvaid stood on a large plateau of well-wooded land on the north bank of the little river Shochie, overlooking the parish church of Moneydie.

Lynedoch House stood in an angle of the Almond River, about two miles to the south of Kinvaid. These estates have classic surroundings: on the east lies the battlefield of Luncarty, with its memorial stones, and traditional "Oh hey," and Cargill, the scene of one of the Drummond tragedies. On the north, the spot where stood, not many years ago, the palatial residence of the Nairnes. On the west, Logie House, the birthplace of Sir William Drummond and other members of that distinguished family; and on the south, Methven Castle rears its undiminished head, all unconscious of the bitter falsehood which Margaret Tudor concocted within its innocent walls. Lynedoch itself as the cherished residence of the hero of Barossa, and the scene of our sorrowful little story, has many old world associations.

In the year 1760, Major Barry (a gentleman of refined feeling and taste) became owner of the beautiful estate of Lynedoch proper. He improved it greatly—especially round the mansion-house—by embanking, subdividing, and fencing, and planting choice trees. The graves of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray were to him objects of great solicitude. Penant says that "he completely ascertained the spot, and had it immediately enclosed by a stone wall." The enclosure he planted with wild-flowers, and festooned the walls with ivy and honeysuckle; and when, in the course of years, the walls became dilapidated, these plants hung and clustered round their serrated cope like trappings of woe.

When Major Barry sold Lynedoch to Graham of Balgowan, he removed to Perth, where he resided a number of years. He had a confidential female servant who became the wife of Peter Livingstone, bookseller in Perth. They had a son who cultivated the muses, and in an edition of his poems, the following interesting foot-note appears:—

> Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) Scott when about to publish one of his earliest works, was anxious to obtain some information about the classic grounds of Lynedoch, its mansion-house, the graves of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, all so romantically situated on the banks of the Almond, and for that purpose waited on the amiable and aged Major Barry, then residing at Perth, but formerly proprietor and (with his equally amiable lady) improver of that beautiful estate. He obtained from the major ample information, particularly about the means he used to ascertain the exact spot where the beauties lay.

This must have been about the close of the last century, while Scott was catering for "The Border Minstrelsy;" and it is a curious fact that both he and Robert Burns had, within ten years, been making inquiries respecting this interesting ballad; but being conscientious men, and finding the information slender, and exceedingly delicate, they declined making any attempt at resuscitation. Mrs. Graham asked Burns to pay her a visit at Balgowan, and as an inducement, she offered to show him the graves of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray; but he did not come. His deep interest in the story is made obvious, however, by the following entry in his diary as he was on his homeward journey: "Saturday morning (Sept. 15th, 1787). Leave Perth, come up Strathearn to Endermay—fine, fruitful, cultivated Strath—the scene of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, near Perth."

In the year 1860, on making inquiry at Sir Patrick Murray Threipland (who was one of Lord Lynedoch's trustees), respecting Burns and Mrs. Graham, and more especially about the transfer of the estate of Lynedoch, Sir Patrick sent me the following obliging answer:—

> Fingask Castle, Errol, 20th February, 1860.
>
> DEAR SIR,—I cannot say at what date the late Lord Lynedoch purchased that portion of Lynedoch where rest the remains of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, but this I learn from an entail executed at Balgowan in 1787, August 2nd (to which, by the by, Charles Sidey, the father of our friend of the Post-office, is a witness) by Thomas Graham, afterwards Lord Lynedoch; he was then (August, 1787) possessor of it.
>
> This clearly shows that Lord Lynedoch was inhabiting—as we must suppose, along with his lady—Balgowan House at the time Burns paid his visit to Ochtertyre.—I am, dear Sir, truly yours,
>
> P. M. THREIPLAND.

It is clear, when this deed is taken in conjunction with the following circumstance, that it was in the autumn of 1787 that the original portion of Lynedoch estate came into the possession of Mr. Graham of Balgowan. Towards the end of the same month on which this deed was executed, Mrs. Graham was living with her sister at Blair Castle, and was probably not aware, when Robert Burns presented himself there, that the classic grounds of Lynedoch had during her short temporary absence from home actually passed into her husband's possession,—although the story of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray had obviously been referred to, for the poet had only been one day in Edinburgh after his return from the North, when he received a long letter from his friend Josiah Walker, dated at Blair Castle, and containing the following passage:—

> When you pay your promised visit to the braes of Ochtertyre, Mr. and Mrs. Graham, of Balgowan, beg to have the pleasure of conducting you to the bower [*graves*] of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, which is *now* in their possession.

Mrs. Graham survived this interesting acquisition only five years, and her husband's interest in home faded away before his blighted prospects. Lynedoch and Balgowan saw little of him for thirty years; but when he did return, it was to the former estate that he devoted his attention; and amongst the first objects of his care were the graves on Dronach-haugh. He had the remains of Major Barry's wall removed, and a handsome iron railing, five feet in height, placed round them. In 1826 that railing was entire, the graves neatly trimmed and covered with wild flowers, but during the subsequent fifty years the railing has undergone considerable dilapidation; a few years more of neglect, and all traces of the maidens' graves will inevitably be lost.

A very slight inquiry into the circumstances which led to the sad story of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray will divest it of much of its apparent cruelty and inconsistency. The measures adopted by them for self-preservation were by no means singular. Wherever the disease appeared, similar precautions were taken, and frequently to as little purpose. The Reverend James Porteus, who was minister of Monzievaird in 1730, contributed to the Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries, the following graphic description of the disease, and how it had been treated in his parish, in the year 1645.

> "An old man," says Mr. Porteus," informed me that his father, having recovered, at that time was a cleanser; and told him that, when this fatal disease was raging in the parish, our gentlemen caused many huts to be built, and ordered all who perceived that they were infected immediately to repair unto them. That particularly the family of Ochtertyre caused observation to be made every morning whether the wind blew from the east or west. That they sent provisions of all kinds to them, but gave their servants strict orders, if the wind blew from the east, to lay them down a good way to the east of them; and to the west, if it blew from the west; and that, sometime after they were gone, the cleansers took them up and carried them to the diseased."

The graves of those who then died of the pestilence were still visible to the west of the Loch of Monzievaird when Mr. Porteus drew up this statement.

In Perth and its neighbourhood, these huts, or pest-houses, were erected in remote places as soon as the disease manifested its presence. The following singular circumstance is narrated in the 13th volume of the third edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

> When the plague raged in Holland, in 1636, a young girl was seized with it; she had numerous spots or carbuncles, and was removed to a bower in her father's garden. Her lover, who was devotedly attached and betrothed to her, attended her as a nurse, night and day. He remained uninfected, and she recovered and was married to him.

When the disease was ravaging the immediate neighbourhood, and all these examples before them, nothing was more natural than that the Lynedoch family (who had, no doubt, many domestics) should erect a bower on Burnbrae; and without suspicion that they were to be the sole victims, the two young ladies may have been mainly instrumental in devising and erecting it. Every precaution may have been used by the household; but if Mary's lover came to her out of the vortex of the disease, nothing was more likely than that he would carry infection to her, and that she, along with the friend of her bosom, would become tenants of the bower that they had biggit. This does not violate the terms of the legend, but acquits the young ladies of selfishness and the other members of their families of cruel neglect. The mind revolts from the implied accusation that the parents left their children to perish, or that the girls left their homes to starve in the midst of a wood, while they were in perfect health, merely because they were in the neighbourhood of disease; but when the pestilence came, the law of submission would assert itself, and the affectionate and much beloved daughter would have to put on her final robe and wend her way to the little lazar-house that erewhile her tender hands had assisted in building on "yon burn-brae."

CHAPTER II.

THE IRELANDS OF MILNHOLE.

> "For why? because the good old rule
> Sufficeth them, the simple plan
> That they may take who have the power,
> And they may keep who can."
> WORDSWORTH.

THIS somewhat pestilent family had their residence for many years on the northern bank of the little river Shochie, about a mile to the westward of the parish church of Moneydie. Some relics of it are still scattered about, and there are men yet alive who remember a portion of the house still standing. It occupied a finely-sheltered nook of earth on the north-east corner of what is now the estate of

Blackpark, the property of John Steel, Esq., of Fairmount. What is known of these Irelands is mere floating tradition, the position they held did not entitle them to any more substantial record. They appear to have been to Logiealmond and Strathorde, what the Armstrongs were to the national border. Their little fortalice did not rival Gilnockie, and their following was very limited; but there were seven of themselves, great and tall like the children of Anak, and few could stand before them. Their fortunes seem to have culminated in William, the hero of the ballad, who had slain his neighbour, John Crighton of Kinvaid. The Crightons were proprietors of Kinvaid in 1584; Sir Patrick Crighton held both it and Strathorde at that date; and the latter fine estate went direct from him to the ancestor of the first Lord Nairne; but the former, although now in the same family possession, must have passed in the reign of Charles the First into the Bell family, otherwise their daughter Bessie could not have figured in the mournful Lynedoch dirge. At the same date the estate of Pittendynie, Regilmey and Balmblair was in the possession of the Gowrie family. The loose retribution which followed Ireland's murder of John Crighton need not be wondered at, for thirty-five years afterwards, Colin Pitscottie, the young heir of Luncarty, murdered Alexander Lambe in the house of Walter Whytock, smith at Benchill, "under silence and cloud of night," and the criminal law took no cognisance of it whatever. His parish Session, Redgorton, instituted certain feeble proceedings against him, while he was allowed to go at large, and treat them with indifference. They persevered, however, and held over his head the terrible retributive of *excommunication!* Eventually he appeared, and received sentence for this "cruelle murther," not of death, or banishment, or imprisonment, or any other of the varied punishments which the sanguinary laws of recent times have prescribed as the merited doom of all murderers; nothing so common. Mr. Pitscottie pleads guilty, and offers no extenuating circumstances; and the Presbytery of Perth lose sight of the murder itself, but "for removing of *the sclander* of that unhappy fact of the murther of umquhill Alexr Lambe, committit be him," they ordain him to appear and "mak his public repentance in the kirk of Redgorton in lyning clothes, and there exprimlie confess that he did the wicked and unnatural murther."

James the Sixth entertained a wholesome objection to the punishment of death in cases of murder, resulting possibly from a consciousness that he had himself made more than one royal escape, and that the *unnatural* and *cruel murthers* of the Earls of Murray and Gowrie and of Alexander Ruthven were in no sense extenuated. Pitscottie of Luncarty, and Ireland of Milnhole, were not singular in the impunity with which they committed deeds of the most crimson dye. All the waters of the Forth and of the Tay, nay, all the cunning of a deep and reckless career, will not exempt, or wash out a stain so deeply imbedded in blood as the murder of these three Scotchmen; and if the law, either negatively or positively, flinches from punishing those who are understood to be its constructors, how can it be expected that those who avowedly disregard its minor propositions, can be restrained from a defiance of its most fatal denunciations. Pitscottie of Luncarty saw his neighbour on the west murdered with impunity, and Ireland of Milnhole saw his neighbour on the north massacred for the penalty of a contemptible kirk ceremony, why should gentle John Crighton of Kinvaid stand in his way?—and he murders him accordingly. The ballad states with obvious truth that—

Nae law could reach them here ava.

So the seven brothers were sent to Edinburgh for trial, and their fate forms the subject of the ballad.

THE JUSTICE DEFEATED, OR IRELAND'S ESCAPE FROM EDINBURGH.

There were seven Oys into Milnhole,
It was weel kend they evil did,
Dippin' their hands in the innocent bluid
O' gentle John Crighton, the laird o' Kinvaid.

They're a' awa' to Edinburgh toun,
Nae law could reach them here ava,
There was three o' them was guilty found,
And four o' them did win awa.

Up it spak William Ireland's mither,
A frichtfu', warlock glower had she,
"There'll be little justice in the land
If an Ireland for a Crighton dee."

Up it spak John Crighton's mither,
An' a wae, wae, woman was she,
"The Ireland's bluid was gentle enough,
John Crighton's aye is dear to me."

Up it spak William Ireland's mither
A fyre-like low sprang frae her e'e,
"You are the judge o' my three sons,
An' a cruel judge ye're like to be.

"O! dinna ye mind, sir," she said,
"When ye lay in yon prison strang;
I stole the keys frae my faither' head,
An' hoo sae quietly I let you gang?"

Then up it spake the pauchty judge,
Hey an' an angry man was he,
"An' for these very words ye've spoken,
You and your three sons shall dee."

Up it spak William Ireland then,
Hey an' an angry man was he,
"If I maun die, I'll die but ance,
Sae bragged by nae man I will be."

A deadly blow he dealt the judge,
A little below the collar bane;
He jumped the Bartizan, thirty feet high!
An' ower the Firth hae swimmin' gane.

