James Macdonell.

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JAMES MACDONELL

JOURNALIST

BY

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WITH ETCHED PORTRAIT BY H. MANESSE

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE object of this volume is sufficiently explained in the opening chapter. As this is probably the first book of its kind, I have had no precedent to follow. It is obvious that many difficult and critical questions present themselves to a biographer with such a subject, and that he is also not without temptations. But I have done my best to act with scrupulous regard for the great traditions of English journalism, to violate no confidence, to insert nothing that would give pain, to write the life of James Macdonell in something of the spirit it was lived in.

My obligations to his surviving friends and correspondents are many, and cannot fully be acknowledged here. Without the unwearied help of his wife this book could never have been written. Of several chapters (viii.—xi. especially) she is virtually the author, and in almost every page her influence is to be traced. Miss Margaret A. Macdonell has given the most generous and valuable aid, especially in writing the story of her

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brother's early days. Mr. H. Gilzean Reid, President of the Institute of Journalists, has, in the kindest manner, put into my hands the larger part of his long and confidential correspondence with Mr. Macdonell, and has besides favoured me with many helpful suggestions. Mrs. John Macdonell wrote for me a very interesting paper of reminiscences. My friend Professor Minto of Aberdeen sent me a very useful letter on Mr. Macdonell as a journalist. I have also to acknowledge the kindness of Dr. Alexander of Aberdeen, and other correspondents. It is hardly needful to say that for any errors of judgment or fact I alone am responsible.

BAY TREE LODGE, FROGNAL, HAMPSTEAD.
December 9th, 1889.

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ERRATA.

Page 26, line 28, *for* "There were there" *read* "There were then."
„ 37, line 14, *for* "honarary" *read* "honorary."
„ 68, line 13, *for* "nearing" *read* "hearing."
„ 81, foot-note, *for* "Thorn" *read* "Thom."
„ 83, line 27, *for* "Macdonells" *read* "Macdonell's."
„ 296, line 10, *for* "European" *read* "Crimean."
„ 310, line 3, *for* "Sir" *read* "Mr."

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

THIS book is the life of a journalist—perhaps the only life of a journalist pure and simple ever written. An enthusiasm for his profession was early kindled in Mr. Macdonell, and it burned steadily and brightly to the end. He loved his work, and was proud of it. He cheerfully yielded all his strength to its claims, and he found it a sufficient outlet for all his faculties. At a very early age he saw that his function in life was to act on the higher nature of man through the press, and he fulfilled it with eminent power.

Mr. Hamerton has said, "Industry is a good practical virtue, and a habit which, no doubt, is useful in enabling us to make the most of our time; but genius or inborn faculty, whatever moralists may say, is more effectual as to results than the most laborious application. Both for acquisition and for production also, natural faculty and aptitude are worth any quantity of toil. The gifted man will work, of course, because he cannot help it, and sometimes he will work with tremendous energy and magnificent perseverance; but the difference between him and the dull struggler is that he simply

exercises a power while the other tries painfully to acquire one." * James Macdonell's natural aptitudes from the first authorized his desires, but he never presumed on them. From the beginning he lost no opportunity, neglected no gift. Nature was kind to him, but he was his own best friend. His circumstances were not those most helpful to literary cultivation, but he would have been the last to complain of them. He delighted to acknowledge their bracing quality. If they had been far more repressive than they were, he would still have been of the same mind as the French sculptor Rude, who maintained that all circumstances presented a favourable side if people only knew how to seize them, and who proved it by turning an awkward fragment of marble into the composition which made him famous, simply because such a work would go into the block. Everything, says Epictetus, has two handles, and the art of life is to seize the right one. So cheerfully and assiduously did Macdonell cultivate his talents, that had they been fewer his place must nevertheless have been high, and his story is thus one of the most inspiring and conspicuous examples of self-help.

Higher than all his intellectual achievement and endowment was his brave and beautiful life. The nobleness of his nature, its unselfishness, courage, and affection, bound his days one to another. From end to end of his brief career the lineaments are always the same, though they had a natural growth. An undying glow of family affection suffuses his whole course. His pure youth passed into the ideal

* "Modern Frenchmen," p. 335.

of manhood without rupture or rebellion. He knew the satisfaction of

> "That awful independent on to-morrow,
> Whose yesterdays look backward with a smile."

There is nothing in his life to conceal—nothing to lower our thoughts of the hero. I have had unreservedly put before me the most intimate outpourings of his soul. If every word were printed, it would only show more clearly how stainless, how loyal, how chivalrous that soul was. Even the coldest and earthliest might be stirred to some effort and compunction by the companionship of this pure and radiant spirit. I was anxious that some record of his life should be written for the sake of journalism—a profession which has many heroes who die unknown; for the sake of the increasing multitude of thoughtful and able young men who are looking forward to that honourable labour as their life-work, that they might learn in how great a spirit it may be pursued. But I am encouraged to hope that beyond the circle of those specially interested in the Press the record may be helpful. Most of the work Mr. Macdonell did of necessity perished with the day, and cannot be revived now. I have not done his memory the injustice of reprinting his old articles, my reason being simply that the interests dealt with are no longer in the same case. As they were written the articles gave the best judgment a singularly just, penetrating, well-informed, and liberal mind could form on the situation then existing; but readers might find it difficult to allow for the change of circumstances. All the more is it needful that his life should be written. In the words of William Caldwell Roscoe, a brilliantly

gifted critic whom he in many ways resembled, and who was cut off at the same age, "Where personal character is the main source of influence on others—where the unconscious labourer, pressing forward in faithful service, reflects a glory from his upturned countenance, scatters the fire of his aspiration in surrounding hearts, and by the subtle impress of spirit upon spirit refines conscience, warms enthusiasm, and quickens effort—there it is that a life, a record, a portrait is most needed. The chief work indeed is done without it, many a heart moulded, many a course changed, many a soul set in motion, purified, redeemed by contact with the living man; and the influence spreads from mind to mind like circles in the water. But, like such circles, this influence grows less discernible and fainter as it spreads; and it is a great thing to stamp with permanence its original sources, however inadequate and fragmentary may be the image preserved."

James Macdonell was born at Dyce, a bleak little village some six miles from Aberdeen, on Tuesday, April 21st, 1842. He remained there only a few weeks. His father, James Macdonell, was engaged in the Excise, and belonged to an old Highland family—the Macdonells of Glengarry. He was a Roman Catholic. His mother, Rachel Allardyce, was just seventeen when she married. She belonged to an Aberdeenshire family connected with Tarves, and was a Protestant. Thus in him the elements were kindly mixed. He derived from his father the dreamy, passionate, chivalrous nature of the Celt; from his mother, the industry, tenacity,

and shrewdness characteristic of the Saxon. His father's profession was an important factor in his early development; and his being brought up a Roman Catholic, in the midst of a Presbyterian population, was a circumstance which had large issues, and gave direction to much of his life.

The good fortune of the Macdonells perished where the passion and agony of Celtic Scotland were accomplished at a stroke—at Culloden. There, as Mrs. Oliphant has eloquently said, "the race marched with the wild pibroch wailing over them, with waving plaids and antiquated shields, and hearts full of primitive virtues, passions, and errors, for which the world had grown too old, straight into the jaws of destruction, into the valley of death, into the mouth of hell." Only a few months before, old Tullibardine, amid a wild outburst of cheering, had shaken the crimson folds of the Stuart standard into the Highland air, and had proclaimed King James. It was a brief, bitter story, and yet a noble one—one of which proud memories will ever linger in "the land where song lies bathed in tears." The unsurpassed fidelity, devotion, and honour which marked the death-struggle of the clans may do something to atone for the merciless fury with which they avenged themselves on their enemies. I need only recall, in connection with the Macdonells, one characteristic episode. A clan at variance with them were worshipping in a church. The Macdonells set fire to the building, their piper playing all the while the tune which is now their pibroch, to drown the cries of the victims. One poor wretch escaped, but was seen by Glengarry, who pursued him to a precipice, where he was

clinging for dear life to a bush. The old savage sent his dagger through the twig. "I have sent many of your race into eternity to-day; you must follow." So complete and intense a hatred provoked vengeance equally ruthless, and after Culloden it is not wonderful that the race got scant help or pity. They became herds, drovers, poachers, smugglers, cattle-lifters, some of them servants and shoemakers. We find James Macdonell's grandfather, John Macdonell, a well-known figure in his day, as innkeeper and farmer in Tomintoul, a wild and winter-bound Highland village in Banffshire, stigmatized by the Queen as one of the ugliest villages in her dominions, and yet the dwelling-place of a strong race. James inherited his grandfather's fair hair and blue eyes; eyes which much resembled those of General Gordon—pale in repose, but flashing with life and light as he grew excited.

In his visits to Tomintoul the boy breathed the air of the true Highland country. He was in the midst of Highland surroundings and traditions. Beside him were the hills black with storm, the lonely moors, the mountain passes. The heather was under his feet, and the sound of strathspey and coronach in his ears. He dearly loved the Jacobite songs and stories, and to the end of his life retained some of the superstitions of the north. It was a hard, stern, rugged life enough, but it was not without its alleviations. This is the country of music and the dance, of manly sports; and into these the youth entered. Always a good walker, he could when a boy race and leap with something of the force of his ancestors. He enjoyed all the barbaric show of Highland games, and

could "put the stone" and "toss the caber" in no contemptible manner. An American writer, of distinct individuality and power, has described the Tomintoul of to-day, and a few sentences may be copied.* "A more cheerless and unattractive district cannot be found in the Rocky Mountains. The only relief to it was the heather, whose purple blossom, now in full bloom, softened the lofty contour of the mountains, and veiled their rugged faces. Coming over the hill upon Tomintoul, we saw before us a line of stone houses, with more thatched than slate roofs. The buildings appeared to be pretty much of one pattern, and most of them were rather squalid. Almost the whole village was built on the High Street, which was devoid of pavement, and showed numerous signs of neglect." He describes the Highland games, and then comes the sequel. "After that the competitors and observers dropped their identity and mingled together. Every room in the low, squatty Gordon Arms, and in the low, squatty Richmond Arms, was filled, as were also the stairways, with people. The young maids were kept busy running up and down the stairs from the bar to every nook and corner in the building capable of holding two people and two glasses. Men and women mingled; and the clinking of glasses, tread of feet on the bare floors, and loud voices of those in debate, with snatches of song from the more convivial, made up a scene that defies the power of my pen. All the poverty and deprivations and bleakness of Highland life in the Tomintoul region were for the time put far from memory. The people were getting

* "England from a Back Window." By J. M. Bailey (p. 321, etc.).

ready for the ball in the evening, and every soul in the village capable of being out of bed was in or about these two inns." "As a child," writes a Tomintoul correspondent to me, "I can recall bands of poachers entering an inn. Once there came a band of six, with a well-known poacher as captain. They emptied their bags, full of hares, grouse, etc., on the kitchen floor, and demanded food, whisky, and beds. In the morning they gathered together; each man unscrewed the barrel from the stock of his gun, putting the barrel into one big pocket, the stock into another, and set out different ways, to meet again on the moor beyond the bridge."

I may add that in Macdonell's time two venerable gentlemen—the minister of the parish and the Roman Catholic priest—would look in benignantly at the beginning of the proceedings, and probably put some pennies in the hands of the little boys. They would not remain long, for copious draughts of whisky would soon raise the spirits of some of the revellers to an unreasonable pitch.

For this region is famed as the great whisky country. In these lonely and inaccessible hills smuggling was carried on long after it had been put down in more civilized parts of the land. All the district associated with James Macdonell's youth—the Dufftown, Cabrach, and Rhynie tracts—were in comparatively recent times full of smugglers. No discredit, or at least very little, attached to the practice of smuggling. In the days when Auchindoir, Kildrummy, Cabrach, and similar parishes were inhabited by a population of crofters, it would have been impossible for the people to live if they had not

been able to add the gains of smuggling to the scanty subsistence arising from the sterile soil. At present the legitimate manufacture of whisky is energetically practised in the Banffshire Highlands. Glenlivet whisky is universally known. Great energy was shown by the original manufacturers in getting it taken over the hills to Perth, whence it was distributed through the kingdom, and in spite of fluctuations the trade has been kept up. James Macdonell's father had thus plenty of work as an excise officer, and his occupation brought him into intercourse with many classes of society.

In patches of these remote regions the Roman Catholics were protected by the Gordons, and survived. In Banffshire there are still flourishing indigenous congregations of Roman Catholics. Macdonell's father was a strict though not a bigoted adherent of this faith. He was a man of refined and chivalrous nature—fond of books, of good music, and partial to the society of a few friends, submitting without complaint to the isolation to which in certain districts he was condemned by reason of his religious belief.

His wife's relations represented a wholly different type of Scottish character. The life of rural Aberdeenshire at this period has been set forth with marvellous fidelity by Dr. William Alexander in his works "Johnny Gibb of Gushet Neuk" and "Life Among My Ain Folk"—more especially, I venture to think, in the latter. Whoever wishes to understand the undemonstrative, douce, thrifty, plodding, unimaginative, and yet affectionate and sternly faithful nature of that particular variety of

the Scot, will find it drawn to the life in these books. Mrs. Macdonell had a full share of these virtues. I should not forget to say that on the mother's side Mr. Macdonell was related to John Philip, the painter, and that a great-grandmother on the father's side won fame in her day amongst her friends as a writer of Gaelic verses.

The influences of home were exceptionally high and pure. Children came fast, and the family resources did not increase in proportion; but the income was thriftily spent, and the meanness of worldliness was never allowed to intrude. Talent and scholarship were always reckoned of more account than wealth. Courtesy to inferiors, reverence for the aged, a disdain of gossip, James learned from his father—a true Highland gentleman. Politics were a favourite subject of discussion in the family, and public men were freely criticized.

The early years of his life were spent in Inverness, the beautiful Highland capital, and he liked in after years to speak of himself as an Inverness boy. There he was taught by his mother to read at a very early age. Soon after he was sent to school, where he did not learn much, but greatly delighted in the sports, and often rough fun, of his Highland playmates. Even then he had that brightness of look and quickness in reply which attracted people later on, and was a great favourite with his teachers. He delighted in history, and in the historical associations of the places he knew, and, being utterly without self-consciousness, was eager to share with others any freshly-gained information. Reading was already a passion with him, but lessons were irksome. He

was a heedful listener to his father's conversation, and in after years acknowledged how much he had unconsciously acquired in this way. He was best known in the playground, where his daring vivacity and quick, generous, impulsive temper made him very popular.

His father left Inverness in 1853, and went for a year to the beautiful Banffshire village of Dufftown. Here the boy's intellectual growth was greatly stimulated by the influence of a remarkable man, a Mr. McPherson, one of a notable race now almost vanished—the parish schoolmasters of Scotland.

In those days, thanks to certain wise and liberal bequests, the position of parish schoolmaster in the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine was considered a good one, and the best students of the universities aspired to it. It might be an introduction to the Kirk. There were ways by which a schoolmaster, by attending the divinity hall for a few weeks in each year, might find himself in comparatively mature life a licentiate. It was not easy to take the step from the desk into the pulpit, for both patrons and congregations were of opinion that dominies were not eloquent preachers ; and so the probationer often remained a probationer, occasionally preaching when the minister was absent, an event that rarely happened in the era before holidays. The Disruption was a godsend to many of these clerical teachers, who but for the vacancies it made would have wielded the "taws" to the end. Many felt no vocation to the clerical profession, but kept up their classics, and would occasionally publish

in the local newspaper a neatly-turned translation of Horace. Their position was secure, and they were little vexed by inspectors. They were generally very intimate with the minister, and on a level with the best people in the parish. There was no position in the educational world to which they might not aspire; they might even look forward to a university professorship.

Without railing at inevitable change, it may seriously be doubted whether boys of talent, and eager to learn, fare as well under the new *régime* as their predecessors did under the old. These schoolmasters of the last generation took a friendly pride in fostering the gifts they discerned in their pupils. Many who have been prosperous in life remember with emotion how the gates of the great world of thought were opened for them by these kind hands, how their teachers ever cherished the generous love of learning, and despised the hateful processes of drudgery and cram. Sometimes these men were conquered by the great temptation of their lonely lot. It was the habit in those days to drink deeply and freely when a few choice spirits met, and the habit occasionally became a tyranny, making the last days of its victims pitiful and clouded enough. The escape from the dull village life proved too easy and too entrancing. Let not the frailty be judged too harshly; these men were friends to many, and enemies to none but themselves.

In Dufftown, as I have said, the schoolmaster was a Mr. McPherson. He was a highly gifted and accomplished man, an excellent scholar, and a strong but cynical thinker, regarding with a spice

of impatience and contempt the life he saw round him. He did not neglect any of his scholars, but promising boys he loved and forwarded with his whole heart. He often took his favourite pupils a Saturday afternoon ramble, when he would charm with a flood of instructive talk. Something was noted about every tree and bird; or the secrets of angling, of which he was a master, were explained; so that ever after, in a country ramble with James Macdonell, it was delightful to see how the rustling of branches, the rushing of waters, the song of birds, acted on him like music, and brought out a flood of bright and eager talk. Or the master would go over the stories of Greece and Rome, and make the dry bones live. Or the subject might be the rudiments of geology. In short, the mind of the teacher was so rich and full, his delight in communicating all knowledge so great, that the open-hearted boys conceived for him an undying love and reverence. Under this powerful influence the boy learned to be a student as well as reader—a most important fact in his mental history. Mere miscellaneous reading, however diligently pursued, would never have sufficed for what he had to do. Henceforth no amount of mere memory work was distasteful to him. He grew exact and very painstaking, silent and bookish. This influence makes his year at Dufftown very important. I close the chapter with some reminiscences of McPherson by an old pupil.