Before they got their little boats drawn,
An' souple chiels to row the while,
Wi' dauntless heart an' brawny arm,
He was before them lang three mile.

He's left them a' and hame to Milnhole,
Just as the day began to daw;
An' when he cam' to Bonny Milnhole,
Hame was to him nae hame ava.

An' he's climb'd up a high high tree,
'Twas a' to see what he could see:
There he spied his lordship comin',
Wi' many in his companie,

Some o' them ridin', some o' them rinnin',
An' some o' them in their coaches free,
An' as many followin' in their train
As a' the trees that grew for me.

"Och an' alas!" said William Ireland,
"There's peace in Scotland but nane for me,
My happy days are spent an' gane,
Milnhole ane mair noo canna gie,"

He tauld his lover ere he fled,
To Ireland owre the ragin' main,
The rose maun bud, an' bloom seven times
Before ye see my face again.

This achievement of William Ireland's eclipses all the Leanders, and Byrons, and Boytons of modern times; and the metrical narrator did well in informing posterity that old Dame Ireland had a "frightfu' warlock glower," and a fyre-like low in her e'e, for the feat could only be accomplished by a demoniac. He has certainly managed to conjure up the most grotesque group of supreme and minor officials that ever joined in a race. A perfect stampede of the justiciary court—wigs, gowns, batons, and indictments rushing frantically up the highland road after Master William Ireland, leaves Dick Turpin's famous ride to York and John Gilpin's journey far behind. When the like happens again "may I be there to see."

CHAPTER III.

"THE DUKE OF ATHOL."

"Affections, like the conscience, are rather to be led than drawn; and 'tis to be feared they that marry where they do not love will love where they do not marry."—

ANDREW FULLER.

THE DUKE OF ATHOL.

"I AM gaun awa', Jeanie,
I am gaun awa';
I am gaun ayont the seas,
I'm gaun sae far awa'"

"Whan will ye marry me, Jamie?
Whan will ye marry me?
Will ye tak' me to your countrie,
Or will ye marry me?"

"How can I marry thee, Jeanie?
How can I marry thee?
Whan I've a wife and bairns three.
Twa wad na weill agree."

"Wae be to your fause tongue, Jamie,
Wae be to your fause tongue;
Ye promised aye to marry me,
And ha'e a wife at hame!"

"If my wife wad dee, Jeanie,
And sae my bairns three:
I wad tak' ye to my ain countrie,
And married we wad be."

"O an' your head war sair Jamie,
O an' your head war sair;
I'd tak' the napkin frae my neck,
And tie doun your yellow hair,"

"I ha'e nae wife at a' Jeanie,
I ha'e nae wife at a',
I ha'e neither wife nor bairns three,
To try thy heart was a'.

"Blair in Athol 's mine Jeanie,
Blair in Athol 's mine;
Bonnie Dunkel' is whaur I dwell,
And the boats o' Garry's mine.

"Huntingtower is mine Jeanie,
Huntingtower is mine,
Huntingtower and Balnagower,
And Logierait is mine."

Every lover of our old Scottish lyrics must regret that so little has been recorded of this very interesting ballad. Mr. Kinloch states that he took his copy from the recitation of an idiot boy at Wishaw; but it has been hovering, with little variation, about Perthshire for many years. Half-a-century ago I made a pilgrimage to Dunsinane to hear it sung by a domestic of the late Mr. Meliss Nairne, who had the air and words completely at her command, but had no feeling for its plaintive story. Twenty years afterwards I had the pleasure of hearing it sung by the late Mr. William De la Rue, of London, in such a way as only an accomplished amateur could do it—every note of the lovely air, and every word of the finished lyric, distinctly but tenderly enunciated. In Mr. Kinloch's set the verse beginning "Huntingtower is mine," does not appear, which injures the dramatic equality and gives too great a preponderance to the dark side of the picture. It was not enough to tell the lady that he had engaged and then cast off, that after all he would marry her; he must show that he had a sort of right to put her so cruelly to the test. In the tragedy of "Macbeth" young Malcolm denounces himself to try the fealty of Macduff, and the young duke tried Jeanie's love for him by a similar questionable ruse. She came out of the crucible like refined gold, loving but resigned. She did not scruple to pronounce a woe on his false tongue and the barbarous inconsistency of his conduct, in promising to marry her while he had a wife at home; but burst forth in accents of undiminished affection, declaring her readiness to assist him in his day of trouble, even to the length of taking the napkin from her own neck and tying it round his aching head. Vengeance is no part of her resolve. She does not even second Jamie's affected desire that his wife and bairns "wad dee." Her longing to go with him had taken deep root in her heart, but she takes no notice of the chance so saucily suggested to her, submitting rather than looking for remedy.

The Duke finds that his experiment has borne fruit, and the lady, like Malcolm, feeling more for him, who "by his own interdiction stands accursed," than for her blighted hopes, is ready to exclaim, "Fare thee well! These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself have banished me from Scotland;" when the Duke, in breathless haste, cries—

"I ha'e nae wife at a' Jeanie.

Your highland homes are ready for you, I have castles and domains, and I lay them all at your feet. The boats o' Garry's mine."

If the narrative of a ballad, so very conversational, can be held in a fair degree truthful, the hero and heroine are easily found. There never was but one James Duke of Athole; he courted Jane Lannoy, a handsome young widow, sister of a Surrey baronet, Sir James Frederick, whose ancestor had been Lord Mayor of London. Duke James was proprietor of Huntingtower, as well as the other properties named in the ballad. So if it is conceded that he had asked the lady in marriage and gained her consent before he made her thoroughly acquainted with his position in life, the ballad is fairly sketched in. The Duke is from home, probably in London; in the neighbourhood of which his lady-love, the beautiful Jane Lannoy lived. The widow of a rich Hammersmith proprietor, may be held an inferior match for a great Scotch Duke in our day, and the disparity may have been greater in the reign of William and Mary. The lover did not appear to put much value on that fact however, but he had a wholesome dread of his rank being the captivating force, and resolved to test the lady's love for himself and her temper under reverse. This is the ground-work of the little drama. The question put by the affianced lady is an extraordinary stroke of nature, worthy of our great dramatist himself. Her lord dashes at once into his plot, "I am gaun awa', Jeanie, ayont the seas." Without an apologetic note, preface or preamble, she replies to the announcement by the point-blank interrogation, "Whan will ye marry me, Jamie?" Ladies are forbidden by the laws of pre-nuptial etiquette, to put the primary question; but they claim a right, after all has been settled, to have a word in fixing the day.

The lady was no doubt startled and excited by her lover's strange interrogation, or she would have detected his hollow scheme. Bigamy does not seem to have awakened his solicitude at all, but if his position had been real, he would certainly have pled it first. The assumed callousness of restricting the danger to a problem of two wives not agreeing, might have shown the unconscious fair that her lover's plot was too thin to hold water. He makes too little of the crime he accuses himself of having committed, and shows too much levity under such deep alleged guilt. That is the weak point of his device. The Duke was satisfied, however, and Jane Lannoy became Duchess of Athole. She bore the Duke two daughters, through one of whom—the Baroness Strange—the direct line was perpetuated down to 1846. Whether Duke James was of a romantic turn or not does not appear; but few men who have been twice married have had both their love-makings celebrated in song, and not in ordinary songs, but in lyrics that would do honour to any station in life, or to any kindred or tongue. However successful the Duke may have thought himself in probing the sentiments of Jeanie Lannoy, Dr. Austin tells him, in very unequivocal terms, that he had not been quite so successful in the case of Jeanie Drummond.

> A star and garter have more art,
> Than youth, a true and faithful heart:
> For empty titles we must part,
> For glittering show, she has left me, O.

SECTION SIXTH.

THE
PERTHSHIRE DRUMMOND
BALLADS.

THE PERTHSHIRE DRUMMOND BALLADS.

CHAPTER I.

BONNIE MARGARET DRUMMOND.

"*Tayis Bank.*"

> "For aught that ever I could read,
> Could ever hear by tale or history,
> The course of true love never did run smooth."
> SHAKESPEARE.

PERTHSHIRE, whether as an integral portion of the kingdom of Scotland, or the home of a stirring domestic community, has no better exponent than the memorials of one of its own families. The standard of the Drummonds has been foremost in its battles, and their mansions have studded its landscapes. Few Perthshire families but have at one time or other been connected with them. Their influence has been great, their loyalty inflexible; and, according to Cultoquhey, their ire a thing to be held in dread. They have filled every office in the state, from the throne to the clerkship of the kitchen, and in the Church, from the Archbishopric of York to the parsonage of Kinnoull. They supplied lords in waiting at Holyrood, and butlers at Stobhall, Lord Provosts to Edinburgh, and peers, sheriff, clerks, and town drummers to Perth; where numbers were wanted they never fell short, and where blood was to be spilt their hands were seldom slack. They were sufferers in two of the great Perthshire tragedies, and aggressors in the other two. They stuck pertinaciously to Rome and to the Stuarts, hence from time to time their estates have been put in jeopardy, alienated or confiscated, and as a natural consequence, they have not lacked historians. In more modern times Lord Strathallan has recorded their prowess; Dr. Malcolm has extolled them; they have been defended by Henry Drummond, and sneered at by Fraser Tytler; and more remotely, they figure largely in the pages of Holinshed, Drummond of Hawthornden, Buchanan and Robertson.

In the reign of James the Fourth the Drummonds came forward more prominently than during any previous reign. That prince, though about the best of his race, partook of the moral obliquity which stagnates over them all. The spirit of filial indifference so common to them was strongly exemplified in him; yet his affections were ardent, his attachment to his distracted country devoted and generous; and when, in the lapse of years, the circumstances of his father's death presented themselves to him in all their naked atrocity, he became remorseful and penitent, and to testify the anguish of his mind, he girt his body with an iron chain, to which he added a link every third year. During the time his father was engaged building the noble halls and Chapel Royal at Stirling Castle, the ill-fated lady whose tale I am about to tell, then in her fifteenth year, was introduced at court by her father. The susceptible young Duke of Rothesay, who had been little else than a prisoner in the hands of his father's turbulent nobles, fell in love with the young beauty, and paid her what civility the strict surveillance of Shaw of Sauchie would permit. She returned to Stobhall before the catastrophe at Sauchieburn, with the fascinations of the handsome, chivalrous young Prince impressed on her youthful heart. History furnishes few instances of beautiful women—whether high bred or nursed in the lap of poverty—successfully resisting the allurements of the royal diadem; many untainted young lives have fallen before it. But before emphatically designating Margaret Drummond as the mistress of James the Fourth, the historian should mark the difference between the remorseless meanderings of the court *intriguante* and the venturous step of the confiding young maiden, who hazards her all on the faith of an ineffectual ceremony, setting not only her fair fame, but her life on the hazard of the die. Margaret Drummond, girl as she was, had before her the example of her ancestor, Annabella Drummond, who became the recognised queen of Robert the Third, although married to him while he was Earl of Carrick, and heir-apparent, as James now was. Although many authorities condemn the step that she eventually took, the Drummonds must be silent, for from that step, false or true, the race has maintained its vitality for four hundred years. The Drummonds and other Scotch families who have sprung from the mysterious bridal of James the Fourth and bonnie Margaret Drummond, are now beyond record; a list of them goes deep into the Scottish peerage, and includes almost every family of distinction in the county of Perth.

The Castle of Stobhall, whose turreted gables and weather-worn chimneys tower above the wooded southern bank of the Tay, eight miles above Perth, was the original Perthshire mansion of the Drummonds. They took possession of it about the year 1360. For many years they had held a high position in the west. They were thanes of Lennox and proprietors of vast estates between the Leven and the Gairloch, but quarrelling with the Monteiths, King David the Second, to obtain peace, procured a marriage between Sir John Drummond and Mary, the eldest daughter of Sir William Montifex. With her he obtained Cargill and other estates in Strathmore and Strathearn, and took up his residence at Stobhall. She bore him four sons and four daughters. The eldest daughter, Annabella, became the queen of Robert the Third, and was mother of the first Scottish duke, the ill-fated Rothesay, who figures so prominently in "The Fair Maid of Perth," and the talented, but no less ill-fated, James the First, whose death in the monastery of the Blackfriars forms one of the four Perthshire tragedies. The Drummond family continued to reside at Stobhall for many years. Camden says, in his account of Strathearn: "The women of the family of Drummond, for charming beauty and complexion, are beyond all others, inasmuch as they have had kings for their admirers." In the year 1439 Lady Murray Drummond bore a son, John, who afterwards became First Lord Drummond, a man of vast merit and singular destiny, "distinguished," says one historian," for honour, fidelity and reputation." He fought for his sovereign and conquered; assisted in making laws and administering justice; and was four times sent to England on missions of peace. In his long life he had served four kings, and before he died he saw twenty-five of his descendants wearing coronets. The troubles of life which naturally arose from such an extended connection bore heavily on him. His son was taken from his castle and beheaded, for an affair in which historians agree that he was only a remonstrating participant, his three daughters were poisoned in his own house, while he could afford them no protection; and the turbulent spirit of the parties alleged to be implicated smothered all attempts at reprisal.