"Two stories were current about McPherson,—that, as a young man, he had written much for *Blackwood* and other magazines; that when tutor in a nobleman's family he had fallen in love with the daughter of the

house; that she was also smitten with the stalwart and accomplished youth; that he was compelled to leave, and that his habitual gloom came of his disappointment. So much truth there was in this— he was undoubtedly cynical, believing all was vanity except shooting and fishing, in both of which in the whole country side he had no superior. His delight was to take, when it seemed good to him, a holiday, and spend it, rod in hand, on the banks of the Spey. A pupil, some favourite of the hour, was occasionally with him. Here is an instance of their adventures. He to whom it happened is now a wealthy merchant. Mac and G. set out in the morning for the Spey. Mac tried his luck on one side of the swollen river, but to no purpose. 'We must cross.' 'But how?' asked the lad of twelve, trembling as he gazed at the swift broad stream. Mac gave the word of command. The lad stripped, and the athletic dominie swam the river with his pupil on his back. He caught more than one salmon, while his young charge stood shivering on the bank. Then he took the lad to an inn, and revived him with hot whisky and water; ordered a dog-cart, and drove home in the dark at a tearing pace. The horse got off the road; the dog-cart struck a bank; the lad, a light-weight, went over the hedge into the neighbouring field, and found himself not much the worse. His heavier companion was badly hurt. Mac was in all things above conventional rules. On a hot afternoon he would appear in the schoolroom in a short white linen jacket, like a countryman's stable jacket; and woe be to the urchins who grinned. Sometimes he would call up a favourite pupil, such as James Macdonell, to talk

over the events and the questions of the day with him—what move Liprandi would next make, and who would be the best successor of Lord Raglan. Curious though his system of tuition was, Mac never might have feared for payment by results. At a dinner in London some years ago, five of his old pupils were present. Two were ex-Premiers of Australian colonies; one a famous Indian soldier, who has filled the highest offices; a fourth the chief of the medical staff in India; and the fifth an American millionaire, whose name is familiar to every railway-man."

CHAPTER II.

RHYNIE.

THE family removed in 1854 to the village of Rhynie, in Aberdeenshire, where James Macdonell's intellectual development proceeded apace.

Rhynie is a small and remote Aberdeenshire village, separated by the Cabrach from Dufftown, and to all appearance little favourable to the cultivation of intellectual life. Trees are as rare as in the Scotland of Dr. Johnson's imagination. The little cluster of humble homes lies under the shadow of Top o' Noth—"the lofty battlemented hill which—with its ruined fortalice, the Barmbin, its crumbled walls, its Clochmaloo, its giant's footprints, its evidences of a great and portentous history, now utterly lost in prehistoric darkness—stands sentinel over the upper waters of the Bogie." In the distance is visible a rival mountain, the Buck o' the Cabrach, which is mentioned by Elspeth Mucklebackit in "The Antiquary" as the place where a coronach ended. The population consisted mainly of tradesmen and crofters. Their life was in many ways rough and limited; but "things are not what they seem," and the combination of plain living and high thinking was not rare in the district. And even in that little village were felt the perturbations of the great ocean of intellectual interests.

This country is well known to me, and looking back, it is the winter that strikes me as the dominant influence of the region. It was very long and very rigorous. The country-side was famous for its snowstorms, the huge "drifts" they left behind them often impeding traffic for days. It was impossible to work out of doors during the dark and roaring nights and the scarcely brighter days. People were thus thrown upon their own resources, and were either made or marred by their use of the winter.

First among the intellectual influences may be placed the parish school. At Rhynie James Macdonell was again fortunate in his teacher, the Rev. George Stewart. It was then the custom for working men whose education had been neglected to take a winter's "skweelin'" (schooling). The sight of classes composed of smart little urchins, and tall, brawny, and slow-witted agriculturists, was not without suggestiveness. These latter were mainly bent on acquiring the accomplishment of "coontin'" (arithmetic), which was not taught in the "adventure" schools to which either the poverty or neglect of their parents had entrusted them in childhood. For side by side with the parish schools were the "adventure" schools, taught by those mysteriously hindered from every other labour—retired soldiers, cripples, and weird old women. These were seldom able to carry their pupils beyond a very elementary acquaintance with reading.

James Macdonell was diligent at school, excelling chiefly in arithmetic. But, as he did not intend to go to college, he could not take full advantage

of all the resources put within his reach. By the admirable Bursary system a link was provided in Aberdeenshire between the parish schools and the university, by which proficient scholars, however humble their circumstances, could secure a college training. For five shillings a quarter, or less, the parish teacher would give his best energies to instructing a promising lad in classics, more especially in Latin prose composition. The boy could go to Aberdeen in October, and compete with some two hundred and fifty of his fellows for perhaps thirty bursaries or scholarships, ranging in value from £30 to £10, or even less, and tenable for four years. As the college session in Aberdeen lasted only five months, and the fees were not exorbitant, a strictly frugal bursar, aided by supplies of oatmeal and butter from home, was able to pay his way. James Macdonell, however, showed no ambition in this direction. The idea of his becoming a Roman Catholic priest had been suggested while he was in Dufftown, but was utterly distasteful to him. But he would always have acknowledged himself "one of the millions who have owed the rudiments of their culture to John Knox and the other wise ecclesiastical statesmen who, when rearing the Protestantism of Scotland, acted on the principle that to make the edifice stand for ages they must place it on no quicksand of tradition or of sentimental faith, but on the rock of educated reason."

One of the educational influences of Rhynie was that of the Church. It was inevitable that much of the most earnest thinking of the most earnest minds in such a place should be on religious and ecclesiastical

subjects, and in Rhynie the strife was exceptionally keen. For it was part of the famous Presbytery of Strathbogie, which had so great a share in the proceedings which led to the Disruption of 1843. The minister of Rhynie was one of the seven deposed by the evangelical majority of the Church of Scotland, a sentence, however, not recognised by the minority. The echoes of the great war were not soon spent. Whatever else may be said of the Disruption, it cannot be denied that it had a wonderful effect in quickening the intellectual life of the Scottish people. Years before, the Independents had planted churches in the district, and had been successful not only in securing preachers of rare fidelity and zeal, but in taking captive for religion certain minds of a very uncommon type. The most noteworthy was George Macdonald, the novelist, a native of this district, who a few years before the time of which I write had "struggled with the traditions of the elders" in the Congregational Church at Huntly. In the Macdonell household, also, there began to be warm discussion as to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church.

This atmosphere of religious controversy gave James Macdonell a love of Church dialectics which he never lost. He was a born fighter. He might have made a good soldier had the opportunity been given him. As it was, he became an eager debater, and the ecclesiastical arena continued to the end his favourite field. The proposal that he should be trained for the Roman Catholic priesthood forced him to examine the grounds of his own religious faith. It must not be forgotten that his mother was a

Protestant, that all her relatives were Protestant, and that the Bible was constantly read in the household. In the boy's reasonings one point always came uppermost,—" These kind friends, my mother's relatives, are they not to go to heaven? God could never mean to keep them out." But he went deeper into the matter. His father was a subscriber to the *Tablet*, both at Dufftown and Rhynie, an admirer of Cardinal Wiseman, and a constant reader of the modern books of Roman Catholic controversy. The son was ever busy on his side with the study of Church history and the works of Protestant divines, and the result was earnest and sometimes bitter dispute between the two. The father was proud of his son, but loved his Church, and was tried by the boy's fierceness in argument. He unwisely brought to bear on him the influence of priests and others, who said hard and cruel things to the lad, with the result of making his opposition more determined. We shall soon see the issue of the struggle, which to a wise on-looker would never have been doubtful. For apart altogether from Protestant dogmas, Mr. Macdonell had at this time and always a strictly Protestant intellect. Restraint of any kind in the form of a creed was irksome to him. These disputes were painful, but they did not affect the deep bond of affection which held the father and son. I cannot doubt but that Mr. Macdonell's early association with the Roman Catholic Church did much to widen his mind. The little isolated handfuls of Catholics in the midst of a somewhat disdainful Presbyterianism comforted themselves by the thought that they belonged to a

great Church, all powerful in other lands if beneath a cloud in this. The famous names of the Church, the sacred places of her history—these were familiar to the young Scot from the beginning, and did much to redeem him from the provincialism which is the bane of his kind. They helped to give him that interest in continental politics, especially in those of France, which began about this period of his life and continued to the end.

Among the books in his home, one to be seen at that time in all Catholic households in Scotland, was Stephen Keenan's "Controversial Catechism." It was as good as its title; it was fiercely aggressive, and Mr. Keenan did not fire blank cartridges, but grape and canister, served out to the faithful situated in exposed parts. One of the first questions will show its nature. "What is Protestantism? A new religion invented and propagated by Luther." It concluded impressively, if irrelevantly, with a wild, impassioned cry for Home Rule. "Oh, persecuted, wronged, reviled children of Ireland, be patient yet a little—a day of retribution will come—God is just. Lazarus will yet be comforted." Strong meat for babes! and a strange substitute for the "Shorter Catechism" taught next door. More wholesome for a child were the other books in the home, and in particular the works of the saintly George Hay, Bishop of Daulisa. Alternately medical student, surgeon in the army of Prince Charles Stuart, prisoner for treason in Edinburgh, Episcopalian, convert to Catholicism, metaphysician, and, in the last years of his life, ecclesiastical statesman and mystic, this little known hero of Scotch Catholicism exer-

cised a profound influence on his countrymen. His "Sincere, Pious, and Devout Christian" and other devotional works moulded the religious life of many noble spirits. They kept far away from the asperities and pettinesses of controversy, and, read by people who knew no other books, they flowed as a pure stream through wild glens.

"No one," says a correspondent, "has described the priests of the scattered Highland communities, as the picture is now, perhaps, impossible. They are no longer there, and a different generation has taken their place. In manners, knowledge of the world, and probably culture, their Maynooth successors are not their peers. Though often the sons of peasants, they had spent many years of their lives abroad—in Rome, Douay, Valadolid, or Rheims. They had acquired, at least, one modern language. They lived on a pittance—out of which they found the means to be generous—with their housekeepers in humble chapel houses. Some of them were scholars; not a few of them were mystics; they were, for the most part, lovers of peace; and to the young, and the aged, and the poor they were ever friendly; and their kindly eyes, to those who knew them, still benignly look out of the past. I do not name you, M. and R.; you have long gone to rest, and your names would now be meaningless to all but a few; but your benedictions are still perhaps with some of those who have grown to middle life since your hands were laid upon them. Of a very different character, but a type also in his way, was the Rev. Terence M'Guire, the priest at Huntly. We went, when a dog-cart could be

borrowed, to mass there; and M'Guire was host as well as priest to his scattered congregation. He literally fed his flock, who came, of course, fasting to the service. I see him now, this tall, strapping, son of Tipperary, with his broad, red, moon-like countenance. His sermons were not much—short exhortations to his flock to stand well in line, and discourses calculated in every way to leave small impression on the infant mind. He was himself when, service over, he entertained with hot coffee, bread and butter, and the most genial of smiles, his far-travelled flock—a curious assembly in the little room: Catholic lairds and their families, ladies in high station in the Court of Madrid, and farm lassies who had walked nine or ten miles that morning, and donned their shoes only before going into chapel."

Hardly less keen was his concern in the Free Church controversy. He read Hugh Miller diligently—one of the very few books which he allowed himself to mark was his copy of Hugh Miller's "Headship of Christ." He acquired a mastery of the points in debate between Scotch Presbyterians equal to that of any Scottish ecclesiastical leader. This interest remained unabated, and he adhered to the Free Church side, offering, as we shall see, a vehement opposition to the Patronage Bill, on the same grounds as those taken by the Free Church majority. He came, however, to think more liberally, though never favourably, of Moderatism, and to consider the Disruption chiefs "provincial thinkers, whose philosophy had been forgotten at the chief centres of European thought, and who spoke an

obsolete dialect." For Miller he had an enthusiastic admiration, as the last great literary representative of Scottish Puritanism—the Puritanism of Knox and Melville, Rutherford and Erskine ; the Puritanism in spirit, if not in specific creed, of the Covenanters, who conquered for Scotland her ecclesiastical freedom. But in mature years he admitted that, though Miller perhaps merited a position among the dozen men who in this generation have been able to write English, his place was not among the first. "He seldom wrote with perfect ease and grace, and indeed his writing never lost a certain stiffness ; the easiness of its flow did not hide the effort of the toiling hand."* He was interested also in theological controversy, and read much Puritan literature at this time. But he never really took to mysticism, and his contact with the Congregationalists or "missionaries" issued only in that respectful consideration for sincere and deep feeling in all forms, in which no one could excel him.

More potent still was the effect of his long hours of solitary reading at home. He was better supplied with books than might have been expected. His father had accumulated a considerable number, including a collection of political pamphlets, mainly relating to the Corn Laws, which he greedily devoured. He had access to the "Easie Library" close at hand, where books were lent, and from which the Macdonells were accustomed to bring home their portion in sackfuls. I must ask my readers to remember the long "fore-nights," as they were called, of these winters—the unbroken stillness—the vast breadths of monotonous

* *Spectator*, August 18th, 1871.

leisure. In these James Macdonell "made himself." He was never a careless reader. From the first he was accustomed to make notes when he had a book in hand. But his first interest was not in books, but in art. His ambition, spurred perhaps by his relationship to John Philip, was to be a painter. He made some very spirited drawings, and taught himself to etch on copper. He informed himself from books about the Early Masters. But he only knew pictures from woodcuts and engravings, as the small country village furnished no facilities for his advancement. So "when I paint my first picture" soon turned into "when I write my first book"—the date when all the family were to be made happy.

I have before me the catalogue of the Easie Library and the recollections of his sister. From these it is clear that at an early period he had been at home in a wide range of literature. In addition to works on divinity, ecclesiastical history, and politics, he read with special delight Christopher North and De Quincey, and exulted with true patriotic feeling in the literary glories of Edinburgh when she had such citizens. De Quincey he always considered one of the chief master of the resources of English prose, though he took a severe view of his moral character, calling him an "æsthetic sensualist." What he afterwards wrote about Miller may be applied with perfect truth to himself. "He toiled hard for year after year to master the art which, in common with Rousseau, he thought the most difficult to which a man could address himself,—the art of writing artistically. Addison, Goldsmith, and the other quiet classics of England he studied with such reverential care as an

Oxford double first must have lavished upon Thucydides and Cicero. He never wrote a letter that he did not try to make an exercise in composition." Burns and Byron were, perhaps, at this time his favourite poets. With Macaulay he also became acquainted in these days. Mr. John Morley somewhere says that Macaulay and John Stuart Mill have influenced journalists of the period more than any other writers, but Macdonell always looked on Macaulay as a Philistine giant. The Waverley novels, Dickens, and such older books as "Caleb Williams" supplied him with lighter reading. It is worth noticing that the first school prize he gained—it was in Inverness—was "My Own Story," by Mary Howitt, afterwards his aunt by marriage. With writers who came to have the strongest influence over him, he did not become acquainted till a little later, when he went to Aberdeen. I should add that he was very fond of reading aloud, not so much because he liked the practice, but because he found it impossible to keep to himself any passage that stirred him. He read, if not according to the rules of the schools, yet with fervent eloquence, and repeated in thrilling tones long passages from Tennyson, Ruskin, and Macaulay, Wordsworth, and De Quincey.

I should not forget the newspapers. They were published weekly in Aberdeen, and sold at three-pence or fourpence. There were there the *Aberdeen Journal*, the long-established Conservative organ, which had then the largest circulation; the *Aberdeen Herald;* and the *Aberdeen Free Press*, the Nonconformist and advanced Liberal paper, edited by William McCombie, of whom we shall

hear presently. Only very voracious readers saw more than one of these, and in most cases the same paper was taken in by two or three together, that the cost might be lightened. But the single weekly paper was read with a closeness and intensity of interest such as the daily journal hardly commands now. The *Aberdeen Journal*, as I remember it, was an eight page paper, containing its leaders and latest news on the last page, the first of course being advertisements. But I have seen faithful readers commence regularly at the beginning, and follow the paper through line by line until in due course, perhaps by the end of the third day, when it was a neighbour's turn to have the paper, the "latest news" was reached! Dr. Alexander, a most competent judge, has recently said: "When the newspaper appeared only once a week, the leading articles of the 'able editor' were not only read with deliberation and care, but formed topics of discussion for days on end; and the village tailor, 'souter,' or weaver, was often a keen and exactly informed politician. Nowadays the newspapers are not only rapidly skimmed in the matter of their general contents, but if the leading articles are read at all, the reading hardly goes beyond a hasty glance; and they are, as a rule, seldom remembered for—it is to be feared—more than a couple of hours or so after perusal."

The Mutual Instruction Class must not be passed over. The history of this society has just been told in a genial volume by its founder, the Rev. R. Harvey Smith, M.A.* The record is a valuable contribution

* "A Village Propaganda." By R. H. Smith, M.A. (Douglas, Edinburgh: 1889).

to northern annals, and is my authority for what follows on its subject. In 1846 twelve Rhynie students, merchants, tradesmen, and crofters, founded a class which lasted nearly thirty years, and was widely imitated. Essays, debates, and lectures were promoted by the little company, to the manifest revival of the intellectual life of the district. James Macdonell became a member December 3rd, 1857. "He is young, slender, and pleasant looking, as he appears on that cold December night, with bright, open countenance and blue eyes of the north." He took an active part in the proceedings of the society; reading a first essay February 25th, 1858, on "Light Periodical Literature." His last contribution was on "Public Opinion." One of his papers on "Dress" made quite an indignant flutter in the minds of the ladies of Rhynie. In that society he found companions in such men as Alexander Allardyce, the well-known author of that admirable book, "The City of Sunshine," and Dr. Patrick Smith, now of Queensland, and others who became well known in their various spheres. He acquired there his ease and polish in public speaking.