Lord Drummond's eldest daughter, Margaret, was born about the year 1472, at Stobhall. Her story is complicated, and has been much vexed by historical conflict; but I find it established by the evidence of all the historians who have gone into the matter without prejudice, that she became the affianced wife of James the Fourth, and lived long with him in vain expectation of the time when she would be publicly recognised as his queen. This view of the matter was little disturbed until it was denied by certain historians in the reign of the fourth George, whose minds were naturally tinctured with the libertinism of the period, and who viewed the keeping of a mistress as one of the recognised institutions of civilised life; an era when, by tacit way-giving, the nation was prepared for any vice by the example of its aristocracy, and when the broad wall which separates moral rectitude from licensed wantonness was razed to its foundation.

The ballad literature of a people may not be strictly illustrative of its general history, but it invariably fixes, for good or evil, on some great feature of it. This is pre-eminently the case with the Scottish ballad. Our border minstrelsy makes clear the turbulent character of the dwellers on our southern marches, acquired, no doubt, by their contiguity to the quondam foe. Our Jacobite ballads are the spontaneous product of a loyalty that could not be suppressed, whether right or wrong, in the direction it took. As a conclusion from the same premisses, our love-songs are truthful, and, if contemporary, are more to be depended on in matters of domestic life than the opinions of prejudiced historians, whose era dates after three hundred years. "Tayis Bank," or "Lord Drummond's beautiful Daughter," is one of the oldest ballads known to exist. We are, as usual, much indebted to Mr. David Laing for aiding in its recovery. The ballad, if cleared of alliteration, would be a creditable production for its day, but its rhythmic motion is very much impeded by constant straining after what is mere trick, however cleverly managed. The description of the park of Stobhall, with its beeches and yews, its flowers, and singing-birds, its dun deer, hart and hind, as they appeared on a May morning, harmonises beautifully with the advent of the youthful Margaret as she appears in the glade, all alone. What a mass of love-making, jealousy, political contention, and woe were about to concentrate themselves round the head of that innocent nymph of the wood! James the Fourth was an eagle that knew his quarry, and this "white polished pearl" fell into his toils.

"Tayis Bank" may be accepted as a glimpse into the personal history of Margaret Drummond before she was presented at the Court of James the Third at Stirling:—

TAYIS BANK.

1.

Quhen Tayis bank was blumyt brycht,
With blosumes brycht and bred,
By that riuer that ran doun rycht,
Vndir the ryss I red;
The merle meltit with all her mycht
And mirth in mornying maid,
Throw solace, sound, and semely sicht,
Alswth a sang I said.

2.

Vndir that bank, quhair bliss had bene,
I bownit me to abyde;
Ane holene, hevinly hewit grene,
Rycht heyndly did me hyd;
The sone schyne our the schawis schene
Full semely me besyd;
In bed of blumes bricht besene
A sleip cowth me ourslyd.

3.

About all blumet was my bour
With blosumes broun and blew,
Orfret with mony fair fresch flour,
Helsum of hevinly hew;
With schakeris of the schene dew schour
Schynnyng my courtenis schew,
Arrayit with a rich vardour
Of natouris werkis new.

4.
Rasing the birdis fra thair rest,
  The reid sun raiss with rawis;
The lark sang loud, quhill, liycht nycht lest,
  A lay of luvis lawis ;
The nythingall woik of hir nest
  Singing the day vpdawis ;
The mirthfull maveiss merriest
  Schill schowttit throw the schawis.

5.
All flouris grew that firth within.
  That cowth haif in mynd ;
And in that flud all fische with fyn,
  That creat wer be kynd ;
Vnder the rise the ra did ryn,
  Our ron, our rute, our rynd,
The dvn deir dansit with a dyn,
  And herdis of hairt and hynd.

6.
Wod winter with his wallow and wynd,
  But weir, away wes went ;
Brasit about with wyld wodbynd
  Wer bewis on the bent ;
Allone vndar the lusty lynd,
  I saw ane lusum lent,
That fairly war so fare to fynd,
  Vnder the firmament.

7.
Scho wes the lustiest on lyve,
  Allone lent on a land,
And farest figour, be set. Syve,
  That evir in firth I fand.
Her comely cullour to discryve
  I dar nocht tak on hand ;
Moir womanly borne of a wyfe
  Wes neuer, I dar warrand.

8.
To creatur that wes in cair,
  Or cauld of crewelty,
A blicht blenk of hir vesage bair
  Of baill his bute mycht be ;
Hir hyd, hir hew, hir hevenly hair
  Mycht havy hairtis uphie ;
So angelik vnder the air
  Neuir wicht I saw with E.

9.
The blosumes that were blycht and brycht
  By hir wer blacht and blew ;
Scho gladit all the foull of flicht
  That in the forrest flew ;

Scho mycht haif comfort king or knicht
  That ever in cuntre I knew
As waill, and well of warldly wicht
  In womanly vertew.

10.

Hir cullour cleir, her countinance,
  Hir cumly cristall ene,
Hir portratour of most plesance,
  All pictour did prevene.
Off every vertew to avance
  Quhen ladeis prasit bene,
Rychtest in my remembrance
  That rose is rutit grene.

11.

This myld meik mensuet Mergrite,
  This perle polist most quhyte,
Dame Natouris deir dochter discreit,
  The dyament of delyt;
Never formit wes to found on feit
  Ane figour more perfyte,
Nor non on mold that did hir meit,
  Mycht mend hir wirth a myte.

12.

This myrthfull maid to meit I went,
  And merkit furth on mold;
Bot sone within a wane scho went,
  Most hevinly to behold;
The bricht sone with his bemys blent
  Vpoun the bertis bold,
Farest vnder the firmament
  That formit wes on fold.

13.

A paradyce that place but peir
  Wes plesant to my sicht;
Of forrest, and of fresch reveir,
  Of firth, and fowll of flicht,
Of birdis, bath on bonk and breir,
  With blumes breck and bricht,
As hevin in to this erd doun heir,
  Hertis to hald on hicht.

14.

So went this womanly away
  Amang thir woddis wyd,
And I to heir thir birdis gay
  Did in a bonk abyd;
Quhair ron and ryss raiss in aray
  Endlang the reuer syd:
This hapnit me in a time in May
  In till a morning tyd.

15.

The reuer throw the ryse cowth rowt
And roseris raiss on raw;
The schene birdis full schill cowth schowt
Into that semely schaw;
Joy was within and joy without,
Vnder that vnlenkest waw,
Quhair Tay ran down with stremis stout
Full strecht vnder Stobschaw.

FFINIS.

The authorship of this very early poem is, by some writers, attributed to James the Fourth himself, and it no doubt contains evidence of high paternity. The thirteenth stanza is obviously the production of a sportsman, and the moral reflection by which it is wound up is eminently characteristic of James in his early days. The rank he held as a man of letters, and his love of disguised adventure, have led to his being named as the author of more than one ballad. Besides, the style of "Tayis bank" fixes its date as coming sixty years after the "Christis Kirk" of James the First, and thirty years before the "Gaberlunzie" of James the Fifth.

In 1488, the Drummonds were still resident at Stobhall, for although Lord Drummond had been raised to the peerage, and had purchased the estates of Concraig, Pitkellony, Strageath, and Innerpeffray, he had no residence on any of them, and was far from the Court, then assembled at Stirling. But there is a floating tradition that when James the Fourth came that year to be crowned at Scone, the Drummond family rode to the ceremony, a distance of five miles, on ten richly caparisoned horses, led by twenty grooms, and followed by ten retainers in livery, also on horseback. This corresponds with the number of the family capable of riding—the father and mother and eight children. Margaret was then in her sixteenth year; and although James is understood to have become attached to her while he was Duke of Rothesay, it does not appear that he had made any marriage proposals till after the coronation. One writer says that she was lady-in-waiting on Queen Margaret, but that could hardly be, for she was only a girl of thirteen when Queen Margaret died. The coronation meeting seems to have sealed the affections of the youthful pair. All contemporary authorities say that James formed a marriage contract with "the Lady Margaret without consulting his council," which shows clearly that the contract was not entered into till after he had ascended the throne, and thereby acquired a council.

On returning to Stirling, from Scone, James confirmed to Lord Drummond the charter which his father had given him, conveying the various offices which he had purchased along with the Strathearn estates, and three years thereafter granted him a license to build Drummond Castle. Then the unbroken family left the home of their youth and the ill-fated Margaret took the first step in her journey towards a destiny which blighted her young life, and made her the butt of the captious historian, although originally "mild and courteous, of figure most perfect, heavenly to behold, and fairest under the firmament."

The handsome and intellectual young sovereign, the bustling and wealthy peer, the beautiful and innocent Margaret, had each and all of them only to cast their thoughts back eighty years—to the time when Robert, the Third King of Scotland, James's great-great-grandfather, had gone a-wooing to the castle of Stobhall, where he won the heart and hand of the fair Annabella (Margaret's great-great-grand-aunt)—to be encouraged in the prospect of a match between the lovers, ending in their mutual occupation of the throne, and nothing could be more natural on the part of Lord Drummond than tacitly to allow the king to woo his daughter, seeing the position obtained by Sir John's daughter, who was not so high in rank nor so rich as his child Margaret. But the nobles were jealous of these Drummonds; and when Margaret was led into Court by her doating father, they set their faces against a result which their sagacity saw was likely to ensue. James could not brook delay, however; and, without consulting these remonstrants, he betrothed his much loved Margaret, trusting that time would work a change. He waited thirteen years for that change, and obstinately adhered to his contract; and when the nobles saw their scheme of a marriage with the Princess Margaret Tudor was hopeless as long as the Lady Margaret Drummond was in the way, they took an effectual method of gaining their end.

CHAPTER II.

BONNIE MARGARET DRUMMOND—*continued.*

> "The hand of God hung heavy here,
> And lightly touched foul tyrannie:
> It struck the righteous to the ground,
> And lifted the destroyers hie.
> 'But there's a day,' quo' my God in prayer,
> 'When righteousness shall bear the gree;
> I'll rake the wicked low i' the dust,
> And wauken in bliss the gude man's e'e.'"
>
> ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

However justly James the Fourth may be accused of reckless gallantries, his nature was far from cruel; he was the victim of his high position, and, in the affair with Margaret Drummond, he would, no doubt, have prevented the foul catastrophe; but it was perpetrated without his knowledge. His nobles made him the innocent cause of his father's death; and if his consent could have been obtained to that of his affianced bride, it would have been to them highly satisfactory. But they did not dare to name it to him; and it was not till after her death that their stratagem of marrying him to Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry the Seventh, became fully known to him. When the first act of the drama was performed, James seems to have grown indifferent, and, surrendering himself into their hands, he espoused Margaret Tudor, and paid twenty pounds a year to two priests for saying masses for the soul of Margaret Drummond.

The date of the king's betrothal to Margaret Drummond is not known; but in the year 1495 a daughter was born, and, without scruple, she was received into the king's household. She was baptised as the king's daughter, Margaret Stuart, and was in her seventh year, progressing well with her education, when a circumstance occurred which utterly changed her apparent destiny, and for years made her rue the day that she was born.

Lord Drummond's daughter Euphemia, Lady Fleming, was on a visit to Drummond Castle, where her sister Margaret had permanent apartments, awaiting her delayed espousals. Lord Drummond was absent, but David Drummond, of Milnab, the family physician, and Miss Sybilla Drummond, a younger daughter of the family were in the Castle. No suspicion of evil arose to that devoted household. The July sun shone up the valley of Strathearn with his usual splendour, the cattle reposed on the pastures below, and on the terrace the mower whetted his scythe. No foreboding voice whispered from the kitchen beware! and when the ominous breakfast-bell rang, Margaret Drummond sent for her two sisters and the doctor, that she might have their company to breakfast. They had not proceeded far with the meal, when a strange feeling came over them all, followed by nausea and acute pain. Margaret rose first and staggered to her bed-room. The Castle was alarmed; and the other sufferers were carried to their apartments. Before sundown the three sisters were dead, and the doctor reduced to a state of helplessness from which he never quite recovered.

Lord Drummond was summoned to his Castle, where he found his three beautiful children stretched in the chamber of death. We are not told what means were taken to expiscate this terrible deed, but it was believed in all ranks of the community that Margaret Drummond was the only victim desired. King James still continued to spurn a marriage with the Princess Margaret of England, conscious of his binding connection with Margaret Drummond, and her removal became the object of the minions of court, and in those days, when they set their minds on the perpetration of a deed, however black, its accomplishment was certain. Lord Drummond buried his three daughters in separate graves under the pavement of the chancel of Dunblane Cathedral. After great trouble, expense and delay, he procured from Italy three slabs of marble, each upwards of a ton in weight, and had them placed over their graves. Some years ago that portion of Dunblane Cathedral underwent great alterations, and the marble slabs were removed; but the Earl of Perth heard of the step, and very properly had them replaced. Quite recently I had the melancholy satisfaction of laying my hand on these memorials of a deed that led to the union of England and Scotland, although in itself covered with the lava of the bottomless pit.

Lady Margaret Stuart remained at Drummond Castle some time after her mother's death. Her father visited her once, and eventually came and took her to his own palace at Stirling, where she remained until after his marriage to the Princess Margaret of England. She was then removed to Edinburgh Castle, where she was known as "The young Lady Margaret."

In matters matrimonial, James seems to have had the Gordons of Huntly, notwithstanding their immense possessions and influence, entirely in his power. In 1496 he married the Lady Katherine Gordon to the handsome impostor Perkin Warbeck; and when his own daughter Margaret reached womanhood he married her to Lord John Gordon, son of Alexander, third Earl of Huntly and grandson of Annabella Stuart, daughter of King James the First.

Lord John Gordon died in 1517, and Lady Margaret afterwards married Alexander, Duke of Albany, and after bearing him a daughter she became a second time a widow, and again took up her temporary residence at Drummond Castle. Her life had hitherto been exemplary though changeable; but she was now, by her marriage with Sir John Drummond, of Innerpeffray, to assume that position, which to this hour has exercised such an extended influence over her race.

The Castle of Drummond stands with imposing grandeur on the lofty western ridge of Strathearn, and commands the valley to the root of the Sidlaws, but in the olden time the family had numerous other residences. The student of local biography, or admirer of sylvan beauty who half a century ago followed the course of the Earn four miles below Crieff, would come to another abode of the Drummonds, an old castle with the roof entire and the stone winding stair as it was trodden three hundred years before. The broad river rendered gloomy by the shadows of trees, running close to its walls, and the mouldy vaults savouring of its presence; the everlasting hush of the water as it progressed over its rugged bed; the great broad-leaved chestnuts and sycamores drooping to the rank grass; the profusion of daffodils and wild roses, with the endless paraphernalia of decaying grandeur, produced a feeling of intense and sad interest. Then away up the avenue to another residence and the burial-place of the Drummonds, grew ash and oak of prodigious dimensions, forming a Gothic temple half a mile in length, carpeted with velvet grass, and rivalling Hampton Court and St. Cloud. This classic little nook of earth, now the property of Captain Drummond, of the Kinnoull family, contains besides the two decayed mansions and the family aisle, a library of mediæval literature and a Roman camp.

To this sylvan retreat Sir John Drummond, grandson of Lord Drummond, who had obtained the estate of Innerpeffray from the Mercers, brought home his lofty bride. She was his own cousin, a handsome young widow, albeit twice married. She was a king's daughter, a duchess dowager, and a baroness. Clever and deeply experienced, she had now come to take a part in the business of life, which she performed in a way that brought honour and high distinction to the name she bore. This branch of the Drummonds, springing from Bonnie Margaret's connection with James the Fourth, contributed more to the extension of the family connexions than all Lord Drummond's other children. Lady Margaret Stuart's eldest son, whom she bore to John Lord Gordon, became fourth Earl of Huntly and first Earl of Moray. Her eldest daughter, by the same marriage, became Countess of Sutherland, and the second, Countess of Athole and grandmother to Lady Lovat and Lady Saltoun. Her daughter by her second marriage, to the Duke of Albany, became Lady Drummond and ancestress of the Drummond Castle family, in all its branches.

Lady Margaret Stuart, now Lady Drummond of Innerpeffray, had five fine daughters to Sir John. The family crest is a nest of young ravens, and their motto, "Lord have mercy." What this originated from is not easily divined, but if good Sir John uttered it as a pathetic prayer over his five young daughters, it appears to have been heard for while his sister, the beautiful Sybilla, and his aunt, Bonnie Margaret, had been the victims of crowned heads, his nest of young ravens preserved their plumage, and amidst the wooded glades of green Innerpeffray were wooed and won by the noblest of the land. From Agnes, the eldest, came the families of Eglinton, Winton and Sempill; from Isabel, the second, those of Loudon and Moira, Breadalbane, Lennox, Kilmarnock, Errol and Kircudbright; from Margaret, the third daughter, those of Elphinstone, Balmerino and Findlater; from Jean, the fourth daughter, those of Kinfauns, Madderty, Merchiston, and Strathallan; and from Elizabeth, the fifth daughter, the Drummonds of Boreland, Balloch, and Drumduie.

The fourth child, Jean, was married to Chisholm of

Cromlix, and their daughter Jean became first Lady Madderty, and inherited the lands of Innerpeffray as her mother's portion; their grandson, David, third Lord Madderty, was a literary and public-spirited man, and founded and endowed the library at Innerpeffray. He married, first, Miss Alison Crichton, of Airleywight; and, second, Lady Beatrix Graham, sister to the great Montrose; and whose Bible, bound in crimson velvet, is still preserved in the library.

Amongst the numerous members of the Drummond family that are buried here, a special interest attaches itself to Lord John, the first Baron, Lady Anna Gordon Drummond, and William, first Viscount of Strathallan. The first named left behind him a deed of advice to his successors, which places him in a very high position as a man of the world, a sincere Christian, and the affectionate father of a family. John, second Earl, left a manuscript in his own hand, giving a minute and very touching account of his daughter-in-law, Lady Anna Drummond's last moments. "She bid farewell to her father-in-law and to her husband, with wonderful kindness, and passionate expressions. Then calling for her children, she blessed them, and recommended them to God, seeing she was no more to help them, telling us who were about her, that in place of one Anna, who was now to leave them, she had left another young Anna in her room; and all this she did without the least sign of trouble or disorder. The minister after this prayed; then she herself, so pertinently and with such earnest expressions, that no person could speak better. She lay a while very quiet, and then yielded up her spirit most devotedly to our Redeemer."

This amiable lady's children were descendants, both by father and mother's side, of bonnie Margaret Drummond. The elder son James became the Chancellor Duke of Perth, and the second was created Earl of Melfort. The latter nobleman was great-great-grandfather of the late Lady Willoughby D'Eresby, and also, by his second marriage, great-great-grandfather of George Drummond, present Earl of Perth and Melfort.

William, first Viscount Strathallan (referred to above) is described in the manuscript memoirs of Cameron of Lochiel as "an honest man, a faithful and sincere friend, and an incorruptible patriot." His lordship held the important office of General of the Forces for Scotland, and is well known as genealogist of the family. Principal Monro of Edinburgh preached his funeral sermon, which was published in Edinburgh five years afterwards. Hearers of sermons in these highly evangelical days will be startled by the following quotation :—

> My Lords and Gentlemen,—So far have I discoursed of this consolatory argument to ease our minds upon this sorrowful occasion. But you see another text—viz., the earthly remains of the noble Viscount of Strathallan. The generous inclinations he derived from his ancestors began to appear very early : a family too well known in Britain for everything that is great, ancient, loyal, and generous, to need any particular descant of mine," &c., &c.

This Viscount Strathallan was the grandson of James, first Lord Madderty, and great grandson of Lady Margaret Stuart, daughter of James the Fourth and Bonnie Margaret Drummond.

CHAPTER III.

BONNIE MARGARET DRUMMOND—*continued.*

"Full of contradictions, vacillations, inconsistencies, the little peevish perplexities of this ignorant life, mists which the morning without a night can only clear away."—
CHARLES DICKENS.

AFTER a lapse of nearly four centuries, it would be presumptuous to attempt setting up any unimpeachable theory of the life and character of Lord Drummond's daughter, commonly styled " bonnie Margaret ; " but there can be no presumption in examining, in 1879, what was written in 1824. Mr. Fraser Tytler's History of Scotland has attained wide popularity, but that is no conclusive evidence of its veracity ; and it will not be difficult to show that the portion of it which applies to this ill-starred young lady, her sovereign, and her father, is not only absurdly wrong in its statement of facts, but one-sided in its inferences and unscholarly in construction.

First—at page 20 of volume iv. (first edition), this sentence occurs :—

> The marriage treaty was concluded and signed in the palace of

Richmond on the 24th of January, 1502. It was stipulated that as the Princess had not yet completed her twelfth year her father should not be obliged to send her to Scotland before the first of September, 1503.

The date of the contract between James the Fourth and Henry the Seventh's daughter is correctly stated here, but the stipulations are utterly wrong. This princess was born in the year 1489, and was consequently in her *fourteenth* year, and the marriage was not postponed to the 1st of September, 1503, but to the 8th of August, 1502. Six pages farther on, Mr. Tytler states that,

> On the 8th of August, 1502, the ceremony of the marriage took place, while Margaret was in her fourteenth year.

Surprising statement! a lady who is in her twelfth year on the 24th of January is in her fourteenth on the 8th of August of the same year! Then, in the great note at the end of volume iii. he says:—

> Besides this it is shown by a deed preserved in the "Fœdera," vol. xii, page 787, that James, previous to the catastrophe of Margaret Drummond, had entered into an indenture binding himself to marry the Princess Margaret of England.

This statement is dishonest beyond conception. Margaret Drummond is not once named in the indenture referred to, simply because, as every student of history knows, she died in the early autumn of 1501, and the indenture with Margaret Tudor is dated 24th January, 1502, six months after Margaret Drummond had been finally disposed of.

Second. Mr. Tytler in attempting, through the fog of his prejudice, to arrive at a conclusive estimate of the circumstances which led to the death of Margaret Drummond, says, at page 59 of vol. iv.,

> And reviving the alarm of the nobles, who adopted these horrid means of removing the object of their fears.

It is impossible to conceive a more unqualified charge than this; yet in the great note already referred to he says,

> The story tells more like some dreadful domestic tragedy than a conspiracy to prevent the king's marriage to a commoner.

This latter passage not only contradicts the first, but is in itself full of prejudice, and originates a monstrous proposal: Margaret Drummond was not a commoner, but one of the *noblesse*. Could this historian think for a moment that if the murder of the three Drummonds had been a "domestic tragedy," it would have been allowed to pass? Did James allow William Drummond to pass after the massacre at Monzievaird? Does the fact that no steps were taken, by disinterment or otherwise, not show a stronger power than can be found under one domestic roof? The nobles who adopted "these horrid means," no doubt, calculated the result. They gagged justice, cajoled the king, and proceeded in their unholy schemes.

Third. Mr. Tytler's book is full of weak prejudices, not only against one entire class of authorities, and many historical characters, but against the very language in which he writes. He discards the past participle altogether. At page 147 of vol. iii. he writes,—

> The scene was so piteous that it is said to have shook the nerves of the ruffian himself.

and again at page 34 of vol. iv.—

> But James' power, though shook was too deeply rooted, &c.

But I am not here to criticise Mr. Tytler's book, but to inquire into its authenticity in narrating the story of this much maligned lady. If the author had confined himself to what was really history, however meagre his page may have been, it would have been interesting and useful so far as it went; but deductions are not history, be they ever so logical; and if they are loose and reckless, it is impossible to respect the work of which they form a part.

Fourth. Mr. Tytler refuses pertinaciously to listen to the many authorities who have satisfied themselves that James betrothed Margaret Drummond before she submitted to his embraces, and reduces the complicated story to the following concise shape at page 28 of vol. iv. of his work.

> It has been already noticed that James, whose better qualities were tarnished by an indiscriminate devotion to his pleasures, had, among other temporary amours, selected as his mistress Lady Margaret Drummond, the daughter of a noble house which had already given a Queen to Scotland. At first a little anxiety was felt at such a connexion, the nobles in the plurality of the royal favourites imagined there existed a safeguard for the royal honour, and looked with confidence to James fulfilling his engagement with England."

This is a most extraordinary jumble of absurdity, contradiction, and error. James had selected a mistress, but his doing so did not "*at first*" injure their confidence in his fulfilling his engagement with England. What engagement? When James selected this daughter of a noble house as his mistress, the Princess Margaret Tudor was four years old! and Tytler himself informs us that when the engagement took place, she was in her twelfth year. Poor James! What other engagement had he with England? He is here represented as indiscriminate and select. Thirteen years of close attachment is called a temporary amour. Margaret Drummond is represented as inimical to this engagement with England. Poor woman! Six months before James entered into any nuptial engagement with England in the person of Margaret Tudor, she was lying below the blue pavement in the chancel of Dunblane Cathedral.