He was influenced also by the "characters" of the district. The rapid interchanges of modern life tend to obliterate distinctiveness. In those days people, placed like the inhabitants of Rhynie, either basely yielded to their circumstances or heroically overcame them. A defeat was a rout, and a victory was a triumph. The hard manual toil by which daily bread was earned indisposed men to intellectual exertion; base temptations were always at hand, and many relapsed into stark animalism. This was

especially true of the agricultural labourers, whose condition much exercised the Mutual Instruction Class at the time. The life of the bothy, so full of temptation and degradation, with its lewd songs, and its gross talk; the fights at the "feeing markets;" the deadness of aspiration; above all, perhaps, the miserable intemperance of the class—gave social reformers much to do, and even now present problems still unsolved. But those who escaped all this, usually did so by complete separation and strict adherence to a lofty and rigorous code of self-discipline. Religion, in most cases, had laid its strong hand upon them, and the results were unmistakable. I can recall not a few grave-featured, reserved peasants whose sins—such as they were—must have been sins of omission only; for one could say of them with assurance, what Jess McQumpha said of her husband Hendry,* that "He never did naething that wasna' well intended." Occasionally long and solitary brooding over religious themes produced a certain refinement and distinction of mind, which manifested itself in the supplications at little prayer meetings, some of which still linger in my memory. More often the result was a homely and somewhat unmerciful shrewdness. What is true of the moral, is true of the intellectual nature. Some who go to such regions, as ministers and teachers, soon die an intellectual death. Others again are stirred to exceptional activity by the apathy around them. A few miles from Rhynie, in a still more remote part of the county, the largest private library in Scotland has been accumulated on an income which

* In "A Window in Thrums."

has never amounted to £200 a year, and from the stern and solitary region which was the scene of James Macdonell's schooling, a goodly number have gone forth to take a prominent part in public life. One of his old, quaint, humorous friends, Mrs. Anderson, of Pouron, ought to be named here; and others are duly commemorated in Mr. Smith's pages.

Life was not all reading and debate in Rhynie. When his brother John grew up, his father allowed the two to go often with the "preventive" men in their lonely Highland rambles. They would go to the Blackwater in the Cabrach, and sometimes across to Glenlivat, and so on to Tomintoul or Ballindalloch. Their companions were devoted to the lads, showed them the best fishing streams, the most hospitable farmhouses, and the most comfortable resting-places; and it was wonderful how, with cheerful company, draughts of milk, Highland air, and abundant merriment, the "lang Scotch miles" wore by. On one of these occasions they visited a farmhouse not far from Tomintoul—where their hostess was a relation of their own, and a decided Roman Catholic. As they sat by the peat fire, and talked of the old days when smugglers abounded and robbers were not unknown—of sights, sounds, warnings, and wonderful dreams, a knock was heard. The door was opened, but no one was there. After a short interval the knock was repeated, and when this time the door was opened in vain, it was suggested that some of the farm servants were playing a trick. Again the knock came clear and sharp. "Lassie," said the good wife, "never mind the door, that knock was from no mortal hand." The thrill the boys felt was

not so much of fear as of awe, which grew intense when in the early dawn they heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and found that a messenger had come to tell Mrs. S—— that her niece had died the evening before. James rarely spoke of this: when he did it was in solemn tones.

Altogether, if there was something to hinder there was much more to further his moral and intellectual development in Rhynie. But it was time to change. The boy had become silent and thoughtful. It is always a trying period in such a house when a lad is growing, and does not quite know what is to be his work in life. As the strain upon the resources of the household increased he was anxious to be earning money for himself. And the church controversy made an indefinable aloofness between his father and himself, strong and deep as was the love between them. It was time for him to leave home, time for him to breathe the freer air of a city.

I must not omit to say that before leaving Rhynie he had seriously begun to learn French—his text book being Cassell's "Popular Educator." Thus at a very early age he had commenced the main studies of his life—ecclesiastical controversy, and the literature and history of France.

CHAPTER III.

ABERDEEN.

VILLAGE life had done much for him. It had enabled him to lay broad and deep the foundations of his life-work. Home had grown sacred to him in these years; he had found in his mother a refuge and a harbour, and had already tasted the pure pleasure of giving joy to others. He had learned a lesson to which he was peculiarly susceptible, but which could not so easily have been taught in a city—the richness of the common vital stock. He had studied much in these quiet years, and reverence had kept pace with knowledge.

Still the isolation was great, and the change to a larger life opportune and welcome. Aberdeen was not at that time a great town, and it was further removed than it is now from the chief centres of thought. But to many a northern youth, who came to it from the seclusion of his birthplace, it was more than any other city could become afterwards. To enter it was to pass from prison into a larger air—to taste the sweets of comradeship and liberty. In a marvellously short time James Macdonell found his proper place among his peers in London; but the succeeding changes in his life can hardly have meant so much as this first removal. The town is perhaps not picturesque, but its granite houses and

wide streets give it a stately look, and it has always been a home of culture. Till a comparatively recent period there were in the place two Universities, which are now united. While the inhabitants are famous for commercial ambition and talent, they have ever held in honour the claims of knowledge, and no city in Scotland stands higher in general intelligence. The sentiment of the place is strongly Liberal; ecclesiastically the Free Church, at the period of which I write, was the most powerful body. In the county of Aberdeen, the secession from the Church of Scotland at the disruption was comparatively small, but in Aberdeen the city ministers came out and took the great majority of their congregations with them. But there was not much bigotry; the air was free, and easier to draw than that of villages where the "powers that be" lorded it overmuch, and were indeed not so much the advocates as the high priests of the existing constitution of things. Best of all, the lad found congenial companionship, and was introduced by a friendly hand into the region to which he had long aspired.

The gladness of meeting with those who could sympathize threw an imperishable brightness over these early days. He went to Aberdeen as a clerk in Messrs. Pirie's paper mills early in 1858, and served there and in the excise, partly in Aberdeen and partly in the neighbourhood, for some years. He found in the Messrs. Pirie's head clerk, Mr. McIntosh, a man after his own heart, who treated him with the kindness of an elder brother. Another friendship, more intimate and passionate, with a youth of his own age,

ended, alas! in estrangement and silence. But the great event of his Aberdeen life was his introduction to William McCombie, the editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*, and perhaps, after Hugh Miller, the most notable among the self-taught men of Scotland.

To say that Mr. McCombie should not be forgotten is to say too little. He was never much known beyond his own district of the country, and no one who was acquainted with him, however slightly, or who came under the range of his influence, will ever forget him. He ought to be known much more widely than he is, and a full record of his career could hardly fail to take a place among permanent biographies. A "son of the soil," born in a frugal Aberdeenshire farmhouse, with only four or five years of parish schooling, he became at a very early age the centre of progress in the region where he lived, and ultimately, it is not too much to say, the chief Liberal force of Aberdeenshire. He commenced to publish when he was little more than twenty years old, and wrote books full of strong thought and eloquent expression to the end of his days. But his real greatness did not come from them, nor even from the work he did as editor of a newspaper and an apostle of political Liberalism. It lay in his grand character. He was one of those unspeakably pure and exalted souls in which Puritanism sometimes — perhaps rarely — flowers. On those who came close to him—and especially on worthier spirits—he acted with a force so uncommon that nothing else came near it. For true individual inborn greatness, he seemed to stand alone—and along with this went perfect

refinement and a deep if somewhat shamefaced tenderness. As one who knew him well testifies, his writing was only part of the man; the full stores of his mind only came out in converse with congenial spirits. "Not a few will recollect the keen intellectual enjoyment, the vigorous impulse, they derived from these conversations. They will recollect the treasures they bore away from an evening's converse with one who laid his hand lightly and easily on widely-severed provinces of literature and philosophy, and whose suggestive talk was steeped in that knowledge which has never got, and never will get, into books. There will also be a returning sense of that intellectual awe which was kindled at the sight of a mind instinctively delighting to coast the shadowy margins of the known, and to take occasional fearful and reverential incursions into the void beyond. And with these recollections, provided they are those of intimacy, there cannot fail to mingle thoughts of the delight with which he who is dead looked upon all enthusiasm, however alien in its object to his pursuits, of the tenderness with which he treated youthful thought, however crude and shapeless, and of the width of his intellectual sympathies. . . . There is one side, the best side, of his life, which ought not to be uncovered at the street corners. The last person in the world to flaunt and strut in subscription lists, or to seek publicity for his deserts, he would have hated to hear his good deeds spoken of, and the veil which he cast over his countless acts of charity and kindness ought not to be lifted."

Mr. McCombie used to say that one of the first

things he remembered was the risp of the sickle in the harvest field, and he never ceased to be an ardent and successful farmer. His early essays were written soon after he had ploughed from six to six, others after he had held the scythe through a long summer day. On coming to Aberdeen to start the *Aberdeen Free Press* in 1853 he still retained his farm of Cairnballoch, near Alford. It is never an easy thing to start a new paper, and the fact that the editor was only to give to it part of his energies looked unhopeful. But he wrote himself: "We start on a course of unknown interest, checkered with peril no doubt, but radiant with hope. We press on towards no uncertain goal; and, though we know somewhat of the courage and patience demanded of us, we gird up our loins for it anew with 'heart and hope,' venturing ever to appropriate some encouragement from the fact that the path of the true and brave is cheered by many a wayside flower and refreshed by the gushing forth of many an unbidden spring." Progress at first was slow, but it was sure. From the beginning Mr. McCombie had the literary aid of Mr. now Dr. William Alexander, and the paper soon became not only solid, but interesting. Andrew Halliday was secured as the London correspondent, and wrote bright amusing letters which were always eagerly read. The news of the district was well arranged, and the editor was quite as competent to deal with farming as with more abstruse subjects. He respected his readers' intelligence, and treated in a serious fashion the most serious themes. Great space was given to reviews of books, which were written with courage as well as with ability, and condemned when

condemnation was merited. In this Mr. McCombie secured the aid of his friends, including some of the more thoughtful Nonconformist ministers around. The principles of the paper made even more rapid progress than the journal itself, and Aberdeenshire from being Tory became one of the most pronouncedly Liberal counties in Scotland. The *Free Press* is now one of the best and most influential daily papers in Scotland.

Mr. Macdonell was introduced to Mr. McCombie by Dr. Peter Smith of Rhynie, one of his companions in the Rhynie Literary Society. In these literary societies Mr. McCombie took a warm interest, and was honarary president of the Associated Union. These two congenial spirits took to one another straightway, and years only strengthened the bond between them. Very soon the boy was admitted to the mysteries of the newspaper office. The earliest letter of his which has come into my hands gives a glimpse of newspaper wars in Aberdeen, and gives some account of the famous editor of the *Herald*. The remaining Aberdeen paper—the *Journal*—was Conservative, and was edited during the greater part of Mr. McCombie's time by my beloved and honoured friend, the late William Forsyth, a man of true poetical genius and a most gentle nature. The youth is writing to his father about an article of Adam's in the *Herald:*

135, CROWN STREET, ABERDEEN.
August 4th, 1859.

It is undeniable that the article contains many sensible remarks, to which the Revival preachers would do well to lend an ear. But with the flip-

pancy of its remarks on religion I have, I need hardly say, no sympathy; and the groundwork of its reasoning is, I think, preposterously absurd. You will, however, find a complete refutation of it in to-morrow's *F. P.* I happened to drop into the office of that paper to-night, and had a chat with Mr. McC., during which I got a look at a leader by him entitled "Logic, Ribaldry, and Revivalism" (I think), in which he, without at all heeding the *Herald*, save by a casual reference to it in a foot-note, handles the subject in such a manner as renders his contemporary's writing poor in comparison. If it wants that free-and-easy air respecting religion, and that desperately "witty" manner, which are characteristics of Mr. A.'s effusions, it has a depth of meaning and a moral suggestiveness which to them is utterly foreign.

I sometimes think—though I am perhaps wrong in thus thinking—that the apparently paradoxical, yet not unmeaning remark, which Hazlitt makes regarding Cobbett, in his famous paper upon him, is not at all inapplicable to the editor of the *Herald*—namely, that "he is an honest man with a total want of principle." Somewhat in this light is he looked upon (as far, at least, as my knowledge leads me to judge) by the people of Aberdeen; for I always hear him spoken about in such a manner as would make one think he was viewed by them as a man of the most entertaining quality and as little else worthy of commendation—as an indispensable accessory to the Saturday morning breakfast table.

Yours affectionately,

J. M.

The home circle of the farmer-editor was worthy of him ; his wife was a sister of the late eminent Scottish antiquary, Dr. Joseph Robertson, and of kindred gifts, and sons and daughters inherited the tastes of their parents. Here James Macdonell met accomplished ladies in free and bright intercourse—the society to which he was ever most partial, and in which he most shone. He gave much, and he received at least as much as he gave. With Miss Annie McCombie, her father's cherished companion and amanuensis, his friendship was close, and during his occasional absences from Aberdeen on excise service his correspondence with her father was mainly carried on through her. The Aberdeen life was marked by three important events in his life: his definite break with the Church of Rome ; his initiation into journalism ; and his father's death.

The first was necessarily very painful. As I have said, it was sure to come sooner or later, for his mind was distinctively Protestant. He did not take the step without thoroughly studying the evidence so far as it was within his reach. He acted for himself in the whole matter, for the McCombies never attempted to influence him in any way. He was not blind to the virtues of the Roman Catholics whom he knew, and to the end was sensible of the lofty strain of living and thinking maintained in his father's house. But he was vehemently convinced he was right, and as usual the feeling found corresponding expression. He came afterwards to think he had too little considered his father's feelings, and in his generous manner perhaps exaggerated the fault. But the letter which follows explains his position, and it is

not difficult to read between its lines. It is addressed to an uncle in Dufftown, also an adherent of the Roman Catholic Church.

6, ST. MARY'S PLACE, ABERDEEN.
July 21*st*, 1860.

When I came to Aberdeen I was convinced of the truth of Roman Catholicism. But I had read more than most of my age, and that, too, in a kind of literature which, tinged as it was by the spirit of Protestantism, was somewhat unsuited for strengthening the convictions of a Roman Catholic youth; and, worse still, I had already begun to try to think for myself, and had learned not to believe upon trust every statement with which I might happen to meet. In Aberdeen I continued my studies in English literature; that of it which I perused was, though far enough from controversial, imbued with the spirit of the Reformation; and, consequently, though it had no direct effect, it insensibly broadened my mind and prepared me for the great change that was to take place in my convictions. My favourite authors when speaking of poetry and philosophy were, though far enough from the subject of Roman Catholicism, quietly—utterly unknown to myself, in fact, until a later day—making me a Protestant. Their allusions to what was then my religion may have been few and casual, but, as it were by stealth, they were divesting my mind of prejudices, and gradually bringing me into a condition in which I should have sufficient resolution to determine on considering the antagonistic claims of the two creeds, and impartiality enough to weigh

with justice the evidence which each adduced. That I was on the road to Protestantism I had no idea; the arguments in favour of Roman Catholicism seemed to me to be as strong as ever; and it was only on the occurrence of events which set the rival arguments of both religions before my eyes with greater distinctness than at any previous period, that I became aware how much my broadened vision had sapped my early views.

The few companions whom I had were Protestants. Some of them were, in acquirements and talents, much above the average, and though the subject of our respective religions was never broached until a subsequent day, they were affecting me in the same manner and for the same reasons as my studies.

But the first rude shock which I received came from a quarter from which it certainly was not to have been anticipated. Mr. ——'s lectures, delivered to prove that Protestantism was false, made me believe it true.

On coming out of the chapel one Sunday evening, on which the lecturer had, with his usual fluency of language, been enunciating that fearful doctrine of your Church, that all those outside her pale, with the exception of the "invincibly ignorant," and those unpossessed of the means of enquiring into the nature of her claims, are lost, I was asked by a young friend who was with me if I believed the dogma. The effect of that question I shall never forget; it perhaps did not a little to change the whole course of my life. I answered it evasively. Believe it I couldn't; for knowing as I did, through the medium

of books, of report, and of experience, of Protestants who were God's people if such there ever were upon earth, my conscience would have revolted at the idea of my saying that the salvation of such was an impossibility. No; my faith wasn't strong enough for that. Previously I had kept this dogma out of sight as being above my years, as I thought; but now it stared me in the face, and, in accordance with the reason which God had given me, I was bound to say to it either Yes or No. The consequences involved in the latter I couldn't hide from myself; the anger and the loss of friends I well knew would be the result; but what were these considerations when weighed against the claims of truth?

Doubt having once been raised, I, instead of being a mere passive listener to the lectures, became their examiner. And little though I knew about the subject of them, and that little all from one quarter, I began to suspect the accuracy of the statements they contained; and I couldn't help perceiving that the discourses, though plausible, and though couched in energetic language, were singularly shallow. My doubts begin to increase in number and to take a more tangible shape; what was I to do? Should I, a mere boy, presume to question the assumptions of the "Church of the living God," to use Mr. ——'s high-pitched language? But how did I know that she was the "Church of the living God"—how did I know that she had remained uncorrupted? Her own assertion wouldn't do; I must have external evidence, else acquiescence in her claims would be sinful. If the history of the Early Church didn't substantiate her claims they must be false.

If she couldn't prove her infallibility I must reject it. I must have *extrinsic* evidence; her own assertion was valueless—as valueless as would be the evidence in his own favour of a person on trial for fraud. If the extrinsic evidence which she should produce should be sufficiently strong to convince me of the justice of her claims, then, of course, I must acquiesce; if not, then acquiescence would, as I said before, be sinful—nay, impossible; for it could only be pretended acquiescence, *i.e.*, hypocrisy. You can't believe that the sun is up when it is pitch dark in the open air.

I now began to inquire for myself. I read the history of the Reformation, and my worst suspicions were confirmed. I now felt morally certain that the Church of which I was an adherent was wrong. Still, as I was determined to find the truth, I called on Mr. —— and stated my objections to him. That interview had a wondrous effect! How infinitely obliged I am to the reverend gentleman for his kind assistance to me in my search for truth! His assertions and arguments puzzled me in the meantime, for my cogitations on the subject of discussion had not been sufficiently clear to enable me to perceive the sophistry contained in the gentleman's reasoning. But the argument gave a fresh stimulus to my enquiry. Day after day, week after week, I thought and read upon the subject. At one time I was driven almost to Protestantism, the next week to Roman Catholicism. I couldn't believe in the latter after what my reason and my reading had informed me, and I couldn't get over the difficulties of the former. The truth I was determined to have,

cost what it might. And yet I rather shunned than sought Protestant books of controversy, so fearful was I of being biassed in any way. I continued in this state of mind—a state which I hope you may never experience unless it be the precursor of purity of belief—for months, and had it continued much longer it might have led to downright scepticism. At last I awakened up, and, taking that doctrine upon which Protestantism is based—the doctrine of private interpretation—I carefully examined it. The task was hard, for upon principle I kept aloof from books upon the Protestant side of the question, and difficulties started up on every side; but at length I thought it out. Yes, it was right for each individual to inquire into the meaning of the Scriptures, and to abide by the decision which reason and conscience should dictate. After this my vision began to clear with great rapidity; it seemed as if a conviction of the truth of the great doctrine just referred to was the talisman that led to a perception of the gospel character of the other distinctive dogmas of the Reformation. For now—remember I hardly dared before—I felt bound to read books not only upon the Roman Catholic but upon the Protestant side of the question. And now, too, came the study of Church history, and with it the absolute conviction of the iniquity and of the fearful corruptness of the Church of Rome. Change after change in the constitution, the practice, and the dogmas of the Church I traced, and found that the religion to which you adhere was as different from that of the primitive Christians as sin is from purity. And now I could examine the assertions and weigh the

reasons of my clerical friend; and many a hearty laugh I and others have had at them. Such ignorance of the teaching of the early fathers—of Church history—of the character of the Reformers and of the history of the Reformation—of the nature of faith—of what private interpretation of the Scriptures consists in; such profound ignorance (or something worse, though I hope not) as that manifested by the reverend gentleman upon these topics has, in a divine, and controversial lecturer too, been, I should say, seldom matched.

Now, uncle, after calmly considering these statements, will you dare to condemn me? What would you have done in my place? Did I not act in a manly way, and as became a rational and responsible being, in searching for the truth, and in giving allegiance to no Church until sufficient evidence of her truth had been presented? Should I not have been a despicable creature had I, for fear of offending friends, smothered my suspicions, confessed with my lips what I disbelieved or doubted in my heart, bowed before an altar which I considered a mockery, and assisted in ceremonies which I deemed an outrage on the sublime simplicity of the gospel, and a criminal departure from the practice of the Apostolic Church, which, as its heathen contemporary and bitter adversary, Celsus, remarked in mockery of it, possessed "no temples and no altars," but only a worship and a sacrifice purely spiritual! People are angry at me just because I have acted contrary to the custom of the world, just because I considered religion to be of too awful a nature to be believed in without making it undergo the closest scrutiny. There is a fearful

amount of lukewarmness in the matter of religion in the present age; it being often made a subject of convenience and of taste rather than of serious duty. Let there be earnestness whatever the creed may be. I much prefer an enthusiastic to a cold Roman Catholic. I will, therefore, be no half Protestant. As long as I can speak or hold a pen I will witness against the corruptions of Rome, believing them, as I do, to be subversive of true Christianity and hostile to the best interests of man. And this task I have already begun by writing a series of papers on "Romanism and Some of the Sources of its Strength," which will be published (the first is) in the *Free Press* in the form of leading articles. The first is of a very general nature, but in the second I have attempted to go to the root of the matter, by elucidating the primary cause of the corruption of the Church of Rome, and the consequent peculiarity found in her dogmas. The latter point I have never seen touched, and the whole article will, I think, be something novel to you.

The eager lad was so earnest a Protestant as to espouse the cause of Father Chiniquy, who was then visiting Aberdeen, and to contribute to the *Aberdeen Free Press* (in 1860) the series of articles referred to above. In one of them he has the significant sentence: "A friend of ours attributes his conversion from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism to the fact of having been aroused to inquiry by a course of lectures delivered to prove that Roman Catholicism was true and Protestantism false." This is not exactly true of

himself, for he had been in doubts long before the lectures, but it is tolerably clear who is pointed at. He resumes: "In our contest with Rome we labour under an additional disadvantage—our opponents will not so much as listen to our arguments. Consequently they are separated from us by a gulf which we cannot bridge, and by a distance to which no friendly voice can reach. To us it appears one of the most mournful sights that fallen humanity presents, to see men thus hugging their chains —veiling themselves from the light of day—so infatuated as to believe—yes believe—that the good, the noble, the gifted, whom they see arrayed against them, are on the road to eternal ruin, and that the warning cry of these is but the devil's voice."

That Mr. Macdonell gained intellectually from this early struggle there can be no question. He came to regard his earlier faith with a kindlier eye, though his reason never came nearer it by an inch. The Roman Catholic Church always seemed to him the most implacable foe of liberty.

He acquired at this time a love for ecclesiastical controversy and a mastery in it, in which he was not excelled if he was equalled by any journalist of his time. "Church history," he declared enthusiastically in one of his early *Free Press* articles, "should be the study of every man, whatever be his position in life, instead of being, as at present, the concern of the few." When the bitterness of the fight was mitigated, he studied with deep interest the greater works of Catholic divines and saints. And the debate introduced him to the field

in which the mature work of his life was done—that of foreign politics.

His new friends were happily able to provide him with a congenial religious home. In the Presbyterian churches of the time his restless and sensitive mind would hardly have acquiesced. The revolt against their characteristic theology had hardly begun. Mr. McCombie had, without ceasing to be in warm sympathy with the Secession Church in which he was born and brought up, become a member of John Street Baptist Church in Aberdeen; ministered to at that time by a man of remarkable ability and freshness of mind, the Rev. George S. Mee. A sermon of his * which has come into my hands shows the theological position of the little society. Without formally rejecting the old theology, they had begun to translate it. They were disciples and warm admirers of John Foster and Robert Hall. Foster had gone the length of rejecting one main doctrine of the older creed, but his dissent was not expressed in his public teaching, and on the whole the orthodox looked on unalarmed. Mr. McCombie, though not a Calvinist, never broke with them on any essential point, but he lived to see many of his pupils go further than himself. It is the common lot of reformers. The members of this school longed to see religion brought into closer alliance with the intellectual activity of the times; and to John Street Baptist Church was attached a literary society, then full of life and vigour. In this atmosphere Macdonell breathed freely and happily. He soon became a leading figure in the little band. How much he

* "Christian Immortality." Aberdeen, 1858.

missed its warmth is shown by his letters to Miss McCombie, written during a temporary exile in Old Meldrum, a large Aberdeenshire village. As they are almost the only letters of this period which have been preserved, I give them in full :—

OLD MELDRUM.
April 3rd, 1861.

MY DEAR MISS McCOMBIE,—

Excuse me, please, for not writing to you sooner, for I assure you that, between one thing or another, I haven't had much time to myself since I left Aberdeen. The hurry is over now, however ; this has been an entirely idle day as regards business with me ; so, the "grinding" portion of my work being done, I find myself, at 8 o'clock p.m., in a position to scrawl you a few lines. About what ? It wouldn't do, you know, to get up any more paradoxical theories just yet, after the fate which the last of the kind suffered. Instead of metaphysics, then, we'll talk on sensible subjects, for the general edification. We'll speak about the weather, and the state of the roads, and the prevalence of sore throats, and colds, and coughs, will we ? Well, we wouldn't want news then, for all these exist in a condition or in abundance that would have justified the exclamation of "Prodigious!" from Dominie Sampson. Fortunate are ye, I say, who walk on paved streets, and who don't require to change your shoes some twice or thrice a day at times, and who, in consequence, aren't suffocated with colds, and tormented with coughs. And miserable are we who live in a country town, where the atmosphere is a vapour bath and the road a "mud"

one. In fact, Old Meldrum isn't a likable spot. The town looks as if it had been built by chance. One person has tumbled down his house in this fashion and another in that. Now the gable and now the front protrudes; and the streets radiate from a square, which, in justice, I must term large and respectable-like, in a very staggering condition indeed. He who "planned" them evidently didn't know that "a straight line is the shortest distance between two points." (N.B.—I'm not defending the mathematical accuracy of the definition.) Or perhaps he placed a high value on picturesque confusion. Or it may be that the inhabitants considered that, as Britons, each had a right to do as he liked in the construction of his "castle." Very likely; for the Old Meldrum people get the name of being somewhat queer. Strangers don't like them. A lady told me a few evenings ago that now that she had been here for about two years her favour for them was about as great as it was upon the day of her arrival. They are said to be a shrewd, money-making people—intent upon business, and jealous of the slightest interference with their pockets. "He who steals my purse *doesn't* steal trash," they think; no, but good hard coin, possessed of a certain marketable value, and capable of yielding a heavy percentage of profit when laid out with judgment, or in default of that with cunning. And yet they are a church-going people. None more fierce than they at the Disruption. Those of the different sides would hardly speak to each other, or speak only in accents of invective—and all for the cause of religion! They are cooled down now, of course. "I'm not so bigoted as I was,"

candidly said an intelligent Free Churchman to me the other day. At present they are fortunate enough to possess two able and pious clergymen in the persons of Mr. Cumming, of the Free Church, and Mr. M'Crie, of the U. P. I heard both last Sunday. The first discoursed in a practical, useful style. If there were little ornament in his words or depth in his thoughts, there was much earnestness and force in the man's utterances. Not a learned or profound sermon by any means. I could easily have imagined a more philosophic treatment of the limits of Reason and Faith than that which he gave; but still his sayings were fresh, pointed, devout, and thoroughly applicable to life. He evidently believed that there was sufficient mist outside, without any addition from metaphysics inside. The truth which he pressed home was the necessity of trusting absolutely in Faith in those matters which transcend our Reason —trusting absolutely, and not in fear. Walk without trembling, though the night be dark, even as Abraham of old did when commanded by the Lord to sacrifice Isaac, without any reason being given, or any explanation of the way in which Isaac could die and yet the promise of God be realized.

Mr. M'Crie's sermon was of a different stamp. It was an exposition of the process of Christian development after the work of sanctification. The reputation of the preacher had led me to expect much from him, but not what I heard. There was manifested an intimate knowledge of the results both of practical and speculative thought—not by direct reference to either, but by the familiar, almost unconscious way in which both were used as materials

for building. With the accurate analysis and logical grasp, and with the philosophic precision and almost classic polish of the preacher's style, I was equally struck. And beyond all there was a fervour—a deep, all-embracing earnestness—which I have seldom seen equalled. Mr. M'Crie is getting old, however, and his utterance has become slightly affected, but still are to be seen unmistakable traces of the eloquence for which he was once known. It was beautiful to see the old man's face kindling up,—his manuscript disregarded, — his whole frame trembling, and his voice husky with emotion as he concluded his sermon. Everything about him, indeed, struck one—his venerable appearance, the nobility of his countenance, and the natural dignity of his carriage. Like Mr. Mee and Mr. Bell, his congregation is small; his church, which isn't so large as that of John Street, being but partially occupied during the afternoon on which I heard him. But he is thoroughly appreciated. By his own people he is said to be idolised, and by every one here his piety and ability seem to be admitted.

The other preachers are Mr. Davidson, of the Episcopalian Church; Mr. Easton, of the Established; and Mr. Solomon, our supervisor. I have heard neither. The last, who is the Wesleyan-Methodist, is a well-informed and thoughtful, amiable, and pious gentleman. He occasionally officiates in the Free Church here, and in some of the churches in Inverurie also, and is considered an excellent preacher—the best in the neighbourhood, it is said, with the exception of Mr. M'Crie. He expressed great regret to me yesterday that the wide nature of his district left him

so little time for study, and that there was so little suitable society for his daughters and sons (I believe I should have reversed the order). Certainly it's a hard case when one has a thirst for mental improvement and can't satiate it. Rather than become a machine, like many business men with whom I meet, I would break stones at the roadside. In fact, I should never like a business life—like it, I mean, in the sense that I could, without regret, spend my days at a desk. Stronger and stronger is my determination becoming to join the Press ere many more years shall have passed over my head. What are paltry hundreds a year in comparison with the turning of oneself for several hours a day into a ruling, writing, and calculating machine? Not but what I could set myself to the task if absolutely determined. When I was in Pirie's office, in Aberdeen, I used, much as I hated the interminable calculations I had to make, and the endless rows of figures to add, and the etc., etc., to sit down with grim determination to my work, and to perform an amount of it which I have no inclination to perform again—which, indeed, is frightful to contemplate. You may easily imagine the deadening effect which such a life has upon the noblest parts of our nature. You get exact, no doubt —but it is the exactitude of a machine, *plus* the lifelessness.

From another Aberdeenshire village he writes:—

But to speak seriously, I was extremely glad to see your handwriting. For, as Mr. Mee so truly remarked last Sabbath evening, let a man searchingly inquire what is the most valuable of

his possessions, and he will find that it is not his balance at the banker's, not broad acres, but the place he holds in the hearts of others. This is true—true to the letter, as all who have left a circle of dear friends such as I mixed with can testify. And it's so cheering to see that we are remembered—that, though absent, we live in memory. As for those whom I have left, so far from being likely to forget them, they haven't been an hour out of my mind since I saw them last. Forget them? never, while I live. Each and all have a niche in my affections, and my memory is stored with photographs of them, taken in all conceivable humours—"from grave to gay, from lively to severe." I see them scolding, bantering, angry; I see them instructing, disputing, reasoning, declaiming, listening. Such a circle I never saw before, and feel sure will never see again. The debt I owe to one and all I can never repay save by thankfulness. The two years I passed amongst them—comparatively wasted though they were—were the best spent of my life. I am not the same being I was when I came to Aberdeen, so much have I been acted upon by the superior natures with whom I came into daily contact. There was something beautiful in the intercourse of the whole coterie, all the members of which, while differing so much in mind and character, seemed to have some one striking feature which both marked them out and bound them to the others. The hours which have been passed in concert will, I feel confident, be remembered as bright spots on the existence of each, and as a living refutation of the assertion that life

is devoid of joy, friendship but a name, and that, however fair the outside may be, there is ever hollowness within. My opinion, not only of woman, but of man, has, I confess, been thus elevated to a height beyond that of most with whom I meet. I, at least, have found men and women better than they have been called, and have little patience with those who buttress their speculations and assertions by arguments drawn from what they would seem to consider the universal baseness of mankind. I look upon it as an extremely dubious sign when I witness—as I often have—scepticism as to the earnestness of professing Christians, and in the nobler parts of our nature. In a case of this kind one is tempted to ask the unbeliever how he got his knowledge—directly or through report. If directly it bodes ill of himself; for "show me a man's friends," says the proverb, "and I'll show you himself." And if through report, we must tell him to open his eyes and look—look to find, for jewels do exist, though for most part uncut, and perhaps muddy. Few things do I recollect with such pleasure as the evenings at Mount Street,* so genial and free, and so calculated to instruct and to stimulate to thought. It's a pity that notes of some of the conversations weren't kept; for they ranged, as you know, over every subject conceivable and inconceivable, conditioned and unconditioned, and called forth no end of knowledge, thought, and (from certain quarters) nonsense. But you were going to give me a harangue on the dispersion of coteries. You don't surely mean to say that ours

* Mr. McCombie's house was 2, Mount Street.

is being dispersed; it seemed healthy enough lately. I hope the members aren't quarrelling with one another; which, somehow or other, where the fair sex is concerned there is ever a tendency to do. It's quite true—you needn't look grave. The unfortunate mortals who in irony are called the lords of the creation quarrel about their weaker sisters, and these weaker sisters, with tenfold vehemence, quarrel with one another. The strife of the former is as nothing in comparison with that of the latter. For you women have nothing to rely on, as an instrument of attack and defence, save your tongues, and hence, woe betide the poor unfortunate who becomes a mark for your invective! It's useless denying it; Miss Mulock confesses that it's true. Men, on the other hand, have physical force to fall back upon in cases of emergency; and though they may never dream of employing it, still, it is a latent power, the possession of which consciously or unconsciously makes them dispense with the volubility of their sisters. It's quite true that many men are physically weak and many women physically strong, but even then the assertion holds good, for the majority give a tone to the minority, whatever may be the nature of its constitution. With which bit of sermonising I pass to matters on which we are more at one.

Receive, then, in the first place, my thanks for the notes of Mr. Mee's last two sermons. I perused them with great interest. Though not equal to many other of Mr. Mee's productions,—which is no heavy criticism,—they bear his seal. They have that nameless something which ever marks the

fruits of an elevated mind, however unequal such may be; just as in the face of every intellectual man or woman, whatever may be its cast, there is a nameless something which distinguishes it from the mass. What in Mr. Mee would be considered commonplace would be deemly highly meritorious in one of lesser mark. The nonsense of a great mind has been justly said to be more instructive than the wisdom of a fool. For the wisdom of a fool doesn't belong to himself; it is borrowed or stolen, and dimmed, instead of brightened, by its passage through his mind. But a great man's absurdities are valuable on account of the mould in which they have been cast. The main conclusion to which they lead is erroneous, but the road to it will always be richly lined and valuable in itself. Thus, if they don't yield a direct value by being sound, they are indirectly valuable by being suggestive. We are in the company of one whose keen and extensive vision enables him to discern the hidden and the distant, as well as the near and the seen, although a defect in his spectacles gives an oblique appearance to a portion of the prospect. But Mr. Mee's mind, besides its loftiness, was so well balanced, and had received such an equable culture in all its parts, that there was a uniform justness in his conclusions such as I have seldom or never seen equalled. No matter what might be the subject of consideration—whether theology, philosophy, science, literature, politics, or matters in general—his perception was so clear, and his statements so logical, that to me at least they almost uniformly carried conviction with them. He

seems to take nothing for granted; everything appears to undergo a minute analysis, and then to be laid aside in a corner of his mind, with the reasons attached. Thinking, with him, I am persuaded, is rather an unconscious act than a thing of effort, to be assumed or postponed by an act of will—and this I look upon as a characteristic of the highest order of minds. The truly great poet sings because he can't avoid it—because nothing but rhythmical expression can contain the breathings of a soul so intense as his. And the greatest thinkers—unlike us ordinary mortals, who, in Goethe's language, think about thinking—use their reflective powers, as I have said, almost without an act of will, though, of course, not in the higher regions of thought, without intense exertion. Indeed, in respect of effort the deep and the shallow thinkers are perhaps equal in one respect; for as the province where each investigates is the horizon of his view, there is equal obscurity whether that horizon be near or distant. What to one man is a winning-post, to another is a starting-point; the hard-won conclusions of this man are the household words of that. We are all born with the capability of seeing clearly to a certain distance, greater or less according to the structure of the eye and the nature of our position. After this we can find our way only by dint of groping, and by the help of lanterns and assistance from others, and by reasoning from the known to the unknown. We begin in earnest to use our logical and intuitional powers—both of which, I am disposed to think, are rather one faculty working under different conditions than two, separate and distinct.