Fifth. Tytler says that "Margaret Drummond's obsequious father encouraged her connection with King James knowing it to be illicit." A father who panders his daughter's virtue is a fiend; and if the accusation is at variance with the other features of a man's character, it ought never to be made; yet this loose historian, with a single stroke of his pen, changes one of the best names that graces the pages of Scottish History into that of one of the refuse of the earth. Before characterising the connection as illicit and wicked, and stating that it was connived at by an obsequious father, Mr. Tytler was bound to inquire into the circumstances which led to its formation, but this he declines to do, and treats the guilt of parties as a foregone conclusion; thus violating all the candour with which the uncertified historian is expected to treat the illustrious dead. The daughter's position may be a fair subject for discussion; but to implicate the father in her alleged waywardness is gross injustice.

Lord Drummond was made a Privy Councillor, and got an addition to his estate, because he had defeated the rebel army at Tillymoss and established the permanent peace of the kingdom. No obsequiousness in this! He encouraged the marriage of his grandson, the Earl of Angus, with Margaret Tudor; and when Angus was brought up before the offended Council, Lord Drummond thought that the Lyon King delivered his charge with indiscreet boldness, and dealt him a box on the ear, for which he was imprisoned in Blackness Castle, and his estates confiscated. Most people would consider this outrageous rather than obsequious. Tytler accuses the nobles, holding office, of obsequiousness also, while they persistently declined to sanction the king's marriage to Margaret Drummond, and the Court with the same weakness, while (according to the Gairdrum manuscript) her mother scolded King James, when he came to Drummond Castle for her son William, and said such bitter things to him, that he refused to listen to any application for the young man's life. Wonderful obsequiousness! And behold the end! These obsequious minions prevented the king from publicly acknowledging his espoused wife. And, in the thickening of the drama, when the king had discarded Janet Kennedy and Mary Boyd to make way for his affianced Margaret, these obsequious minions adopted the only method at their command, and for ever silenced the young lady who had so long thwarted them.

Sixth. It was a very simple matter for Mr. Tytler, who had the union of England and Scotland before him as an accomplished fact, to characterise the marriage of James the Fourth and Margaret Tudor, which no doubt led to it, as "the wise policy." But James's nobles were no prophets, and it is at best a cruel expediency to do evil that good may come of it a hundred years hence. Tytler says:—

> The wise policy of a union between the Scottish King and the Princess Margaret (Tudor) had suggested itself to the councillors of both countries some years before, but an indisposition on the part of James to interrupt by more solemn ties the love which he bore to his mistress—Margaret Drummond—had for a while put an end to all negotiations on the subject.

The wisdom of the policy is rendered highly equivocal by its results. Retrospectively it had led the young king to live a life of gross immorality. If he had been allowed to marry Margaret Drummond there is no valid reason to doubt that he would have lived a life of as marked continence as any of his race. But he was compelled to live with his affianced wife as his mistress, and, much as he loved her, he felt that his character had lost its moral *prestige*, and, like other men in the same position, he became reckless, and, instead of one mistress, had as many as four at one time. Prospectively, when Margaret Drummond was disposed of, James married Henry the Seventh's daughter, thereby implementing the "wise policy;" and what resulted? A very few years afterwards England and Scotland became deeper embroiled than ever, and poor

James had to supplement the "wise policy" with his life. His brother-in-law Henry the Eighth, invaded France, and James sent a herald remonstrating with him, who brought back the following insolent answer: "I have heard nothing from him but what I expected from a king a despiser of God's and man's law. As for myself I will not give over a war so happily begun for any threat, neither do I care much for that man's friendship, of whose inconstancy I have so often had experience, nor for the power of his kingdom and ambitious poverty." This is what Mr. Tytler's "wise policy" led to. Had James been allowed to proclaim Margaret Drummond as his queen we possibly would never have heard of Flodden, and our maidens had been spared the tears they have shed over "the flowers o' the forest." James the Fourth was one of the best of the Stuarts. He was brave, generous and accomplished. The moral turpitude I have referred to must be debited to that policy which is the peculiar curse of kingship, and which in ordinary life would be spurned and contemned. The mendicant pleads for an alms; he is clad in rags and sleeps under a hedge; but he *will* have a wife of his own choosing. Every citizen of the world, whether he be a subject of the Queen of Great Britain or of her of Madagascar, claims to judge for himself in that matter; and if a privilege so much valued and so generally enjoyed is denied to kings and princes, we are called upon by every principle of justice to deal tenderly with them if in a daring moment they cast aside the trammels that are woven for them and for them alone. James did not consult his ministers when he betrothed Margaret Drummond, because he felt that at that juncture their consent would not be obtained; but trusting to the chapter of accidents, he took a step which involved the lives of three amiable and innocent women.

Finally, the most outrageous and cruel of all Mr. Tytler's inferences was that which led him to state that—

> It was through the influence of Sir Walter Drummond, who was Dean of Dunblane, that the three murdered ladies found a last resting-place there.

Thereby insinuating that Lord Drummond had been accessory to the murder of his daughters, and that he had difficulty in finding them a place of sepulture; boldly adding—

> The bodies of the fair sufferers were carried to Dunblane and there buried with a precipitancy which increased the suspicion.

The gross injustice of this inference will become apparent when the following facts are considered. The Dean of Dunblane's diocesan church was at Muthill, surrounded by aisles and burying-places, and certainly as much at his command as the cathedral church. If precipitancy was an object, why did Lord Drummond carry his murdered daughters fourteen miles, and into the very atmosphere of the court, when he could have buried them in ground, quite as highly consecrated, just outside of his own park wall? The paternal taint, the precipitancy, and the suspicion are mere things of the imagination.

The cruelty of this deduction is equalled by the folly of bringing forward as evidences of illicit connection the circumstance that Margaret Drummond put the king to great expense in dresses and in keeping up an establishment for her, and how his great love for her prevented for a time his marriage with Princess Margaret of England, and how he did not obtain a popish dispensation, &c. &c. Does a man not keep his wife in dresses? Does he not keep up an establishment for her? Is he naturally willing to marry another while she is alive? Does he require a Popish dispensation to keep a mistress? Did James charge a penny to the public purse for keeping Mary Boyd or Janet Kennedy?—both of whom bore him children and were as highly connected as Margaret Drummond.

Mr. Tytler has allowed his prejudices, not only to run away with his judgment, but to furnish him with imaginings, that are without foundation in fact, and repugnant to every reasoning principle.

CHAPTER IV.

BONNIE MARGARET DRUMMOND—*continued.*

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed; but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."—PROVERBS XV. 22.

In these essays no attempt has been made to prove that Margaret Drummond was, to all intents and purposes, the wedded wife of James the Fourth, although it is the opinion of many writers that she was so, but to deprecate the repeated averments of Mr. Fraser Tytler and a few others, that she was nothing more than his "selected mistress." The following authorities bear me out in all that I have contended for, and will enable any unprejudiced reader to form an opinion on the much vexed question.

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain took a deep interest in the affairs of Scotland, during the early part of the reign of James the Fourth, and sent an ambassador while the court was at Stirling, who made himself of great service to the troubled monarch. This accomplished Spaniard is sometimes called Pedro de Ayala a Spanish priest, at other times Don Pedro De Puebla, a grandee. While envoy at the Court of James the Fourth, he sent to his sovereigns, elaborate details of the Scottish national affairs, and characteristic sketches of the King and his turbulent nobles. His narrative of Margaret Drummond's position in relation to James, is disinterested and candid.

> In his early years before he became King, James formed a sincere attachment to his cousin, Margaret Drummond, surnamed for her beauty "Bonnie Margaret." The House of Drummond had already given a Queen to Scotland, Annabella Drummond was the Queen of Robert the Third and mother of James the First, therefore James and Margaret were within the forbidden degree of consanguinity. There was a private marriage and bonnie Margaret bore the King a daughter, whom he openly adopted as his child and accepted her as a member of the royal house.
>
> *Ayala's narrative taken from Bergennroth's Simanca papers.*

When I arrived he was keeping a lady with great state in a castle.

He visited her from time to time, afterwards he sent her to the house of her father, who is a knight and married her.

Don Pedro De Puebla's character of James the Fourth, extracted from the Simanca papers by Dr. Hill Burton.

There was a private marriage, and bonnie Margaret bore the King a daughter.

Ayala's memorials 149. *Manuscript in the possession of the Earl of Perth.*

He had a daughter, Margaret Stuart, born to him of a daughter of the Lord Drummond's, married to the Earl of Huntly—whose mother had been contracted to the king and taken away (to his great regret) by those who governed the state, that he should not follow the example of King Robert, his predecessor, who married a lady of that family.

Hawthornden's "History of the Five Jameses," Fol. Ed., 1711, *p.* 78, *written in* 1614.

Lord Drummond had four daughters, one of whom, named Margaret, was so much beloved by James the Fourth that he wished to marry her; but as they were connected by blood, and a dispensation from the Pope was required, the impatient monarch concluded a private marriage, from which clandestine union sprung a daughter, who became the wife of the Earl of Huntly. The dispensation having arrived, the king determined to celebrate his nuptials publicly: but the jealousy of some of the nobles against the house of Drummond suggested to them the cruel project of taking off Margaret by poison, in order that her family might not enjoy the glory of giving two queens to Scotland.

"Moreri sub voce Strathallan," quoted by Tytler, date 1680.

Margaret, eldest daughter of John, Lord Drummond, was a lady of rare perfections of body and mind, to which the young king, James the Fourth, was not insensible, and without acquainting his council or nobles affianced her in order to make her his queen; but as soon as his intentions were discovered all possible obstructions were made to it, both by the nobility, who designed an alliance with the court of England, as a means of securing peace between the two nations, and by the clergy, who declared against the lawfulness of the marriage because they were within the degrees of consanguinity forbidden by the canon law. However, after the marriage arrangements were completed she fell with child to the king, &c., &c.

Gairdrum Manuscript, presented to the Author by the late J. M. Drummond Nairne, of Dunsinane.

Before the king could receive the dispensation his wife (the Lady Margaret) was poisoned at breakfast at Drummond Castle, with her two sisters; suspicion fell on the Kennedys, a rival house, a member of which—Lady Janet Kennedy—had borne a son to the king.

"History of Scotland," by Dr. Taylor, vol. 1st, *page* 391.

Margaret Drummond was a lady of uncommon beauty and extraordinary accomplishments. James the Fourth was so enamoured of her that without acquainting the nobles and council he had engaged to make her his queen.

"Genealogical Memoir of the most noble and ancient house of Drummond." by David Malcolm, A.M., LL.D., 1808.

The noble family of Drummond is one of the most ancient in the kingdom. In I187 the family was raised to the peerage by James III. in the person of John Drummond, Justice-General of Scotland; and the eldest daughter of this nobleman became the espoused wife of James IV. This chivalrous monarch, while Duke of Rothesay, had formed an attachment for fair Margaret Drummond while she acted as one of the maidens of his royal mother, and on the demise of his father, and his own elevation to the throne, he privately espoused her, ere the nuptials should be publicly celebrated on obtaining a dispensation from the Pope, on account of their relationship being within the degrees prohibited by the Church.

"*Beauties of Upper Strathearn*," 1860.

When a dispensation from the Pope arrived, the king determined to celebrate his nuptials publicly, but the death of Margaret intervened. This has never been contradicted on evidence; the conduct of the King fully corroborates it; indeed, however improper the general life of King James may have been—and it was by no means exemplary—everything in regard to his relationship with Margaret Drummond indicates a tender and devoted love, and his consistency to the last in this, notwithstanding the changeable and "impetuous character of the King," will scarcely admit of any other solution than his actual marriage.

The Reverend T. Morris on the Life of Margaret Drummond, 1871.

But perhaps the matters most to be regretted in connection with these enquiries into the story of "Bonnie Margaret," are the statements and deductions contained in the second appendix to Lord Strathallan's Genealogy of the house of Drummond. The author has discovered in the treasurer's accounts certain statements which seem to have upset all his reasoning powers. He quotes as follows—

Feb. 10th, 1502.—Item to the priests that sing in Dunblane for Margaret Drummond; their quarter's fee £5.

Margaret died in the autumn of 1501, and there is nothing wrong in the priests' charge, as the King ordered them to receive £20 annually out of the royal treasury, but the following entry, he thinks cannot be reconciled with it,

June 23rd, 1502.—Item the xxiij. Junij the king (was in Drummonde) giffen to Margaret Drummond, by the king's command, xxx. french crowns summa L 21. Item, to her nurse, iij. french crowns summa 42 sh.