What we call intuition appears to me to differ from logic in nothing but speed. The process is the same in both; the only distinction being, that in the case of the former we travel so quickly along the logical pathway that the intermediate points are unseen. This, if true, would explain why we are more intuitive in the evening when excited, and more logical in the morning when calm; and why women are more intuitive than men, and poets than professional thinkers, seeing that the very delicacy of the mental structure in the female and the poetic character renders it more susceptible of excitement. I remember, when engaged in conversation with Mr. Mee one evening on the intellectual difference of Paul and John, he read a bit from one of his old sermons, in which he, in some measure, combated the current notion that Paul was purely a logician. Speaking of the custom of the latter to leap, in his own rough, abrupt way, "from total to total," without there being any apparent connection between the two localities, he said that the more he studied the transition the more amazed was he at the profundity of their union. This, you see, while showing the intuitive as well as logical nature of Paul's mind, seems to point as well to the fundamental unity of the intuitive and the logical faculties. Logic you may compare to a rocket, which leaves a path of light behind it in its journey through the air; intuition to a shell, whose beginning and ending are in fire, but whose track is invisible to any but the tutored eye. What's your opinion? Tell me when you write, and also what Mr. McCombie thinks.

I was speaking about Mr. Mee's sermons. How I

miss them already! I have heard both the Established and Free Church ministers here, but with little pleasure and little profit. Both seemed to be well-meaning men, and the Established Church minister (he was a stranger though) was fluent enough; but after hearing both I couldn't help asking if this was the kind of preaching which is to ennoble and instruct mankind. To hear commonplace following commonplace was bad enough, but ten-times worse when there was a total want of freshness in the conception, no individuality in the utterance, little or nothing to mark anything like an adequate realization of the texts in hand. In the Free Church minister I saw a man the very look of whose face bespoke faultless orthodoxy, but who addressed his hearers in the conventional and lifeless phraseology of his cloth; couching his solemn meaning in forms of speech which are nothing but fossils of an extinct world—mummies which tell of a great people, but carrying, as far as I can see, no living meaning to the hearers. I wonder if he ever heard of John Foster's essay "On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion," or of William McCombie's essays on "The Pulpit in Relation to the Age"? I hope I don't wrong the preacher by making my own listlessness the measure of his sermon; and, indeed, I hardly think I do when I remember the apathetic and stupid faces of not a few of those around me. And yet the preacher seemed an earnest man, though the stolidness of his countenance bespoke a want of intellectual ability. But the want of this is not the cause of the prevalence of the style of preaching to which I refer; nor can we trace it altogether to a

want of earnestness; it is rather the result of defective culture. I don't mean the culture got at universities, but that more valuable one to be acquired by intercourse with the world, and still more by lonely study and self-communing, and which results in the acquirement of that conqueror of the world, a lofty ideal. Could preachers only *see* the necessity of a higher style of instruction they would give a higher; they could do so were they to try. But their aim is often as woefully low, and their opinion of the field which belongs to the gospel so narrow, that they don't bend the whole of their available strength to the duty of preaching. I don't want what is called intellectual preaching to become the rage—not at all; what is wanted is freshness and life. The dull, dry nothingism which but too often emanates from the pulpit wouldn't be tolerated, even as off-hand conversation, in an intelligent company—no, not even from the preachers themselves; why then should it be considered meet and fit for the house of God? But I must drop the subject at present, else I won't leave myself room for a sentence about anything else. Even as it is I expect a thundering lecture for my "prolixity;" but don't be alarmed, I'll be more brief in future.

It will give me great pleasure to meet your wishes in respect of *Faust*. Unfortunately my copy of Blackie's translation is at present in the hands of a friend, but should he be done with it by Wednesday you shall have it then. I can, however, give you Filmore's version, and perhaps Hayward's prose one. If you wish for literal accuracy, Hay-

ward's would, I suppose, be the most suitable; but if you desire a reproduction of the poem itself,—the soul as well as the body,—I recommend Blackie's. I am told that it is as close a translation as the nature of the two idioms will permit. And not only the sense, and often the exact words, but also much of the wonderful rhythm of the original is preserved. Filmore's translation is generally more melodious than Blackie's, but it is inferior in point of correctness of rendering and clearness of expression, while the beautiful irregularity of the original verse—which Goethe uniformly suited to the nature of the theme—is abandoned for a more formal and monotonous measure. Still, some parts of Filmore's are very fine,—finer, perhaps, than the corresponding portions of Blackie's. It may be disputed whose translation of the Prologue is the better; some think one, some another. Filmore's is the more elegant and melodious; Blackie's the more literal and nervous. Blackie's version is, I believe, almost word for word. At the same time it must be admitted, I think, that the music of Filmore's— and the one merit of this sublime hymn lies in its music—is, in respect of liquid flow, the more seraphlike. It is, however, complained of as giving a very inadequate idea of the power and impetuous rush of the original. Had I time I might say much more on the distinctive features of the two versions. I haven't read Hayward's yet, but intend doing so soon for a purpose.

P.S.—Here are two lines from Goethe, expressing exactly what I alluded to on Saturday night:—

> "Talents are nurtured best in solitude,
> But character on life's tempestuous sea."

Won't I give it to them yet for their undue disparagement of Goethe on Saturday night! Give him his due, I say. I don't say he was a good man; far from it. But he wasn't heartless. And he didn't use his sweethearts merely for the purposes of his art. The idea is absurd.

Macdonell was fascinated by Foster, and frequently quoted from him in after years. He would have agreed with the critic who said that these writings of Foster are not merely fitted to preoccupy the youthful mind with just observations on men and things: "They lift the young reader to a peak of Darien, whence a new world opens to his view—the immeasurable ocean of human life, where, if other explorers have penetrated they have left no track and mapped out no discoveries." But he was still more profoundly moved by other writers to whom he was introduced at this time. Mr. McCombie was a born metaphysician, and was in no mean degree familiar with the literature of philosophy. Through him Mill, Hamilton, and the rest became known to the young student, who soon mastered them. Of Mill he was wont to testify that no one, with the possible exception of Carlyle, had influenced him so much. Mr. McCombie's judgment of Mill's philosophical powers was less enthusiastic, and more in harmony with that of the present time. Other studies, notably French, were pursued with eagerness, and the results appeared in the columns of the *Free Press*. I have not been able to discover his first appearance in print, nor is there any tradition of the "joy and pride" with which young writers usually hail their first victory

over an editor. But at first his contributions were reviews of books, and one of the earliest was a paper on Scottish ballads. He soon made his way to the full confidence of Mr. McCombie, and contributed leading articles. From the first his characteristics are traceable; his boldness and confidence, his sympathy with freedom, the carefulness of his preliminary study, the elaboration of style, and the marked preference for certain classes of subjects. In the *Free Press* for December 28th, 1860, he reviews the autobiography of Carlyle of Inveresk, and says of the sturdy old Moderate: "In such a case as this indignation were useless, even were we able to feel it; which in his case laughter disables us from doing. Contempt would be the proper sentiment, if not for the men, at least for their conduct. Yet there is such a healthy manly air spread over these pages that it is difficult to cherish even contempt. Carlyle had indeed not the slightest spark of Christianity; he was what one of his critics has termed him, an openly irreligious man. But then he made no pretensions to being a Christian; he aspired to be a fine gentleman and a thorough man of the world. . . . He was one of the innumerable class who, themselves entirely devoid of spiritual realization, quietly sneer at those who possess it." Reviewing Principal Tulloch's work on English Puritanism and its Leaders, he says, while injustice was formerly done to the Puritans there was now, mainly through the influence of Carlyle, a danger that their faults might be overlooked. "Cromwell was a man cast in no ordinary mould, and with the opposite extremes of his character strongly developed, and so was liable to be

mistaken by onlookers. It is only the mediocre of whom we can judge accurately; the uncommon is for us acting in a way that defies explanation. Our difficulty in judging of the character of Goethe, for example, is on account of its being, like his genius, universal, a compound in huge measure of the good and bad in human nature." In the issue for June 28th, 1861, he writes elaborately on "The French Legislative Chamber and the Liberty of the Press." The article bears considerable traces of independent study; he refers to the leading French journals, and handles with less decision than usual the question whether articles should be signed—concluding that there is something to be said on both sides. Other articles on France follow, and show an increasing familiarity with the subject. So highly, indeed, did Mr. McCombie value him, that on going to the Continent for the benefit of his health, he left the journal in the hands of his trusted lieutenant, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Macdonell, who was to write the leading articles. His sense of the responsibility of his position is expressed in the following letter to his uncle :—

2, Millburn Street, Aberdeen.
June 13*th*, 1861.

I have been rather busy in my spare hours for some time back, and expect to be so for some time to come. Mr. McCombie's health, which for years has been delicate, has at last fairly given way. Continued brain work, with hardly any intermission for years, has reduced his strength to the lowest ebb The result has been a command from his medical

adviser to cease every kind of mental work immediately, and to proceed to the Continent without delay. This, I am convinced, is the only way through which a renewal of his health can be even hoped for. He thinks so himself, and intends starting for Geneva on Wednesday next with two of the family. In his absence I have consented to write the leaders for the *Free Press*. The task will be difficult to one so young as I, and will entail much labour upon me. Yet I am glad of having the opportunity of making some return for his oft-repeated kindness to me. You may think that I have assumed too great a responsibility in agreeing to perform the duty of an editor at my time of life. But any danger in this way is lessened by the fact of the sub-editor being a gentleman of great prudence and caution. Before my articles appear he will see that they contain nothing that may overstep the bounds of moderation.

I wish I had been in the habit of paying more attention to politics than I have, for then I would have found the task of leader-writing easier than I do. As it is, every week I will have to go through a great amount of reading in newspapers, the quarterlies, and books. It is the reading, not the writing, that is the chief labour in journalism. It is one thing to gain sufficient information upon a question to enable one to form a clear idea of it, and another to be so well versed in all its details as to be able to discuss it in writing.

This week two articles of mine will appear—one on "The Indian Budget," the other on "American Slavery." The one on "Vagrancy" is by the sub-editor. I will send you a copy of the *F. P.*, which

you will perhaps be kind enough to send to Elsie at Tomintoul when you have read it.

He made many friends, as was natural, during this period. Perhaps none was so unique as the Rev. John Peden Bell, minister of the United Presbyterian Church, Midmar, an intimate friend of Mr. McCombie, and a man of similar tastes. Mr. Bell was noted for his lofty simplicity of character, his profound thoughts, and, not least, his laborious and obscure modes of expression, which, though here and there illuminating and memorable, were frequently awkward and cumbrous. His hearers were often mystified, but ever listened in faith. His meditations were much concerned with the deeper Christian verities, and in occasional little books he gave them to the world. Some months after the publication of one of these volumes he was preaching for a friend, who congratulated him on the success of his work. Mr. Bell's countenance beamed. "Has it sold?" said he; "I am so glad." The good man was troubled by inward fears that no one would purchase a copy of his book, and had not ventured to ask his publisher about its fate. When he was assured on the authority of the said publisher that the edition was sold out he was sensibly relieved. Mr. Bell occupied himself also with the land question,—a subject on which Mr. McCombie also wrote and thought much,—and I am assured by a well accredited authority that the country minister's contributions to the subject were of great value, and anticipated much of what has passed into legislation, as well as of what is still matter of discussion. The

problem was and is naturally of the first interest to agriculturists. Mr. Macdonell, however, does not seem to have been engrossed by it, nor was he ever a close student of political economy.

Another friend with whom he maintained close intimacy during his life, and who remains affectionately loyal to his memory, was Mr. H. Gilzean Reid, now of Warley Hall, Birmingham, the well-known President of the National Institute of Journalists, and lately M.P. for the Aston division of Birmingham. Mr. Reid was at that time a young journalist in Peterhead, with thoughts and hopes like those of his friends; both were nearing their "days before them, and the tumult of their life." I am greatly indebted to Mr. Reid for placing in my hands what he has preserved of their lengthened correspondence. His steady, faithful, helpful friendship Mr. Macdonell never ceased to prize.

The graver responsibilities of life fell upon him at this time by the death of his father. Mr. Macdonell caught rheumatic fever in Rhynie, and never fairly recovered. He came to Aberdeen, thinking the work would be less trying than it had been in Rhynie; but the hope was unfulfilled, and he died of heart disease in 1861 at the age of forty-eight. His love and trust for his son never wavered; all shadow of displeasure between the two had vanished, and on the day of his death he asked James to read to him the last chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians—the triumphant resurrection argument of St. Paul.

When the father died the mother was left with nine children, the youngest only three weeks old. From this time James Macdonell was the head of

the household. He most cheerfully took upon him the burden of the family, and his love and care for every member of it only ceased with life.

He now needed a fixed position on the press, and one was found mainly through the kindness of one of the John Street circle—Mrs. Barker. At her house in Aberdeen he had been accustomed to spend one evening a week, and her sparkling talk of pictures, book, and men made these a bright spot in his existence. Through her he obtained an introduction to the Edinburgh *Daily Review*, where he began his career as a professional journalist.

This chapter may be fitly ended by his fine tribute to William McCombie, published nearly ten years after in the *Spectator*. It tells much of both men.

William McCombie.

" With just suspicion the world scans those reputations which are local, and those records of personal greatness which have not been countersigned by its own hand. The assurance of Wordsworth that " strongest minds are often those of whom the noisy world hears least," is apt to provoke the reply that, in days of such publicity as ours, whatever is good, or strong, or noble, is known in proportion to its degree. And yet, to those that have lived a life of real kinship with their fellow-beings, there occasionally comes the communion of some man who, while unknown to that mass of readers which constitutes the world, is seen to tower head and shoulders above the crowd, and to be, in some of the chief elements of noble personality, at least the equal of men whom the world has lifted with acclamation into high niches of its

Pantheon. Such a man died at Aberdeen last week at the age of sixty-one, in Mr. William McCombie, the editor of the *Aberdeen Free Press*. He had read much, thought much, and written much; but the world has never given a welcome to his books. As a speculative thinker, he had toiled long and laboriously; but his written dissertations were not distinctive or complete enough to be singled out for special remembrance; and, outside the boundaries of the district in which his noble qualities had given him a modest fame, his writings were known only to a few lonely students. As a journalist, he had, in the later years of his life, written with a compass of knowledge and a philosophical elevation of thought which lifted him into an altogether different atmosphere from that breathed by the respectable scribes who minister to the acrid Liberalism of provincial Scotland; yet even his reputation as a journalist had never travelled far beyond the limits of Northern Scotland. Hence, if measured by the public recognition of his work as a thinker, a writer, or a publicist, he might seem to merit no more than a few lines of gratitude and respect. Nevertheless, by those who knew the man himself, who knew what he had been, what he had become, and what store of great qualities lay in his nature, William McCombie will be remembered as one of the most remarkable men that Scotland has produced during the present generation, and as, among her self-taught men, certainly the most remarkable after Hugh Miller.

Scotland has been rich in men who have reached some degree of intellectual eminence without the aid of schools or of any regular teachers, and whose

stimulus towards study has come from the fervency and the intellectual character of Scottish religious life. High among that class stood William McCombie. His father held the farm of Cairnballoch, in the parish of Alford, about thirty miles from Aberdeen; the farm had, for the most part, been reclaimed by his father from rugged moorland and stony hill-side; the holding was small and the soil poor; so that the future metaphysical and theological student was brought up in an atmosphere of what English farmers would deem stern poverty. To Mr. McCombie, as to many other Scotchmen, the big family Bible was the first spelling and reading book. From his boyhood he was charged with the duties of the farm, and, while he was still a youth, the chief share of the work fell to his hand. At an age when most lads are still at the grammar school, he was holding the plough; and among the young men of the district he saw no more noble exemplar of life than that presented by the farm labourers or the farmer's sons, who, when the work of the day was done, thought of nothing but frolic or sleep. He had no intellectual companions, and at times he could get no more nourishing intellectual fare than the "Penny Cyclopedia," or Harvey's "Meditations among the Tombs." Nevertheless, he became an insatiable reader. In the long evenings of winter he read by the light of the kitchen fire; and when sent to Aberdeen with the carts, he seated himself on the top of the stuff which he was bringing to Cairnballoch, and read as the horses jogged slowly home. At length there came to the young student that moment which, in one form or other, comes to all

earnest men; that moment which Christianity calls the season of conversion, and in which the moralist sees a conscious choosing of what seems to be noble and right, a deliberate rejection of what appears to be unworthy and bad. To different men the change comes in different forms; to one, as the conviction that peace, and rest, and goodness, and the possibilities of a noble life lie in the hard embrace of a dogmatic creed; to another, in the counter-conviction that the rejection of all dogmatic creeds must be the initiatory rite of a pure and true existence; to a third, in the feeling that the secret of a good life must be found in self-denying work; to a fourth, in the belief that the hunger of the soul can be satisfied only by some mighty act of self-sacrifice, whose consequences shall be as illimitable as life itself. In the case of William McCombie the change, almost of necessity, took a theological form. Among that Scottish people which has not forgotten the traditions of the Covenant, and which is slowly but surely vanishing, religious thought and theology hold such a place as they occupy among the corresponding class of no other country. Among them the Bible still keeps a position of almost Hebrew supremacy. It is emphatically the Book of Books; morning and night it is read with such eagerness and such thoroughness as can be matched only in the studies of the commentator; and the precedents of Moses and of Joshua would still be applied to the affairs of modern political life with an intrepidity which might recall the deliverances of those cuirassed theologians who studied the Books of Kings by the light of the camp fire after Marston Moor and Naseby fight.