He therefore coolly proposes in the face of Lord Strathallan's statement, to postpone the date of Margaret Drummond's murder, to the end of the year 1502, or January 1503. He is still further puzzled by entries in the same accounts "for the lady's expenses in Strivelin in

1503," but he gets over them by stating that "they must refer to L.A. or L.A.M. or some other lady," as on the 1st of February, 1502, he found this payment,

> Item, to the priestis of Edinburgh, for to do dirge and saule mass for Margaret Drummond, £5.

The following historical facts, apparently unknown to this writer, explain the whole circumstances in the simplest possible manner, and it is, to me, incomprehensible, how any man apparently desirous of arriving at the truth, should so completely overlook, or ignore them. He surely knew that James the Fourth and Margaret Drummond had a daughter named after her mother and father, Margaret Stuart, but styled indifferently, the Lady Margaret, Margaret Stuart, or Margaret Drummond. This young lady was at Drummond Castle at the time of her mother's death and remained there till the summer of 1502. Her father came first to see her, and afterwards took her to his own residence at Stirling, from whence she was removed to Edinburgh Castle, at all of which places she was styled as I have named above; but the minions of court—more especially after her father's marriage to the princess Margaret Tudor—contrived to avoid her father's surname and call her Lady Margaret Drummond.

If any evidence is necessary to prove that this is the lady referred to in these entries, it will be found in the very entry which confounded this commentator. "To her nurse 42 Sh." Query, what nurse? If Margaret Drummond had been alive she was neither sick nor a suckling. She required no nurse, but dresses and equipages—as appears from all former entries; but now that she lay in Dunblane Cathedral she needed neither, but her little daughter had a single attendant, very properly called a "nurse," and when she went to Stirling she still required to be sustained.

Finally. One of the noblest features in the character of James the Fourth was his stedfast adherence to his engagement with Lord Drummond's daughter; and whatever may be alleged to the contrary, he certainly made no concession to the matrimonial schemes of his nobles so long as she was in life; but, as Hawthornden says, "she was taken away to his great regret," and he yielded to their importunities. Accidental results will not justify crime. We are not entitled to do evil because good may come of it at some remote period. The union of all the crowns of the European empires will not atone for the shedding of one drop of blood.

Why was Margaret Drummond poisoned if she was so emphatically the mere mistress of the king as Mr. Tytler would have the world believe? Is there no other way of silencing a mistress but to poison her? Why were Mary Boyd, and Lady Isabel Stuart, and Janet Kennedy not poisoned? Simply because the tie of the courtesan is easily broken, while the bond of matrimony is in law like fetters of iron; and in feeling, to every properly constituted mind, indissoluble as the fibres of the heart. But, "death's thousand gates stand open." The knife and the poisoned chalice sum up speedily; and when the minions of state have been interested, the ermine has been often sullied. James saw it bought and sold and gagged, and instead of adopting energetic measures for the detection of the miscreants who had destroyed his patient bride, he established a whole reign of masses for her soul. The Borgias, Brinvilliers, and Turners, had the blood-hounds set on their trail, and compounded for good lives by the sacrifice of bad; but the murderers of the three Drummond Castle ladies defrauded the gallows. They stifled the cry of agony, and disregarded the Court of Final Appeal, but the inexorable fiat remains in full force: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."

CHAPTER V.

DAVID DRUMMOND'S DESTINIE.

"The Weary Coble o' Cargill."

"I go and it is done."—MACBETH.

THE WEARY COBLE O' CARGILL.

DAVID DRUMMOND'S destinie,
  Gudeman o' appearance o' Cargill,
I wat his blude rins in the flude,
  Sae sair against his parents' will.

She was the lass o' Balathy toun,
And he the butler o' Stobhall;
And mony a time she wauked late,
To bore the coble o' Cargill.

His bed was made in Kercock ha',
Of gude clean sheets and of the hay:
He wudna rest ae nicht therein,
But on the proud waters he wud gae.

His bed was made in Balathy toun,
Of the clean sheets and of the strae,
But I wat it was far better made
Into the bottom o' bonnie Tay.

She bored the coble in seven pairts,
I wat her heart might ha'e been sair,
For there she got the bonnie lad lost,
Wi' the curly locks and the yellow hair,

He put his foot into the boat,
He little thocht o' ony ill;
But before that he was mid waters
The weary coble began to fill.

"Woe be to the lass o' Balathy toun,
I wat an ill death may she dee,
For she bored the coble in seven pairts,
And let the waters perish me.

"O help! O help! I can get nane,
Nae help o' man can to me come!"
This was about his dying words,
When he was choked up to the chin.

"Gae, tell my father and my mother,
It was naebody did me this ill:
I was a-going my ain errands,
Lost at the coble o' bonnie Cargill."

She bored the boat in seven pairts,
I wat she bored it wi' gude will,
And there they got the bonnie lad's corpse
In the Kirk shot o' bonnie Cargill.

Oh! a' the keys o' bonnie Stobhall,
I wat they at his belt did hing,
But a' the keys o' bonnie Stobhall
They now ly low into the stream.

A braver page into his age,
Ne'er set a-foot upon the plain;
His father to his mother said,
"Oh! sae sune as we've wanted him!"

I wat they had mair luve than this,
When they were young and at the scule;
But for his sake she wauked late,
And bored the coble o' bonnie Cargill.

"There's ne'er a clean sark gae on my back,
Nor yet a kame gae in my hair;
There's neither coal nor candle light,
Shall shine in my bower for ever mair.

"At kirk nor market I'se ne'er be at,
Nor yet a blythe blink in my e'e,
There's ne'er a ane shall say to anither,
'That's the lassie garr'd the young man dee.'"

Between the yetts o' bonnie Stobha',
And the Kirkstyle o' bonnie Cargill;
There is mony a man and mothers son,
That was at my luve's burial.

Two lines in this ballad point to its date as being coeval with the famous old "Waly, Waly."

There's ne'er a clean sark gae on my back,
Nor yet a kame gae in my hair.

O wherefore should I busk my heid?
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?

Love is the all-absorbing passion of woman's life. Her heart, when fairly under its control, will admit of no other occupant; but if jealousy finds its way into joint possession the conflict becomes terrible. If love is her heaven on earth, jealousy is a foretaste of the worm that dieth not,—a soothing flame blown into a consuming fire. This poor Ballathie maiden possessed strength of mind and energy of purpose, but the conflicting passions were commensurately strong: conjunctly, they gave a wrong bias to her mind; and every doubtful step, on the part of him she loved, nursed in her the demon of revenge, goading her on, filling her hands with the weapons of death, and converting the simple young woman into the accomplished midnight assassin. The pages of history have not disclosed, nor the complexities of dramatic design developed, a deeper-studied or more successfully executed plot, than the scuttling of the weary coble o' Cargill.

When the great river Tay at Cargill is in tranquil mood, you may toy and paddle and wade, you may sit on the grey stone and lave your grateful limbs in the crystal water, you may watch the graceful evolutions of the salmon as they dart through the limpid pool, you may read your "Romeo" in mid waters and throw pebbles at the stonechatters; but when "the rain raineth every day," and the tiny streamlet becomes swollen and dashes down the serrated Grampians, when the Lyon, the Tummel, the Garry, and the Isla pour in their accumulated waters; and when the sou'-west wind blows down between Benmore and Ben-lawers, and between Ferragon and Birnam, beware! stand back! there is but one step between you and death. What are you in the grasp of that turbulent, irresistible flood? Give it bank and brae. Keep your boat at anchor; remember, these are the rapids; a few minutes will take you to the falls. The deep-rooted saughs that grow along the banks can scarcely keep their heads above the moving mass of water, they are in danger of being torn from the parent stem and carried away by the remorseless element. The pure, lustrous river has become clotted; and when darkness sets in, instead of the sharp hissing sound—so familiar to the Scottish valleys, nothing will be heard but the sulky, half-stifled groan of the pent-up mass, tossing and roaring like a ground-swell in an inland sea.

Such must have been the state of the Tay on the night when David Drummond went on his perilous journey to Kercock. Two beds were prepared for him on the Kinclaven side of the river by his solicitous friends; but he was a brave page, and would not "rest ae nicht therein,"—"on the proud waters he would gae." He had great faith in his own prowess, and in his knowledge of the Cargill waters; and had he been left to the exertion of his own arm, he would, no doubt, have reached the southern bank; but the treacherous maiden had laid her plot well. "Mony a time she wauked late," and now the opportune flood had come. A roaring, swollen river, and a scuttled boat, were too much for human skill. So she took the auger in her hand, as lady Macbeth took the dagger, and creeping along the river's northern edge, bored seven holes in that portion of the coble that was hanging dry on the bank. What could be the feelings in her woman's heart as she stole back to her "bower"? Remorse came, but it did not come in time. The trusting youth "little thocht o' ony ill," and stepped into the frail craft that had been so mercilessly tampered with. His Kercock *leman* had accompanied him to the river-side, otherwise we would not have known what occurred when he had reached "mid-waters." When the danger first presented itself, he naturally invoked vengeance on "the lass o' Balathy toun," but after he had cried for help and found he could "get nane," his heart recoiled at the doom that must fall on the reckless girl;

and in the midst of his last struggle for life, his voice was heard exclaiming,

"Gae, tell my father and my mother,
It was naebody did me this ill,
I was a-going my ain errands,
Lost at the coble o' bonnie Cargill,"

Some philosophers, who think an error inexcusable under any circumstances, will blame the young man for going down to death with a lie in his right hand; but wisdom is of slow growth, and in moments of terror yields to impulse; besides, is there no extenuation in humanity being humane? Impulse is never cruel. If this infatuated girl had seen the lad she loved struggling in the water, she would inevitably have stretched forth her hand to save him, although in her moments of stifled passion she had encompassed his death. Sympathy is demonstrative and prompt; selfishness, inert and slow.

In more recent times, the Drummonds of Ballathie were younger sons of the Logiealmond family; and as David was at school with his frail Ballathie leman, we are led to conclude that he was born there, and would naturally be an expert swimmer; but his struggle with the submerging coble, had exhausted him, and he was little able to breast that terrible weight of descending water; he must have nearly reached the southern shore, however, for if he had sunk in "mid-waters," his body would have inevitably gone down the river, instead of remaining in the Kirk shot of Cargill.

We are not told what befell the conspiring maiden. Short of capital punishment, her self-inflicted sufferings were perhaps as much as she could bear. She resolved to abandon all purities of personal habit, to dwell in darkness, to embrace despair. No one should have an opportunity of pointing her out at kirk or market as a murderess. Her remorse is in perfect keeping with the crime which led to it—stern, cool, and resolute. But Lord Drummond was high in office, and not likely to allow a deed of such deliberate wickedness to extenuate itself by reproachings of conscience, more especially as it was committed under his own bedroom window, and on the person of his own youthful and trusted retainer. On this point the song is, very properly, silent.

What we regret most on reading this "woeful ballad," is that the plot did not fail. Had the infatuated girl bored one hole less, the young man might have saved himself; but she reckoned with the skill of a practised engineer; seven was the deadly number; ten would have filled the coble too soon, and he would have returned; with five he might have been able to save himself, but with seven the poor lad was caught in "mid waters." No doubt a dark night formed an important accessory to the successful scheme and remedy may have been impossible before its want was felt.

After the young murderess had performed her part of the plot, she must have surrendered herself to her irretrievable doom, because, after what she had done, success or failure was equal ruin. Life, on the terms left to her, became loathsome. The young man's parents attributed the crime to a quarrel; but it is unsurpassed as a deed of deliberate revenge. They had been lovers at school; and this Ballathie lass, although she evidently expected him on the fatal night, had become suspicious, and this obvious desertion raised these suspicions to exasperation. When man, strong man, who has to fight with sword and bayonet, and make the work of death his study and aim, commits a deliberate crime he is execrated; but between a desire to protect gentler woman, and the fact that she can come out from her domesticity and commit such a crime as this, our nice sexual subdivisions seem delusive, and suggest a necessary adjustment of woman's rights and her wrongs.

Influenced by the beauty of the scene, or by the interest raised in studying the romantic and often striking association of land and incident, I have for many years past been in the habit of having occasional pictures painted from the subjects of these essays; amongst others, "The Queen and Prince Albert at Taymouth Castle," by Kenneth and Macneil MacLeay; "Perth, as seen by Sir Walter Scott," by Horatio Macculloch; "Robert Nicoll's Birth-place," by John Cairns; "David Drummond at the Coble o' Cargill," by W. Q. Orchardson, &c., &c. The last-named gem of art has, after some vicissitude, found its way into the collection of Mr. Andrew Heiton of Perth, Architect, where I have no doubt it will be appreciated as its great merits deserve. The young man is represented as moving off the ill-fated craft, which had been moored on the Ballathie side of the river. Any one who knew the artist when a comparative youth will readily observe that in this case he did not go far for his *lay figure*. Drummond is handsomely dressed according to the period, and has the keys of Stobhall slung to his belt. Altogether, this desirable little picture is not only indicative of the high position which the artist has attained as an active member of the Royal Academy, but is itself highly estimable. Since it was painted, Mr. Orchardson has led his method, or style of colouring, through a process of refinement which has met the approval of his contemporaries; still, the freshness and extraordinary handling of this early effort have not been surpassed, even by the great R. A. himself.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DRUMMONDS AND THE CHISHOLMS.

"*Cromlet's Lilt.*"

> "She sent word to Lord Lochinvar,
>   'My wedding come and see;'
> And he sent answer back to her—
>   'I will not fail to be.'"
>
> OLD BALLAD OF KATHERINE JANFARIE.

CROMLET'S LILT.

SINCE all thy vows, false maid
  Are blown to air,
And my poor heart betrayed
  To sad despair;
Into some wilderness
My grief I will express;
And thy hard-heartedness,
  O cruel fair!

Have I not graven our loves
  On every tree
In yonder spreading grove,
  Though false thou be?
Was not a solemn oath
Plighted betwixt us both—
Thou thy faith, I my troth—
  Constant to be?

Some gloomy place I'll find,
  Some doleful shade,
Where neither sun nor wind
  E'er entrance had.
Into that hollow cave
There will I sigh and rave,
Because thou dost behave
  So faithlessly.

Wild fruit shall be my meat,
  I'll drink the spring;
Cold earth shall be my seat;
  For covering
I'll have the starry sky
My head to canopy,
Until my soul on high
  Shall spread its wing.

I'll have no funeral fire,
  No tears nor sighs;
No grave do I require,
  Nor obsequies;
The courteous redbreast, he
With leaves will cover me,
And sing my elegy
  With doleful voice.

And when a ghost I am,
  I'll visit thee.
Oh, thou deceitful dame,
  Whose cruelty
Has killed the kindest heart
That e'er felt Cupid's dart,
And never can desert
  From loving thee!

The circumstances upon which this ballad is founded are these: Sir James Chisholm of Cromlix had affianced Miss Helen Stirling, daughter of William Stirling, a younger brother of Stirling of Ardoch. The marriage was postponed until he paid a visit to his two uncles, William, Bishop of Vason, in France, and Sir John Chisholm, who had married a rich heiress and settled in the same country. He arranged with a friend in whom he had confidence to receive his letters, and have them safely conveyed to his lady during his absence. The lady's charms fascinated her lover's friend, and she fell into his toils. He suppressed Chisholm's letters, and told her tales of his inconstancy until he had moulded her to his purpose, and then proposed marriage to her himself. He managed to keep matters so smooth at the other end, that the unsuspecting victim prolonged his journey beyond what was its original limits, which strengthened his treacherous tale, and the lady giving way, the marriage ceremony was finally arranged.

On the wedding-day, when the guests were all assembled, and the bridegroom and bride stood ready to lead off the dance, the door of the apartment was thrown open, and a stalwart figure, muffled to the eyes, stalked, with a proud air, into the midst of the company. The bride whispered, "Sir James!" The bridegroom stood aghast, and was shrivelled up with horror. The strange visitor said not a word, but after an instant's hesitation he walked up to the bridegroom, and, grasping his throat, tossed him, head foremost, into the lobby. The common tradition is that he killed him, but that is not well authenticated. It would have compromised his chivalrous conduct to have shed his betrayer's blood, and rendered his own life unhappy ever afterwards. Mutual explanations reconciled the lovers, and they were shortly afterwards married. They had two sons, who each succeeded to the estate, and two daughters. Helen Chisholm, the eldest, became Mrs. David Drummond, of Invermay, and Jean, the second, Mrs. John Grahame, of Orchill.

Many writers assert that Sir James composed the ballad himself; others question this. No doubt he married the lady, and there was little necessity for his moping or writing elegiac verses. But it cannot be supposed that his arrival on the night of his frail lady's bridal was altogether accidental. Some guardian angel, with inked pinions, must have whispered in his ear what was going forward at Dunblane, and on his way thither, wincing under the contempt of his pledged faith, he may have composed the ballad, little calculating on his opportune arrival and its results. Lochinvar was quite aware of what was going forward at Netherby Hall, although his arrival there was somewhat fortuitous. The ghost of "Alonzo, the brave," knew very well when to "arrive at the fair Imogen's door;" but Sir James Chisholm was no ghost, as his rival felt, and instead of riding away, like the gallant Gordon, he scattered his opponents like chaff before the wind.

Chisholm's treacherous friend has sometimes been called a priest, sometimes a lay brother, upon what authority I know not. Dunblane was, no doubt, a nest of those officials immediately before the Reformation, and a looser set of men it is impossible to conceive. They were not allowed to marry, but there was no limit set to the number of their illegitimate children. Chisholm's grand-uncle was Bishop of Dunblane: he had two sons, Malcolm and John (Malcolm had a natural son, Sir John Chisholm, Archdeacon of Dunblane). He had an uncle, also Bishop of Dunblane, who had a daughter borne to him by Lady Jean Graham, daughter of William, Earl of Montrose. A quaint historian says of him, "He had diverse natural children, according to the custom of the clergie in those days. He wasted the bishop's patrimonie, and reduced it to a mean benefice." This was long before the time of Robert Burns, but if he had been present he would have set this Bishop William on the "cutty stool." Charles Dickens shows us, in his "Tale of Two Cities," that nothing tended so much to exasperate the French revolutionary spirit in 1790 as the personal tyranny of the nobility, and we are justified from the above facts in stating that nothing tended more to bring on the Reformation from Popery than the personal debauchery of the priesthood.

The following genealogical table shows that, although the lady of the ballad was a Stirling, and the knight a Chisholm, their common ancestor was a Drummond. Bonnie Margaret was Chisholm's great-great-grand-mother, and his bride's cousin in the fourth remove. I have not ascertained to whom James Drummond, of Coldoch, was married, nor who was Helen Stirling's mother. The centre dates are in some cases a year or two off the respective marriages, but they approximate to them closely and carry the connection of the Drummonds of Perth, and the Chisholms of Cromlix through seven sovereignties. Their intermarrying terminated by Jean Drummond carrying the estate of Innerpeffray to Cromlix, and James first Lord Madderty bringing it back to the Drummonds, by his having married Jean Chisholm, grand-aunt of our ballad hero, and eventual heiress to both estates.

Sir Malcolm Drummond of Stobhall married Marion Murray of Tullibardine.

James II.
1445.

James Drummond of Coldoch and Ballochard married to —— ——	James III. 1470	John, first Lord Drummond, married Lady Elizabeth Lindsay, daughter of the Earl of Crawford.
Janet Drummond married to Edmond Chisholm first of the Chisholms of Cromlix.	James IV. 1489	Margaret Drummond espoused to King James the Fourth, and poisoned at Drummond castle.
Beatrix Chisholm married to Harry Sinclaire. He got from Bishop William the five merk land of Ardoch.	James V. 1519	Lady Margaret Stuart married to Sir John Drummond of Innerpeffray.
Marion Sinclair, heiress of Ardoch, married William Stirling, who became Stirling of Ardoch.	James V. 1540	Jean Drummond married to Sir James Chisholm the third of Cromlix.
William Stirling younger brother of Henry Stirling—both sons of the above.	Mary. 1568	Sir James Chisholm the fourth of Cromlix, married Anna Bethune of Creich in Fife.

James VI.

Helen Stirling, the heroine of the ballad, married in 1591 to Sir James Chisholm the fifth of Cromlix, the hero.

Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel gave Robert Burns a letter, which he had received from Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, giving a very circumstantial account of this ballad, and the poet good-naturedly inserted it in his strictures on Scottish song. He says: "In the latter end of the sixteenth century the Chisholms were proprietors of the estate of Cromlecks." So they were: and in 1568 Sir James Chisholm married Anne Bethune of Creich. They had a son, James, born to them in 1569. This was the hero of the ballad. After telling the story the letter goes ontosay: "Helen was obdurate; but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother, with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands—she submitted." On first reading this I felt very sorry that Robert Burns had inserted it. Am I to believe that "Fair Helen of Ardoch," about whom there had been such a love-contest, had lived in single blessedness with her brother until he became the father of thirty-one children? The aunt of thirty-one children is hardly fitted for a heroine of romance. But the whole story foisted on the too confiding poet is a piece of terrible nonsense. Helen Stirling's father and mother were married in 1566. The great feat of tossing the bridegroom at Dunblane occurred in 1591. So that between the birth of Helen Stirling's brother and her marriage, not more than twenty-four years elapsed, rather a short space of time for an infant to grow into manhood and become the father of thirty-one children. A postscript to this letter confirms its absurdity, by stating that the youngest of these thirty-one children, commonly called "the Tutor of Ardoch," died in the year 1715, aged 111 years. Thus he was born in 1604, while this letter gives his father credit for him, along with the rest, in the year 1591.

Helen Stirling was not the daughter of Stirling of Ardoch, as represented in this letter, but the daughter of William Stirling, a younger brother of the laird's, whose name was Henry. Wiliam Stirling's house was in Dunblane, and it was to it that Sir James Chisholm came on the occasion of Helen's reluctant marriage. Stirling of Ardoch had a very large family, cousins—not nieces and nephews, of fair Helen's. The tutor of Ardoch may have lived 111 years, but he was the son of Henry Stirling of Ardoch, and poor Helen did not require to marry a "lay brother" in order to get out of his way.

CHAPTER VII.

LADY MARY DRUMMOND KEITH'S LILT.

"Dule and wae to the order, sent our lads to the border."—Miss Jane Elliot.

Lady Mary Drummond, daughter of John, fourth Earl of Perth, commonly called "The Chancellor," married William ninth Earl Marischal. They had two sons; George, the eldest, in whom the estates were confiscated; and James, long an officer in foreign service, who became a field marshal in the Prussian army, and was killed at Hochkirchen in 1758. The circumstances which are alleged to have given rise to "Lady Keith's Lilt" are thus detailed in Sharpe's Peerage:—"The extensive property of the family having been dilapidated during the civil wars, it was reduced to the three estates of Dunottar, Fetteresso and Innerugie; and the Earl preferring a military life, was by favour of Queen Anne, constituted, in February, 1714, captain of the Scottish troop of horse grenadier guards. He signed the proclamation of King George the First, but being unacceptable to John, Duke of Argyll, was deprived of his command at the same time that his cousin, the Earl of Marr, was dismissed from office as secretary of state. The Earl Marischal set out for Scotland in disgust, and meeting his brother James at York, on his way to town, in pursuit of military promotion, they returned home under strong feelings of irritation together, where they were easily instigated by their mother, who was strongly attached to the abdicated family, to enter into the rebellion of 1715." They did so, and she composed the song te encourage them; but ruin followed, and "the office of Marischal, which had been seven centuries in the family, was with his titles and estates, forfeited to the crown." Lady Mary had been two years a widow, but the Jacobite spirit, so strong in her nature, was easily kindled into flame.

LADY MARY KEITH'S LILT.

I may sit in my wee croo house,
  At the rock and the reel to toil fu' dreary;
I may think on the day that's gane.
  And sigh and sab till I grow weary,
I ne'er could brook, I ne'er could brook,
  A foreign loon to own or flatter;
But I will sing a ranting song,
  That day our king comes ower the water.

O gin I live to see the day
  That I ha'e begg'd and begg'd frae heaven,
I'll fling my rock and reel away,
  And dance and sing frae morn till even;
For there is ane I winna name,
  That comes the reigning bike to scatter.
And I'll put on my bridal gown
  That day our king comes ower the water.

I ha'e seen the gude auld day,
  The day o' pride and chieftain glory,
When royal Stuarts bare the sway,
  And ne'er heard tell o' Whig nor Tory,
Though lyart be my locks and grey,
  And eild has crook'd me down, what matter?
I'll dance and sing ae ither day,
  That day our king comes ower the water.

A curse on dull and drawling Whig,
  The whining, ranting, low deceiver,
Wi' heart sae black, and look sae big,
  And canting tongue o' clishmaclaver,
My father was a good lord's son,
  My mother was an earl's daughter,
And I'll be Lady Keith again,
  That day our king comes ower the water.

CHAPTER VIII.

JEANIE DRUMMOND AND DR. AUSTIN.