The household of Cairnballoch emphatically presented that hard and Hebrew, but still noble type of religious life. Mr. McCombie's father had been reared in one of those smaller religious sects to whom even the austerities of the Scottish Kirk seem only so many base compromises with the world, and to whom the cardinal precept of the New Testament is, " Come out from among them and be ye separate." Thus the son was taught to regard the acceptance or the rejection of certain dogmas as the first duty of life, and, in the season of choice between good or evil, he was brought face to face with questions respecting the providence of God, the efficacy of prayer, free-will and predestination, the mystery of election, the possibility and limits of a revelation, the character and office of the Church, the nature and scope of her sacraments, the limits within which she might command the world to accept her decrees. Long brooding on these problems gave Mr. McCombie a higher education, in the true sense of the word, than that which the mass of men receive from the discipline of a scholastic course. The training made him an independent, original, and vigorous thinker. Moreover, it so quickened his intellect that, while still a young man, and still oppressed by hard daily toil, he employed the scanty leisure of his evenings in writing a book. The stone window-sill of a little opening in his father's cottage he used as a writing-desk, and, for the want of a convenient seat, he had to kneel on a large chest. The book which he called " Hours of Thought," was a collection of moral and religious essays, stamped by such reflection as might come to a lonely student, and written with a dignity

and sobriety of style which are seldom exhibited in the first efforts even of the rhetorical schools. Dr. Chalmers, we believe, thought so highly of the volume, that he recommended it to his students. After the publication of that book, Mr. McCombie wrote much and well. In time, as modest wealth came to his family, and he was no longer beset by the old necessities of daily toil, he was able to give himself more and more to thought and study. How independently he thought he showed by a book on "Moral Agency," in which he combated the Calvinistic theology of his country. How eagerly he entered into the controversies respecting the duties and the future of the Church was seen from a book on "Heresy and Schism,"—the most rhetorical and least satisfactory of his writings. How keen a critical faculty he had developed in the sphere of literature was displayed by his biography of Alexander Bethune, one of two remarkable brothers who, like himself, had been wholly self-taught, and had plucked literary achievements of no common order from the hard necessities of manual toil.

A more remarkable exhibition of intellectual energy it would have been difficult to find throughout Scotland than that presented in the household of Cairnballoch. The last thing which a stranger would have expected to hear discussed on visiting the quiet farmhouse would have been the abstrusest problems in speculative philosophy; the last person for whom he would have looked would have been a speculative thinker and writer. And the expectation would certainly not have been changed by the discovery that Mr. McCombie was a thorough farmer. On the

breeding of polled Aberdeenshire cattle he could talk with much of the profound knowledge, and some measure of the infallible judgment, which belongs to his neighbour and cousin, Mr. McCombie of Tillyfour, now the Member of Parliament for West Aberdeenshire. Alike in the theory and the practice of agriculture, he might have won the highest rank had he devoted all his energies to the task. And when, three or four years ago, he removed from Cairnballoch to Milton of Kemnay, Aberdeenshire, he rapidly made his fine farm a model both for the completeness of its arrangements and the quality of its stock. Nevertheless, it was to books, and the strife of politics, and the din of ecclesiastical polemics, and the debatable ground of speculative philosophy that his mind most eagerly turned. He read everything, from the debates in the General Assembly of the Free Church, to such books as Juffroy's review of the Scottish philosophy, Sir William Hamilton's "Lectures on Metaphysics," Mansel's Bampton Lectures on "The Limits of Religious Thought," and John Stuart Mill's "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy." His library was, for that of a farmer, very large, and was filled with treatises of revolting dryness on the controversies of the Christian sects. To the lonely farmhouse came a crowd of newspapers, monthlies, and quarterly reviews; the latest poem, or novel, or history; the political, theological, or philosophical work of which the world was speaking. And, meanwhile, Mr. McCombie himself wrote books full of thought, quarterly-review articles, newspaper articles, essays, lectures, sermons. As a lecturer, he was eagerly welcomed both in town and country by those

typical Scotch audiences who covet depth of thought, earnestness of manner, and grave dignity of style. The religious sect to which he belonged accept the pulpit ministrations of laymen; and those who have heard Mr. McCombie preaching in his later days, as, with accents of profound solemnity and reined-in passion, he read discourses full of cloister-thought and living experience, find the remembrance uneffaced by the subsequent recollections even of great pulpit orators. But it was in conversation that his powers were most vividly seen. As he walked through his fields with a friend, or sat talking by the fireside, he would quietly turn from root-crops, or the points of cattle, or the economics of drainage, to a comparison between the respective literary merits of Archer Butler's and John Henry Newman's sermons; the intellectual stimulus given by John Foster's "Essays;" the theology of Mr. Maurice; the theological position of the *Spectator;* the ethical creed of the *Saturday Review;* the utilitarian theory of Morals; Neander's subtle analysis of the fashion in which Christianity had transformed the thought and institutions of Paganism; the question whether the human mind could have an apprehension of the Infinite, and whether Sir William Hamilton had not forged the most potent of weapons for a destructive scepticism in his famous criticism of the rival Philosophies of the Unconditioned taught by Cousin, Schelling, and Kant; the question whether Mansel's application of the Hamiltonian philosophy to theology would not, if it were tenable, be fatal alike to theism and morality; the question whether Mr. Mill had not utterly misunderstood Sir William's philosophy of

the Absolute, and whether the author of the "Logic" and the "Political Economy" was not incapable of working in the highest region of speculative thought. Such were the topics of discourse that came easily and naturally to this Scottish farmer. The town-bred student, fresh from college classroom and communion with the highest culture, found that much of the best thinking of Europe had floated to a bleak hill-side, and that, from an unassuming farmer, it elicited comments stamped by a rare vigour of intellect and a still rarer personality.

Mr. McCombie was a keen politician, and a decided Liberal. He detested the petty tyranny of the Scottish lairds as heartily as he despised their Toryism, which is perhaps the most bigoted, the most stupid, and the most contemptible creed that ever found its way into a substitute for a human mind. Being the most courteous of men, he wrote and spoke with a certain decorous moderation against the feeble misdoings even of these aristocratic animalculæ; but, more than any other man, he contributed to free Aberdeenshire from their influence, and to send two Liberals to Parliament as its representatives. For many years he had strongly felt the need of a local newspaper, which should be at once decidedly Liberal, and earnestly Christian. To represent the religious earnestness, as well as the advanced Liberalism of the county, Mr. McCombie and some of his friends founded the *Aberdeen Free Press*, of which he became the editor, and which he conducted until he was stricken down by mortal sickness. Untrained in the ways of journalism, and despising some of its traditions, he tended for a time to write over the heads of

his readers. The leading articles which he penned in the seclusion of Cairnballoch, or in the quiet study of his town house, too often bore traces of the metaphysical atmosphere in which they had been conceived. Readers who pined for the personality and the hard-hitting which distinguish the provincial press were often dragged against their will through a thicket of ethical and philosophical principles. Like most men with a decided turn and aptitude for metaphysical thought Mr. McCombie found it difficult to discuss any subject without a reference to first principles. He constantly sought an ethical or a philosophical basis on which to rear the slightest superstructure of Imperial or Ecclesiastical policy. Some idea of the estimation in which he held the duties of a provincial editor may be gathered from the fact, that a few years ago he wrote a series of articles on Christianity in relation to Civilization, in which he discussed such themes as Buckle's theory of historical progress, Mill's defence of the inductive school of ethics, and Comte's attempt to found a religion on the enthusiasm of a few devout atheists, and without the assumption of a God. If Mr. McCombie thus limited the number of his readers, he gave a new moral dignity and a new tone of intellect to the journalism of Northern Scotland by the subjects which he chose for discussion, by his philosophical habit of treatment, and by the noble morality of his creed. Latterly, moreover, his political writing became much more practical. To qualify himself for the treatment of the Irish Land Question he paid a visit to Ireland, and looked at the country with the eye of an experienced farmer. The result was the

publication of a pamphlet, which the *Spectator* criticised at the time of its appearance, and which ranks with the ablest discussions of the subject.

Self-taught men seldom acquire fineness of taste, and they usually display a yearning for the louder notes of rhetoric; but this self-taught farmer and journalist had risen far above that infirmity of his class. His taste was so fine as to verge on the fastidious. He did injustice to the poetical genius of Byron, for example, not merely because he viewed the character of that gifted voluptuary with all the scorn and contempt which befits a noble nature, but because he fancied that the colouring even of Byron's least offensive work bore the touch of a loud and glaring vulgarity. On the other hand, he displayed the keenest appreciation of all that is fine in literature, as well as of all that is strong and pure. Milton has had few more appreciative students; on Wordsworth he would pour forth the subtle comments of a mind that had lived a lifetime in the atmosphere of the "Excursion;" and those passages of the "Two Voices" and of "In Memoriam," in which Tennyson gives melodious utterance to the floating doubts and yearnings of an age that is ill at ease, he would recite with a strange unearthly fervour, which was none the less impressive because its elocution defied the most cherished canons of the schools. Mr. Matthew Arnold, who doubtless fancies that "sweetness and light" cannot flourish in the remote seclusion of a Scottish farmhouse, would have stared to find the subtlest of his own criticisms delicately weighed by a farmer who, immediately after discussing Mr. Arnold's essay on Spinoza, would

quietly go out of doors to see what progress had been made with the ploughing or the threshing.

After all, however, it is not on account of his intellect, his acquirements, or his culture that Mr. McCombie will live in the memory of his friends, but on account of his rare and lofty personality. He had been endowed with that gift which we vaguely describe by the words personality, individuality, character; a gift which, when ennobled by intellect and sanctified by religious earnestness, ranks with the most precious and the rarest boons that can be lavished upon man. Mere intellectual cleverness is as worthless as it is common. In this age of negative criticism, the power of dexterously wielding what Mr. Carlyle calls "attorney logic," and of spying flaws in any philosophic arraignment or defence, belongs to nine educated men out of ten. But we soar into an altogether different atmosphere when we hold communion with a lofty nature. Archbishop Whately pointed out the difference between the two types of manhood when, speaking of his Oxford life, he said that his own judgment was trusted only so far as it was supported by a logical statement of its grounds; whereas, he added, the words of Newman carried weight because they were Newman's words. The Tractarian leader possessed the gift of personal influence because he was seen to be, not a mere reasoning or acquiring machine, but a great and subtly-organised nature, who saw farther into the Promised Land than other pilgrims, and who, therefore, spoke with a Joshua-like authority. Such, in smaller measure, was the case with the man of whom we are speaking. He lived apart, in almost austere

solitude, from all that was commonplace and mean. His thoughts were lifted above the accidents of his station and his time into a region of Wordsworthian purity. The religion of his country had so transformed his nature that he seemed to be a Covenanter born out of due time. That religion, while it gave a tone of sternness to his ethical verdicts, also gave to his nature an element of womanly gentleness, which found solemn voice in the supplications of family prayer, and which blossomed into deeds of beautiful friendliness. An altogether nobler soul it is the privilege of few to meet. The present writer, who knew William McCombie as few men can know each other, and who has had sufficient means of measuring him by a metropolitan standard, has met with men of far more brilliant faculty, and with minds of far keener dialectical edge, but with no man through whose nature there rings so distinctly the note of personal greatness. The dead farmer, journalist, and thinker was one of those pure and lofty souls that keep the life of a nation green.

All this expressed his settled thought. "The privilege of unmerited deference and consideration from accomplished and vigorous minds in the fulness of their powers is," it has been said, "one of the unforeseen rewards, and seldom a dangerous one, of the later years of those under whose eyes, in any real spiritual relation, noble and cultivated men have grown from their youth upward."* Mr. Macdonell's constant tribute of reverence and gentle courtesy came from the depth of his heart.

* John Hamilton Thorn.

CHAPTER IV.

EDINBURGH.

THE *Daily Review*, on which Mr. Macdonell had obtained an engagement, had been started in April 1861 by Mr. David Guthrie, proprietor of the *North British Agriculturist.* Mr. Guthrie acted from the purest and most patriotic motives. He believed that the better traditions of Scottish religious life and history were not adequately represented in the Edinburgh press, and desired to see a daily paper conducted on Christian principles. The new journal made a good start. James Manson, its first editor, was an accomplished man, and a brilliant writer. Under Mr. Guthrie's guidance and with a good staff of assistants its reputation as a literary journal and a newspaper grew. But on his death the proprietors hit on the singular and unfortunate experiment of appointing Henry Kingsley as his successor. Mr. Kingsley had made a considerable reputation as the author of some spirited novels in which he made good use of his Australian experiences, and he could on occasion write a clever, sparkling article. But it was too much to expect him to master the details of Scottish eccle-

siastical controversy, or to breathe freely in its air. His term of office was brief, and he occupied part of it in acting as war correspondent to his journal. I can recall the consternation with which some of his rollicking leaders were read in northern manses. He did not succeed in attracting readers to fill up the places of those whom he lost, and the paper fell off in reputation and circulation. It was afterwards in the hands of very able journalists, but never retrieved its fortunes. Mr. J. B. Gillies, who was long closely associated with the *Review*, and at one time occupied the editorial chair, writes to me: "I believe that if half the money doled out to keep it alive in its later years had been freely and prudently spent at the time it had the tide in its favour, it would have been a valuable property and a power for good to this day." It may be so, but it had to cope with the formidable opposition of the *Scotsman*, and also with what was not less formidable, the dislike of Scotsmen for sectarian newspapers. It was always dubbed the Free Church organ; and human nature is so constituted that this, while it repelled other readers, did not invariably attract those of the Free Church.

Of these months in Edinburgh few traces remain. Mr. Gillies writes: "What struck me most in the character of Macdonells work was its thoroughness—a character which belonged to the work of most Aberdeen literary men I have known, and which, I suppose, is partly owing to the start the northern counties took in education through the Dick Bequest, and the advantages for obtaining higher education chiefly through the universities. The

rest of us on the *Daily Review* thought Macdonell too formal and pedantic for a newspaper man; but that was, I fear, because we had not the high conscientiousness which impelled him to do his very best at whatever cost of effort. He was always intensely in earnest. His subject carried him away. He could not write to order, or at least he could not write till he had come to entire conviction, and he expressed his conviction with vehemence. Writing for the press was a serious and responsible business with him. He wrote and spoke what he had satisfied himself was true, with no respect for accepted authorities. While admiring those traits of character, I always felt he was working too much under high pressure, and I used to doubt whether it would not have been better for him to husband his strength, so as to make it possible for him to do longer service in his generation."

He enjoyed in Edinburgh the company of his friend Mr. Gilzean Reid, who was then editor of the *Edinburgh News*, and a leader in the social movements of the working classes. In company with Mr. Reid he went round the churches of the city. Among his favourite preachers were Dr. Hanna, then colleague to Dr. Guthrie; and Dr. Walter C. Smith, the author of "Olrig Grange," then minister of Roxburgh Free Church. He used to tell with glee how Dr. Smith struggled one day to express his admiration of St. Paul, bringing out at last the words, "The fact is—Paul was *a real honest man*." Through the introduction of Mr. McCombie he met Joseph Robertson, John Hill Burton, and others. The following letter gives his impressions of a well-known Scots worthy, Dr. James Begg.

53, GEORGE IV. BRIDGE, EDINBURGH.
August 31*st*, 1862.

MY DEAR MR. McCOMBIE,—

I have met with another notability since I saw you—I mean Dr. Begg. Mr. Reid had mentioned my name to him, and he called upon me one day at the office; but, unfortunately, I wasn't in. I returned the call on Friday evening, at his beautiful villa at Newington, and took tea with him and his family. Truly he is a remarkable man. Not by any means a man of fine mind—rather the reverse indeed—but possessed of no end of mental brawn and muscle. Before being an hour in his company you would recognise in him one whose life had been one continual battle, whose whole soul is bent upon fighting; ever dealing, even while conversing with you, trenchant blows to some imaginary adversary, and dealing them with almost as much gusto as he would on a public platform, or on the floor of the Assembly Hall. As he spoke of some wrong that he had assisted in righting, or was trying to right, or dealt with some sophism that it had been his life-object to expose, there was such a look of determination in his face, such a rough strength in his rhetoric, such a fiercely contemptuous tone in his voice, or so much broad humour in the metaphors with which he shivered his enemy's arguments, that you couldn't help feeling that here, unmistakably, was a formidable adversary and a leader of men. Our conversation turned mostly upon subjects calculated, more than any others, to "bring out" Dr. Begg, if I may so express myself. I refer to the grievances of the working-classes, and to the efforts

that are being made by him and others to ameliorate them. Mrs. McCombie would have been delighted, —and, indeed, this part of my letter is for her more than for you. Tell Mrs. McCombie that I made known to the Doctor her wish that he would come to Alford, and stay long enough to see the working of the farm-kitchen system in that quarter. I likewise told him what stores of information on that subject Mrs. McCombie had ready to pour into "his lap" whenever he should show himself; but—stupid mortal that I am, after so much teaching!—I was unable to give him an account of the schemes for the improvement of the agricultural classes, which Mrs. McCombie has so often dinned into my ears. I contented myself with saying that she *had* schemes, and that she would be delighted to unfold them to him. "Yes," said the Doctor, with energy, "a proper remedy is the thing. Vague declamation about the evils of the system is useless, unless you can point out how the system can be improved." He added afterwards, when we were speaking about Cobden and Bright, "The battle of life can be won only by paying attention to details; without that the declaiming about generalities is of little use." Altogether, I liked Dr. Begg. Rather a hard, and not what you would call an amiable man, I should say; yet real, and outspoken, and strong, and very valuable to the world,—altogether, indeed, a true man.

I have had little time to go about since I saw you. As I said, I have been very busy. And so I have, —more so than at any previous period of my new career. The absence of Gillies in the country for

more than a fortnight, and the want of any reported matter at this dull season, has thrown the whole burden of the paper on my shoulders. I have frequently had to give out twenty columns of copy—or more than three sides of the paper—after nine at night, and the average quantity for a week or two has been, I should say, fully six columns. Then the summarising has occasionally been long. Friday and Saturday papers contained each a column of summary, and it was about one o'clock on each of these mornings before it was commenced. So you see that, between that time and three—by which time they were in type—there wasn't a minute to spare. But the writing of a column in from an hour and a-half to two hours isn't so hard work as one would think. The boy who has to trot up and downstairs with the slips of MS. has, perhaps, the hardest lot of the two! However, I hope to get relief ere long. I intend making a push for an assistant. You will be glad to hear that it is the opinion of not a few—and of Dr. Begg among others—that the paper is improving. By-the-bye, I don't wonder at Mr. Robertson saying I should have £200 of salary. £300 a-year is paid for the sub-editing of the *Courant*—£200 to the first, and £100 to the second sub-editor. I have every reason to think you may rely on the correctness of this statement. A few lines from you would be very acceptable. Hoping that this will find you in good health,

I am,

Yours, with much affection,

JAMES MACDONELL.

W. McCOMBIE, ESQ.,
Post Office, Brodick, Arran.

I have gone over the file of the *Daily Review* for the period during which Mr. Macdonell was one of its staff. The paper was generally made up of eight pages—sometimes four large pages; it was well if sparsely printed, and many of the articles and reviews of books were decidedly able. But the advertisements were obviously too few, and the space given to Free Church lectures, presbyteries, and the like would hardly be believed in these days. Brief and unimportant in other respects as was Mr. Macdonell's connection with the Edinburgh press, in one regard it bore significantly upon his after career. It confirmed his already deep interest in ecclesiastial controversy. Edinburgh was the headquarters of the Scotch Churches. At that time some of the most eminent leaders of the Free Church were still surviving. Their influence was naturally strong, so strong that the advancing waves of thought which were invading other sects were kept back for the time, to return with vehemence. Turning over the pages of the *Daily Review*, one observes the scorn and anger with which these men treated such manifestations as "Essays and Reviews," and Bishop Colenso's "Criticisms of the Pentateuch." There was little alarm, for they were confident of their ground. They had not got so far as the John Street Baptists; they had not even acknowledged any necessity for revising the current terminology of religion—a terminology they could still vivify. They were, it is true, beginning to recognise that that middle position between Established and Voluntary Churches was untenable; that they must either go backwards or forwards. The negotiations for union

between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian were beginning, and the second chapter in the history of the Free Church was opened by the induction of Dr. Rainy to a theological professorship.

All this will seem to most readers matter of narrow and provincial interest. In a sense it seemed so to James Macdonell. But he would have said first that provincialism is not bad, but good. "Provincialism is the nursing mother of character, morality, intellect, philosophy, and religion. The lack of provinciality denotes the lack of colour."* And, next, the Arnolds and the Roman Catholics, who sneer at the sublime provincialism of the Scottish seceder are themselves as provincial as he. "Since churches deal with what is infinite and eternal, they are as much a speck in the expanse of infinite space and eternal duration as the Calvinistic and excommunicating unit of the Scottish town." He therefore applied himself with diligence to the study of these problems, and to the end read with lively interest the debates in the General Assemblies, and wrote much on Scottish churches and churchmen. A now very eminent Liberal peer had to take part in a Scotch ecclesiastical debate in the House of Lords. He was told that Mr. Macdonell knew more about the Scotch churches than any other man in London. The peer asked for an introduction, invited the journalist to dinner, and was thoroughly "coached" in all the intricacies of "patronage," spiritual independence, and the Sustentation Fund.

Some of his judgments may be quoted, for im-

* *Spectator*, May 25th, 1872.

partial and cultivated criticism of these men is perhaps not abundant. The Moderates he always regarded with a kind of humorous contempt. "They bore the scars of sportsmen's battles on their glowing faces. The rich coppery hue of many a reverend countenance had been got only by dint of long and persistent effort—by nightly touching and retouching, by the laying of tint on tint, by the determination never to throw away an opportunity of giving mellowness to the alcoholic colouring of years. Some of their faces could not have been tinted for less than five or six hundred pounds, and if they had drunk old port instead of toddy the operation might have cost them half as many thousands. There were "drunken presbyteries," filled, of course, with theologians, who even in the last stages of articulation boasted that they were Moderates. One who played a great part during the Ten Years' Struggle of the Disruption consumed as much toddy as would have drowned the General Assembly." * "Cook, Bryce, and Robertson of Ellon, the leaders of the Moderate party, were all able men; but they were far more than out-matched, both in the pulpit and in debate, by Chalmers, Cunningham, Candlish, Welsh, Guthrie, Begg, and the other leaders of the Nonintrusionists. The Disruption carried the flower of the clergy to the Free Church. But before many years had passed it began to be seen that they were to have no successors. The very zeal of the Free Church had generated an impatience of independent thought, and a demand for the rigorous Calvinism of the Covenant, which were strangely out of harmony with the growing liberalism

* *Spectator*, May 30th, 1874.

of the age. Young men of rare powers did not find such fetters congenial, and the Free Church is paying the penalty which always awaits those institutions that shut themselves into an iron shroud of dogma. The leaders whom it followed into the wilderness of voluntaryism are all dead, with the exception of Dr. Buchanan, a respectable debater, and Dr. Begg, who had the most earthly mind of them all, and who is indeed a vigorous political agitator rather than a theologian—a debater who would have become the equal of any man in the House of Commons in the power of sheer hard hitting, if he had been caught young enough ; a born pugilist, an incarnate denial of the precept, 'Blessed are the meek,'—but not a father of the Church. The only worthy successor of the vigorous band is Dr. Rainy, and he stands alone." Writing on the death of Dr. Guthrie, he said,* "Dr. Chalmers would have taken a leading place in any assembly in the world; and there are few debaters either in the House of Commons or out of it who would be a match for Dr. Chalmers." Of Guthrie's work for children, he said it would give him a lasting claim to the gratitude of his country. His sermons he characterised as "altogether pieces of passion and imagery. So instinct were they with passion that they contained scarcely one calm or sober sentence, and so full were they of figure as to outshine in wealth of hue the most florid of undergraduate rhetoric. Indeed, their luxuriance would sometimes tempt a smile if the fine words did not always aim at the most sterling of practical work, and reveal the prompting of as genial a soul

* *Saturday Review*, March 1st, 1873.

as ever used a figure of speech." Norman Macleod he considered "a far abler man, and cast in a manlier mould," though he did not excite such vehement enthusiasm. He came to look with hopefulness to Principal Caird and others of the same school. He reviewed in the *Spectator*,* Professor Flint's "Philosophy of History," and spoke warmly of the author's enormous reading and keen critical power. But "Mr. Flint has not taken the trouble to make himself a good writer. He flings out his words with the rude profusion of a German professor, and his sentences are often so long and shapeless as to draw distressing maledictions from the sensitive reader. He does not hit the nail on the head at one stroke as an artistic workman does, but he tries again and again till he is out of breath. Hence he is verbose even when he tries to be condensed."

On no subject did he ever write with greater decision and energy than on the Bill for the Abolition of Patronage in the Church of Scotland, brought in and passed in 1874. I should despair of making the subject clear to those who do not understand Scottish ecclesiastical history. Suffice it to say that Mr. Macdonell took the view of the decided majority of Free Churchmen, and also of the Liberal party led by Mr. Gladstone, in disapproving the measure. He wrote both in the *Spectator* and *Examiner* against it with the utmost vehemence. As the *Examiner* was a Radical organ it naturally took that side; but Free Churchmen were pleasurably astonished by the support of the *Spectator*. His drift is sufficiently indicated in the following passage:

* *Spectator*, November 21st, 1874.

"The first thing that a generous and far-seeing leader of the Established Church would have done on resolving to abolish patronage would have been to ask the Free Church, 'Will you come back to us as equals? We offer you terms of absolute equality. We invite a union of the two bodies; we will give you a share of our scanty endowments; and we are ready to join the £270,000 a year which we raise by voluntary contributions to the half a million which is the result of your more fervid zeal.' Such an invitation might have saved the Church of Scotland; but not one whisper was heard of any wish to bring back the seceders. They will not be allowed to vote even for the election of ministers, although their theological creed is practically identical with that of the Establishment. They can gain the ecclesiastical franchise only by leaving a communion which is endeared to them by the memory of a heroic struggle. But they would be curs if they were to buy the sweets of conformity at such a price, and curs are not generated by the rigour of the Calvinistic discipline. It has been said that since the Free Churchmen left the Establishment as individual men they may go back to the same state of sublime isolation. Dr. Chalmers and his party left the Establishment not like individual deserters, who run secretly away after nightfall, but in a great compact mass in the full light of day. Their leaving was one of the most impressive scenes in the history of modern Scotland, and they instantly proceeded to form a Church as fully equipped with all the appliances for teaching the gospel as the Establishment itself. Chalmers, Cunningham, Buchanan, and

Begg possessed masterly powers of organization, and they have built up a fabric which is a model of completeness. And yet Free Churchmen are told they may come back to the Established Church as individuals. No doubt they may, if they leave their places of worship to be closed, their colleges to become music-halls, their missions to become by-words of neglect, and their faithful ministers to starve. They are at liberty to become members of the Establishment at the expense of ceasing to be men of honour."

His view of the future of Scotch theology is thus expressed: "Both High Churchism and Calvinism are fated to be doomed to extinction by that moral sense which is the last court of theological appeal, and which ultimately determines the creed of Christendom; by that sense of right and wrong which no hierarchy can ultimately deprave, and which all the General Councils of the Church are as powerless to conquer as human arm is to keep back the tides of the sea. It is the theology of the conscience and not of the clergy that is to be the Christianity of the future, and to that theology Scotland is now turning an attentive ear." *

Out of his small salary in Edinburgh he was helping to provide for the household left behind in Aberdeen. I give one note—a specimen of a hundred like it—which will show that unremitting, thoughtful, self-sacrificing, and cheerful care with which he ever watched over his mother and those of the family who needed help.

* *Spectator*, March 11th, 1871.

"DAILY REVIEW" OFFICE, EDINBURGH.
September 5th, 1862.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I send you a post-office order for £7, a pound note beside to keep you going till you get the order cashed. I should have sent this before. This is my present to you; those to the others will follow. I am glad Helen has left Culter, and gladder that she is coming to Aberdeen. When I get Margaret, too, I shall be all right. I saw uncle Sandie this afternoon. I am in great haste at present, and of late have been tremendously busy. You will get my box in a day or two, and you will find something in it for most of you. I'll write soon again. I've a bad cold just now, otherwise I am quite well.

Your very affectionate son,

JAMES.

CHAPTER V.

NEWCASTLE.

AFTER spending less than a year in the office of the *Daily Review*, Mr. Macdonell was promoted to the editorship of the *Northern Daily Express*, a Newcastle paper. The former editor had gone north, I believe, to conduct the *Aberdeen Herald*. The salary was not magnificent — only £150 a year—and the duties were at first irksome, but he was soon relieved from the worst part of the drudgery on his ability being recognised. I am thankful that now Mr. Macdonell will speak for himself. Some of his letters preserved by Mr. Reid and others give a sufficiently clear account of his life and thoughts at this period.

2, PINE STREET, SCOTSWOOD ROAD,
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
March 28th, 1863.

MY DEAR REID,—

I suppose you have been wondering—that is, supposing you have had time to wonder—what on the face of the earth has become of me. Be comforted! I'm alive and well. Only what about the letters, and the papers, and the articles I was to send? Yes, that's the question. What about them, sir? Have you seen any of them lately? because if you have you've been more

fortunate than I. Now, don't get into a passion, for you can have no idea how many excuses I am provided with. The fact is, my path to Peterhead has been paved, like the path to another place, with "the best intentions." I was to do the Marriage for you, etc., etc., only when the time for work came I found I couldn't—yes, sir, positively couldn't. To cut the story short, my position in the *Express* office is different from what it used to be. I have got an assistant who does almost all the sub-editing, leaving to me the general management of the paper, the writing of the political summary, and a heavy share of the leader-writing. When I tell you that just the other week I wrote, in the course of six days, five leaders—or about as much as would cover a page of the *Observer*—besides from half to three-quarters of a column of summary daily, and that, in addition to this, I was seldom in bed much before four o'clock, and was in the office at least ten hours daily, you won't say I am an idler. Usually, however, I write from three to four leaders a week, besides attending to the etceteras—a heavy item. You see what daily journalism is. I used to pine for the day when I should be an editor, and verily I've got my wish granted with a vengeance. I've been pitchforked into the present position at a ridiculously early age, and so the work—which in itself is very hard—is telling heavily upon me. In fact, it is a serious question how long I shall be able to stand the present strain upon brain and body. I suspect a couple of years of it would ruin both body and mind. However, I am living in hope of better days. The fact is, that before I got the *Express*

it was going down rapidly. The circulation was lessening, the advertisements falling off, and our rival the *Chronicle* was rapidly gaining ground. Our leeway must be made up; we are straining every nerve to do so; and I think we are succeeding. I am writing on local subjects whenever an occasion offers itself, and endeavouring to beat the *Chronicle* in the matter of reports. Still it is hard, uphill work, as I am beginning to feel.

All this will, I hope, sufficiently explain my silence, and why I have sent you no leaders. I should be happy, had I time, to "do" your foreign politics for you, but, in truth, as things are, it is out of the question. Considerable bits of my own articles have often to be written after midnight, and I am often so fagged and stupid that what I write is very dull and pointless.

But how is the *Observer* getting on? Well, I hope. Most cordially do I wish it success. In my mind's eye I see it, in the distance, a goodly bi-weekly*—the terror of evil-doers and the praise of them that do well, bringing in shoals of money to the pockets of that comfortable-looking individual, its proprietor and editor. Him I see comfortably settled in life, with a good and loving wife, etc., etc., etc. How my pen does rattle, like a silly fool, as it is! I once used to have dreams of this kind, but hard work, and the prospect of unceasing toil, have made me what that considerate dame, the World, terms wiser. You will be glad to hear that I am getting a very prosaic individual, with a look of gravity befitting the mental millstone

* It is now, and has been for years, a bi-weekly.

which is tied about my neck. I hope the cares of office don't weigh upon you. Tell them to get behind thee, and begone to the land where daily journalists dwell. But you must give me a long letter, telling all about the *Observer*, and Peterhead, and yourself.

The next is to his old friend Mr. McCombie, of Aberdeen, who had published a series of essays, reprinted from his journal.

31, RYE HILL STREET, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
January 15*th*, 1864.

MY DEAR MR. MCCOMBIE,—

I owe you no end of apologies for not reviewing your book sooner. The fact is, I have, ever since I received it, been busy, desperately lazy, and now and then obliged to fill up a few of my spare hours by accepting some of the invitations to social gatherings that are so rife in Newcastle at this season. With the notice of your Essays, now that it is written, I feel very dissatisfied; so inadequate is the idea it gives of their ability. The number of the subjects you discuss is so great, the space at my command was so small, that I was fettered. You must take the will for the deed. Let me add that my admiration of your book is not less, but considerably greater, than that which I express in the review. It would have been imprudent—it might have suggested to the reader the pen of a friend rather than of a critic—had I given my opinion without reserve. Has the *Reader* reviewed the book? I should like to see what it has said, or will say, about it.

I am glad to say that everything is going on smoothly at the office. On New Year's Day Mr. M—— wrote me a letter expressing his high satisfaction with my services; and he has since added £50 a year to my salary, thus raising it to £200. This is too little, I know; but, considering my youth and extremely short experience as a journalist, I can scarcely complain of it. In about a fortnight I am to get a new and more efficient "sub," who will relieve me of some of the details with which I am at present burthened. On the whole, my experience of the *Express* and of Newcastle is favourable. I could easily conceive of a newspaper where more freedom of expression would be allowed, and of a proprietor with a broader and more cultivated mind; but I am less sure that either could be easily found. As for Newcastle, I like it extremely well. I have been cast among a circle of friends whose kindness to Helen and me is almost burdensome.

Have you noticed a long controversy on the Schleswig-Holstein question in the *Express?* It may interest you to know that one of the disputants —the Rev. Mr. Jeffrey, of Gateshead—is the writer of the articles on Scandinavian literature and politics in the *North British Review.*

We are taking an interest in the Shakespeare Tercentenary, you will see. Have you been invited to join the *National Committee?* I have, and have consented. It's not every day that one gets into such distinguished company! Mr. Linnæus Banks, in writing me, said that the editors of the chief provincial journals were to be asked to join.