"For lack of gold she has left me, O!"

"O, say not woman's love is bought."

THE wisdom embodied in our national laconics is not of an unexceptionable character. It is said, for instance, "Money will not make a man happy," presuming that happiness being an indefinite quantity, no attempt will ever be made to prove the contrary. But in solving an arithmetical problem, the plan of proof is generally to go on the opposite tack. Thus we add up a column of figures, and, in order to prove our correctness, we add it down again. By the same process we prove in adding up, if we do it correctly, that money will make a man happy, because in adding down we find the want of money will certainly make him miserable. Money is at the bottom of every mine that is sunk, and at the top of every tower that is built. It is the prime instigator of all our woes and our wars. The pursuit of it is the grand struggle of man's life; and when he gets it, rank will as certainly follow as effect follows cause. If Jeanie Drummond had joined Dr. Austin in pushing the cause, the effect would possibly have followed; but she took the consummated fact, and left the Doctor to work the problem as best he could.

Bobert Burns, in his off-hand vidimus of this exquisite lyric, makes out the following strong case for its author:—

> "For lack of Gold."
>
> The country girls in Ayrshire instead of the line
>
> "She me forsook for a great Duke,"
>
> say—
>
> "For Athole's Duke she me forsook,"
>
> which I take to be the original reading. These words were composed by the late Dr. Austin, physician at Edinburgh. He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to have been married; but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the doctor.

Mr. Cromek seems to have considered the great poet's concluding sentence on the young lady rather severe, for he modifies the accusation by saying that, after giving the Doctor some encouragement, she married James, second Duke of Athole. Had Burns or Cromek known the young lady's story, perhaps they might have still farther softened the terms in which they spoke of her. That the Doctor loved the lady, and that she returned his passion, cannot be doubted, because the lyric could not be produced except under the influence of deeply excited feeling. But there is no evidence, so far as can be now ascertained, that a marriage was actually arranged between them. Dr. Austin does not accuse her of faithlessness, but only of having left him.

For lack of gold she has left me, O,
And of all that's dear she's bereft me, O,
She me forsook for Athole's duke,
  And to endless woe she has left me, O.
A star and garter have more art
Than youth, a true and faithful heart;
For empty titles we must part—
  For glittering show she has left me, O.

No cruel fair shall ever move
My injured heart again to love;
Through distant climates I must rove,
  Since Jeanie she has left me, O.
Ye powers above I to your care
Commit my charming, lovely fair;
Your choicest blessings on her share,
  Though she has ever left me, O.

Mr. Whitelaw has introduced the term "faithless" into the sixth line of the last verse, instead of "charming," but I much prefer following Burns, who was a coeval of Dr. Austin.

Till within the last few years some fragments of the old Castle of Kilspindie remained to give interest to the braes of the Carse, but they are now completely razed out. In former times it was an important place, and one of the strongholds of the Douglases. Archie of Kilspindie was banished from Scotland by James the Fifth, and his return in disguise to the Court at Stirling forms an important episode of Scott's "Lady of the Lake." The estate must have passed from the Douglas family before the middle of the seventeenth century, for at that period we find it in the possession of Dr. Austin's family. In 1718, Joseph Austin, the young laird of Kilspindie, married Jean, daughter of Adam Drummond of Megginch, his immediate neighbour. About the same year, his bride's brother John married, and each of them had families. Austin had a son who went through his curriculum as a student of medicine at Edinburgh. Drummond had a son, named after his grandfather, Adam, who was young Austin's fellow-student in medicine. The two families, bound together by so many ties, and living in the Castles of Megginch and Kilspindie, naturally formed a close intimacy. In 1745, when the rebellion broke out, the two young gentlemen were medical practitioners in Edinburgh. Adam Drummond had a sister, Jean Drummond, a beautiful and accomplished young lady. Her cousin, Dr. Austin, brought up from childhood within the radius of her charms. became her devoted, and no doubt, accepted lover. Whether or not the young lady agreed to marry him, he nursed the tacit belief that she was prepared to do so. His father had married the former Jean Drummond, and although he was a younger brother, he had established for himself a business and a reputation which, he thought, justified him in aspiring to the hand of his beautiful cousin. But "the course of true love never did run smooth." At Christmas, 1747, while her father was absent in Edinburgh, with the army, Jeanie fell ill of fever, and for twenty days her life trembled in the balance. On the twenty-third day her mother wrote to her father: "Jeanie continues better. She now sleeps pretty well, and takes frequently a little food, but has been brought low. We all think she is now out of danger." Jeanie recovered, becoming lovelier than ever; and whether or not Dr. Austin began to set his house in order, I am not able to say; but about this time, the Perthshire nobles began to shake off the calamitous effects of an ill-assorted and disastrous war, and the asperities of divided feeling began to yield to the soothing influence of time. An assembly was held at Perth in October, 1748, at which James, Duke of Athole met Jeanie Drummond. The Duke's elder brother William died in the Tower the year before. The Duchess, Jane Frederick, had also been dead some years; so that Duke James was a man without encumbrance; and although above middle life, he fell in love with Jeanie Drummond. Whatever struggle it cost the fair lady, the lancet was no match for the coronet, and next year she became Duchess of Athole. Dr. Austin became frantic, abjured woman, and resolved to emigrate. Before doing so, however, he resolved to let the inconstant dame know how much he felt her wayward conduct, and composed his short but exquisite lyric. It appeared first in *The Charmer*, published in 1751.

Those who have heard the song from the lips of Kitty Stephens or Ellen Tree, would no doubt sympathise with the disconsolate lover, and in imagination follow him to some lone island in the Pacific, to which woman had not yet found her way—a long journey!—but if they did so, they left the Doctor behind. He bethought him of a specific, and came to a different conclusion from that of the great dramatist, who says:—

> O mickle is the powerful grace that lies,
> In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities.

He was too clever a pharmacologist to attempt curing disappointed love by drugs; and too good a judge to expatriate himself for a crime that was not his own. Amongst the families he had been associated with at Megginch and Kilspindie there arose a certain fascinating Annie Sempill, who came to the Doctor like a healing angel. But he had renounced the sex, and could only be civil to the fair Annie. She proved irresistible, however, and on reflection, he failed to see that his having prayed for Jeanie Drummond should be any barrier in the way of his courting Annie Sempill. She did not lack gold, and, curiously enough, he really thought that, after all, she was quite as handsome as his former fickle *affiancée*. So the prosperous Edinburgh physician wooed and won Lord Sempill's daughter, and they had twenty years of happy married life. She bore him a large family; and, although he died comparatively a young man, the prosperous career he had as a physician in Brown Square, Edinburgh, plus his fine wife and children, must have entirely alleviated the woe which he predicted would be endless.

The Duke of Athole died in 1764, and the Duchess married, in 1767, Lord Adam Gordon, son of Alexander, second Duke of Gordon. He was Commander of the Forces in Scotland, and resided principally in Edinburgh. His lady, Jeanie Drummond, died in Holyrood House in 1795, and was buried at Southesk. I have heard her coevals speak with enthusiam of her beauty even in advanced life.

The Drummonds of Megginch are descended from the Concraig family, before it was broken up by the estate being sold to John, first Lord Drummond. They resided many years at Lennoch, in Western Strathearn. Their house is now razed to its foundation, and their estates absorbed in the properties of Strowan and Dunira. In the reign of Charles the Second they became proprietors, by purchase, of the Castle and estate of Megginch, in the Carse of Gowrie. The old portion of the Castle dates from the time of James the Fourth, but it has been greatly enlarged, and the surrounding grounds improved in a princely way by subsequent proprietors. Jeanie, the heroine of the song, was the paternal aunt of the late Sir Adam Drummond. She had no children by the Duke of Athole, but his first Duchess had a daughter, who succeeded as Baroness Strange. She married her cousin, the third

Duke, and bore to him, in 1755, John the fourth Duke, who married, in 1774, Jane, daughter of Charles, ninth Lord Cathcart, sister to the Countess of Mansfield, and the pouting Mary Graham, immortalised by Gainsborough. The memory of this Duchess of Athole will be ever cherished as the "amiable Cathcart," of Robert Burns, the mother of "the little angel band," and who, as the tender-hearted poet feared, filled a too-early grave. "The little angel band" grew up, and the Drummonds come in again. Lady Charlotte, the eldest, was married, in 1801, to Captain, afterwards Admiral Sir Adam Drummond of Megginch; and Lady Amelia, in 1809, to his kinsman, James Drummond, eighth Viscount of Strathallan; her younger sister, Elizabeth, having married the previous year Sir Evan John Murray Macgregor, of Lanrick Castle.

Amongst the more prominent features of these ballads as well as of a nation's history generally, are the vicissitudes of its families. Individual indiscretion has often led to the annihilation of a whole race, while one prudent man has sometimes rescued his family name from impending ruin.

The incidents detailed in this series enable us to allocate them to their various places in the long series of years during which the Drummonds exercised such potent influence at the Scottish court. "Tayis Bank; or, Lord Drummond's beautiful Daughter," dates towards the close of the fifteenth century, when the world of letters was merging from dreamy beginnings into an engine of power that would eventually sway not only love-making, but the destinies of families and of empires, an era when ever weak yet powerful woman was wooed and given in marriage, although the disquiet incident to a lingering feudalism left little time for wooing the still more coy and reluctant muse. These were days when the prayers of the saints, the masses of the priesthood, the orisons and the golden sacrifices were the extenuating ablutions for crimes of the very deepest dye. "The Coble o' Cargill; or, David Drummond's Destinie," and "Cromlet's Lilt," belong to the reign of the sixth James, when amidst the buddings of the dramatic age half a century of learning had achieved a marvellous amount of knowledge, although borne down by pedantry, self-aggrandisement, and deceit, the gloomiest days and the darkest nights that shroud the reign of the Stuarts. "Lady Drummond Keith's Lilt," and "For lack o' gold she left me," bear the impress of an advancing literature, albeit George the Second saw "no good in bainting and boetry." During these times loyal old Scotland beheld the final decadence of a dynasty which for good or evil had ruled over her for four hundred years, and when, coming up out of deep waters, she shook her dripping limbs, and allowed her sons and daughters to fall quietly in love, be deserted, and fall in love again; and her poets and poetesses to inaugurate with bated breath a series of melancholy Jacobite lyrics that could not be stifled, but were first whispered, then sung, and eventually proclaimed. But although the great Scottish Rebellion of 1745 led to much bloodshed and family disorganisation, it introduced a greater regard for national law, and led to the final subjugation of turbulent nobles, border reivers, and marauding clans, and although Jacobitism never underwent diminution in the individual, but rather intensified, it yielded to intermarryings and the benign influence of a supreme power, whose motto was "Peace and goodwill." That supreme power took no impression from the subtle spirit of the first James, nor from the overweening kingcraft of the sixth; the harsh bridlings of the lofty Elizabeth, or the stolid indifference of its own earlier potentates, but by gentle influences reduced reigning over and serving under to a problem, simple as the relation of brother and sister, and arriving in our day at a reign which has no parallel in the eras of the Cæsars, the Bourbons, the Tudors, or the Stuarts.

"Here is my journey's end."—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

"WHERE the tree falleth, there it shall be." We are told of a popular English writer that, although he regarded with respect the opinions of *The Monthly Review*, and the loudly expressed views of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, it was only at the instigation of his wife that he could be brought to alter anything that he had written, and as a considerable portion of these biographical essays has already appeared in print, without any healing counsel other than domestic, the collection must now go forth with all its imperfections on its head, the time of remedy being past. The memorials of our fellow men are, to some extent, public property—the feelings of the living offering at all times a kindly shelter. If in any case I have taken up a wrong view of a man's character, it has not been done lightly nor with indifference, for in every case I have brought forward personal anecdotes which appeared to bear me out in everything that I had written respecting him—poetry to prove the poet, and deeds to prove the man. It must be remembered that the aspects of life are highly varied, moving in the scale between the good and the bad. The swaggering toper who sings "I care for nobody, and nobody cares for me," is grovelling at the bottom, while the perfect man has gone to the top. The intervening characteristics are—first, man's duty to his God; second, his duty to himself; third, his duty to his family; fourth, his duty to his own immediate race; and, fifth, his duty to his country. These are all necessary to the perfect man, and the efforts made to ascend this stiff acclivity are an interesting study, and have been the more especial object of these inquiries and reminiscences. In some cases I may have struck too high a note in the gamut, in others one that is too subdued; and unfortunately no amount of anxiety to be candid will necessarily secure its achievement; but, peradventure, when another cluster of generations will have passed over our much-loved Perthshire, some deep-read and much-skilled historian will arise within her borders, who may possibly deal with motives, whereas I have only dealt with men.

THE END.

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