By this time he was fairly into the swing of his work, and performing it zealously and successfully. As in duty bound, I have turned over the file of the *Northern Daily Express.* The journal is now extinct. During Mr. Macdonell's editorship it was a creditable specimen of its class. It had been going down before he took command. Mr. Joseph Cowen's able journal, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, had to some extent supplanted it. But the lost ground was soon recovered. Mr. Macdonell showed himself not only a good leader-writer, but a good editor. As every journalist knows, the two things are very different. But it was his nature to do thoroughly whatever he undertook. He could not brook failure. It was his business to understand what the public wanted and to supply it—so far as he honourably could. One of his first hits was to go personally to the scene of a shipwreck, and investigate the whole business. He furnished not only long, graphic, and early reports of the occurrence, but went into its causes, and severely censured the captain. An indignant contemporary asked whether he would have done better in the captain's place, to which the reply was, "Very likely not, but the captain should have done better." It cannot be denied that echoes and airs of Eatanswill rise out of these old papers. The *Chronicle* on one occasion reproved the *Express* for containing "sensational" articles; the reply may be imagined. The *Journal* had been criticizing the young editor, whereupon he strikes out, "We have always considered the *Journal* slightly stupid and remarkably dull," and promises to let his readers know when he sees the first

dawnings of thought or wit or humour in its articles. Experienced men smile at these amenities; they are rarely taken very seriously in real life. But as this was the only occasion when Mr. Macdonell acted as editor it is interesting to see how he conceived of his duties. Great space is given to local news. This is, perhaps, the chief thing necessary to success in provincial journalism. Literature is little noticed. I suppose the readers of the *Express* cared less for reviews than those of the *Free Press* and the *Daily Review;* but occasionally there is a well-written critique, evidently by the editor. The summary and the leading articles are capably done. While Newcastle subjects are not neglected, the editor has a high idea of his function, and in one number there are articles on the "Electoral Farce in France," and "Prussia and its Rulers." As time goes on the paper manifestly improves in interest and vigour, and the leading articles show increasing resources of knowledge and style. But the strain on so young a man was heavy, and he grew weary of it. He writes to his ever faithful friend Reid:—

31, RYE HILL STREET, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
April 24th, 1864.

MY DEAR REID,—

I have a favour to ask from you in connection with the following advertisement, which appears in the *Spectator* of yesterday:—

"EDITOR.—Required on a leading provincial journal, of Liberal politics, published weekly, in an agricultural district, a resident editor. He must be

a forcible, terse, and able writer. Address, stating terms, general political views, age, etc., Gamma, care of Mr. R. F. White, 33, Fleet Street, London. All communications will be confidential."

I think you know that I should have no objection to edit a good weekly paper, provided a sufficient salary were offered to me. I should be very sorry to leave Newcastle, where I have found kind friends; and I may search long without finding so good a position as that which I now occupy. Still I should, for various reasons, prefer the editorship of a weekly, for a few years at least, to that of a daily paper, even though I had, as the cost of it, to bid good-bye to my Newcastle friends. The drain which a daily paper makes on the mental resources of a young man is frightful, and it leaves him next to no time for real study. Now I want to learn German and Italian. I want to be a thorough political economist, to get more than a superficial knowledge of history, and to master most of those political problems which constantly present themselves in public discussions; and I want, besides, to write for the Quarterlies. Situated as I am, all this is out of the question. I am placed on a treadmill, the motion of which prevents me from resting, thinking, studying. Nor is this all. Of late my health has been occasioning me a good deal of uneasiness. For weeks it was so bad as to make me almost incapable of working; and, in obedience to the commands of my doctor, I was at one period of that time obliged to go to the country for a few days.

All this makes me desirous of securing the editorship of a good weekly paper. At the same time, my

present situation is too valuable to be trifled with. But I should like *you* to write to the advertiser, stating that a friend of yours, the editor of a leading daily journal, is desirous of obtaining the editorship of a first-class weekly. In order to take away any appearance of the desire for such a change being dictated by incompetency, it would be necessary to state that it is due to the fear, on the part of myself and my friends, of my health suffering from the intense exertion required in my present position. You might state that satisfactory testimonials of ability as a leader-writer and as an editor could, if desired, be forwarded from various journalists and literary men of high standing; and that, if necessary, I could send specimens of my articles. It would, of course, be very gratifying to me if to this you should add anything in my favour that you could conscientiously say. It would be necessary to take the edge off the announcement of my youthfulness by letting "Gamma" know that I have been long a writer for the Press, and that I became the editor of a daily paper at a very early age. "I have learnt discretion in a painful school!"

Next comes the question of political views. Well, I am a Liberal. But I am not a violent Liberal. I am not a Radical. [His opinions were more advanced at a later stage.]

There remains the question of salary. You might say that I should expect at least £200 a year, for which I should undertake all the leader-writing and all the reviewing of the paper.

P.S.—*Monday.*—I send you a copy of to-day's

Express. You see I set down the Tercentenary Celebration as something very like a sham.

[The inquiry was made. The situation did not seem suitable, and Mr. Macdonell preferred to remain on the *Express*.—H. G. R.]

P.S.—Do you know a temperance lecturer of the name of —— ? He delivered a lecture in Newcastle, the other night, on certain articles on the Permissive Bill which appeared in the *Express* and the *Journal*. I sat for about an hour hearing myself called in direct terms fool and knave, and charged with the "atrocious crime of being a young man," "a sucking editor," etc., etc. In to-day's *Express* I have replied to the fellow. Read his lecture and my article.

J. M.

The postscript is amusing. Mr. Macdonell was at that time violently opposed to the Permissive Bill, and wrote against it in his journal. This called forth the wrath of the gentleman referred to above, whose name it is not worth while to print. He found in the "sucking editor" a master of vigorous polemic, and the fight proceeded for some time, to the amusement of the Newcastle public and the benefit of the *Express*.

His life in Newcastle went on pleasantly. He had his sisters from Aberdeen to stay with him. He liked the energy of the town, which was rapidly growing in size and importance. Like Aberdeen, Newcastle has always numbered among its citizens men and women of culture and literary tastes; and

Macdonell, with his social disposition and sunny manner, soon found access to their circle. Among his best friends there were Mr. and Mrs. Robins, and two scraps of letters to her have been preserved.

31, Rye Hill Streey.
Monday.

Dear Mrs. Robins,—

I send you Mr. Bayne's *Essays*, the *British Quarterly Review*, and Cairne's Lecture on America. The other book on America that I spoke of I shall forward to you in a few days. In the *British Quarterly* both you and Miss Page will, I think, find much to interest you. Let me direct your attention to the article on the "British Association," which gives, at some length, an account of the visit of the body to Newcastle, and details with great gusto the skirmish in the Geographical Section in which your friend Mr. Craft shone so brightly. There are other articles in the number of more ability, though of less local interest—as, for instance, those on ecclesiastical questions, and on current politics.

31, Rye Hill Street.
Friday.

I shall be rather busy during the time of the Show. Having talked about nothing but festivals for some time, I must now talk about nothing but oxen,—about which I know a great deal! Already I have written one article on the Show, in which I have manifested an appreciation of it that is quite sur-

prising to myself! By dragging in the corn laws, the British Association, continental fairs, the breeding of cattle, the Emperor of the French, horse-racing, Cardinal Richelieu, the French Revolution, and the French law of inheritance, I have done my best, throughout the space of one column, to exhibit my proficiency in that greatest of arts—the art of concealing ignorance—

> "Of all the thousand arts the learned devise,
> Nature's chief art is that of *looking* wise."

Of course you know the couplet. It occurs in the sixth book of a poem by Ali Hoaxem, an Arabic poet who flourished about 200 B.C. Would you like to read his works?

But the end of his connection with Newcastle came in a very unexpected manner, detailed in the following letters to Mr. McCombie and Mr. Reid. Though they cover the same ground, they are so characteristic that it is worth while to print them both.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.
May 1*st*, 1865.

MY DEAR MR. MCCOMBIE,—

I didn't imagine, when I wrote to William lately, that I should so soon have to give another account than I then did of the *Express*. It is getting on very well, the circulation having risen a thousand during the last three or four months. But the fact is, the paper was sold to-day to a Mr. Saunders of London! Till about a week ago I was not informed that such a design was in

contemplation, and I then heard the news with an amazement which is now shared in by every one in the office. However, the legatees are all old women; the executors are little better; Saunders has offered a good price, as he safely may; and a month hence the *Express* will be his.

One of the indispensable conditions on which it was sold was, that the manager and myself should obtain a year's employment under the new proprietary. I found in my interviews with Mr. Saunders, the other day, that he was only too glad to accept the condition; and he has offered both of us an advance of salary if we consent to enter his service. His offer to me is this, that I should receive £230 a-year in the shape of salary, 5 per cent. on the profits of the paper, and the privilege of purchasing a partnership, to a limited extent, in it. The salary I don't object to, just now; but the 5 per cent. would yield preciously little, I fear, under the system on which Mr. Saunders means to conduct the paper; and as for a partnership in the concern,—though I might, I daresay, get command of sufficient capital to buy one,—I should not be disposed to invest money in the enterprise, however much of it I had.

It is not Mr. Saunders' terms that I object to, it is his system. That is so bad that nothing but absolute necessity will induce me to retain the editorship of the paper. Mr. Saunders, I must inform you, is the proprietor of an establishment in London in which a staff of journalists prepare the news of the day, and write leaders on the principal current topics. The matter thus obtained is put in

type; then stereotyped three, four, or five times; and then the blocks are sent by afternoon train to Plymouth, Hull, and other places in which the firm have papers of their own, or an arrangement for supplying the papers of others with stereotyped matter. Eight columns of such will reach the *Express* office at half-past twelve at night. These will include all the general news, most of the summary, *and even the leader*. The *Express* will every morning be an exact copy of other journals, except in having one, two, or at most three columns of local news. Not one single leading article will be written in this office; and nothing more important will come from the pen of the editor than occasional short *sub*-leaders, too mild in tone to offend any person or any party. For Mr. Saunders thinks, as he distinctly told me, that it is not the duty of a journalist to write strongly, or to commit his paper to the advocacy of any opinion or any principle. Under him the *Express* will have no creed, no principles, no anything but a sneaking determination to pay. I have conducted it on a different plan. While taking care that it should be the mouthpiece of no party, I have written as decidedly as I could on every question that has come up during the last two years. Whatever the paper has wanted,—and I am conscious that it has wanted much,—it has at least had a decided creed. All this is to be changed. And it so happens that the only question on which, so far as I could gather from Mr. Saunders, the leaders turned out of his mill speak with decision, is one in connection with which the *Express*, and even I personally, have won local notoriety, and

incurred much abuse—the Permissive Bill. But then, my decision went in one direction—against it; his goes in another—for it! What a triumph this will be to the local Alliance party, who seldom lose an opportunity of having a fling at the *Express!*

It will be obvious to you, think, that for me to remain here, as the nominal editor of the paper, while I had no more power to shape its policy than the youngest boy in the office, would be very undignified, and very injurious to my professional prospects. It would be different supposing I were to join the paper, for the first time, under Mr. Saunders. But I am well known as the editor of it. I am identified with the political opinions advocated in its columns —opinions which, in some cases, are very different from those which were expressed in it when Mr. Manson held the reins.

I have, therefore, declined to say whether I shall retain the editorship or not, but must give my decision on Saturday. If I see I can do nothing better, I may keep it for a time, but I have resolved in that case to seize the first suitable opening that presents itself, even though the salary should be less than that which Mr. Saunders offers. Meanwhile, I am to go to London on Thursday, furnished with as many letters of introduction to the principal journalists and men of letters as I can get, to see whether I can obtain employment as a leader-writer, or in some similar capacity. You will excuse me, I feel sure, for asking whether you can give, or procure for, me any such letters. I and our family have had to draw upon your kindness so often that I am reluctant to put you to any trouble; but I have

so few literary friends, and the urgency of the case is such, that I know you will excuse me. A letter to Professor Masson might, I think, be of service to me; and so might one to Mr. Halliday. Of course the more I get the better. I have taken the liberty of asking Dr. Joseph Robertson to furnish me with some. Having been in Edinburgh for a day or two lately, I had the pleasure of dining with him and his family.

You may rely upon my acting in this matter with calmness and discretion. If I leave the *Express* and Newcastle, it will be with deep regret. I feel so knit to the paper, in fact, that when severed from it I shall feel, I fear, as if I had lost a part of myself! The prospect of its sinking into a mere copy of other papers is to me very depressing. Besides, the opinion of all with whom I have spoken on the subject is that the change will ruin it. This is an intensely local town. The people want long reports, and if the papers have them not they die. A project is on foot, too, to start a new evening daily paper here. Our manager and myself have been advised to attach ourselves to it in our present capacities, and also as part proprietors. I think we could raise the capital; and a great portion of the *Express* party—who, when Mr. Saunders' reign begins, have no paper they can, even by courtesy, call their own—would, perhaps, rally round us. But I am not at all disposed to engage in the enterprise; in fact, I won't do so. Had the *Express* itself been offered for sale to the manager and myself,—as it would have been had Mr. Saunders not come to terms,—my course might have been different.

47, LEAZES TERRACE,
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
May 1st, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

The *Express* is sold,—"sold" in more senses than one! A Mr. Saunders, of London, is the purchaser, and he comes into possession a month hence. He is anxious that I should remain as editor, and has offered me £230 a year as a salary, 5 per cent. on the profits of the paper, and the privilege of purchasing a share in the concern. To which I answer that I shall see Mr. Saunders plunged into the Bullers of Buchan first.* It is not these terms I object to—they would do just now; it is the man's system, which is so bad that nothing short of necessity will induce me to retain the editorship of the paper. He has a manufactory in London, at which the news of the day is prepared and leaders written. The matter is then set up, and stereotyped three, four, or five times. Then the stereotype blocks are sent, by evening trains, to the papers belonging to the firm, and to others with which they have an arrangement for the supply of matter. Eight columns would reach us daily, including—the leader! yes, the leader! Our politics would come down from London daily, sir, by train, packed in a box. Charming, isn't it? I should be a mere cipher, with no more power to direct the policy of the paper than the smallest P.D. in the office. Nay, I should be worse than a cipher. I should be the nominal editor of a paper in which a policy diametrically opposed to that which I myself was known to have advocated would be written up. To

* The famous "boilers" on the north-east coast of Scotland, which so deeply interested Dr. Johnson. (See *Tour of the Hebrides.*)—H. G. R.

occupy such a situation would be at once undignified and injurious to my professional prospects. So, if I accept it at all, it will be only for a few months, and I shall leave it the instant I see a suitable opening, even though I should have to put up with a less salary than Mr. Saunders offers. Meanwhile, I will go to London on Thursday or Friday next, furnished with as many letters of introduction to journalists and literary men as I can obtain, to see what my chances are of employment as a leader-writer, or in some similar capacity. Can you give me any letters? Or can you get any for me? I should feel deeply obliged if you oblige me in this matter. You know Thornton Hunt, don't you? Can you give me a note to him? He's editor of the *Daily Telegraph* now? Of course I should require the letters almost by return of post. I should apologise for making a request, the fulfilment of which will put you to some trouble, did I not know that I can rely upon your kindness in this matter.

This was a great turning-point in Macdonell's life. What followed must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

LONDON—"THE DAILY TELEGRAPH."

THE time was now come for him to take his place among Metropolitan journalists—in the city where he labours for the rest of his life, and in the rush of which he felt himself at home. Aberdeen continued to be for part of the year "a land of Goshen" to him. "As I spent the impressionable part of my youth in it, as I learned to become myself in it, as I have troops of friends in and about it, I regard it with absolute affection." He had thrown himself heartily into the life of Newcastle, and had made friends even in the office of the *Chronicle*, the sub-editor of which, William Duncan, he pronounces "a fine fellow," although he at that time disliked the "roaring Radicalism" of his journal. Had things continued in their old course his connection with the *Express* might have been prolonged for a time. Even this, however, is doubtful. His eyes were turned towards London; he had a legitimate confidence in his growing powers, and for the sake of others he wished to earn a larger income. He wrote the letters printed in last chapter to his friends McCombie and Reid; his requests were promptly complied with, and the issue was immediate and satisfactory, as the following letter shows:—

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.
May 25th, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

Can you, like a good fellow as you are, send me, by return if possible, a testimonial setting forth what you conceive to be my fitness for the position of a journalist? I wish it for a particular purpose,—at present I can't explain what. But a thousand thanks for your letter to Hunt.* He has taken a fancy to me, and I'm offered the assistant editorship—not the *sub*-editorship, mind—of the *Daily Telegraph*, with a handsome and rising salary.

It never rains, however, but it pours. Russel of the *Scotsman* is anxious to get me as *his* assistant, —as leader-writer, etc. I am to go to Edinburgh on Saturday to see him. *Telegraph* or *Scotsman*—which shall it be?

I'll write you again soon; no end of news to give you; been in London twice lately; will be north soon.

Yours (in a tremendous hurry),
Sincerely and affectionately,
JAMES MACDONELL.

H. REID, ESQ.

The negotiations are sufficiently explained in the correspondence which follows, but it may be convenient to give them in summary form. Mr. Reid's important part is best explained in his own words:—

"I became acquainted with Thornton Hunt—then

* This refers to Mr. Reid's letter of introduction to Thornton Hunt, then virtually editorial chief of the *Daily Telegraph*.

chief editorial adviser of the *Daily Telegraph.* Leigh Hunt had written in the *Spectator* a genial and charming paper on Skinner,* and his son, alike in kindly nature and obliging disposition, readily gave me counsel and hearty encouragement in my first literary venture. We had a pleasant correspondence; and when he published the *Life and Letters of Leigh Hunt*, he sent me the volumes with a letter expressive of warmest friendship. He had also taken trouble to introduce and review Skinner's *Life*, and in later years I spent delightful 'evenings' at his house in Russell Square, where the intellectual *élite* of London loved to gather, and where on more than one occasion Mr. Macdonell and I were privileged to join. I wrote carefully to Hunt, and gave my friend a suitable introduction. The stranger made his way speedily to the office of the *Telegraph*, and was received by the distinguished chief in the freest and kindliest way. This introduction—like others—will be found mentioned in the correspondence, but, unfortunately, the letter describing the interview is missing. It was to me alike surprising and gratifying. After a very brief conversation, Mr. Hunt, with his keen perception, discovered the fine qualities of Macdonell, and in effect, if not in actual words, told him frankly that he was just the person Mr. Levy and he had been looking for to train, practically, for the position of assistant-editor. The account of the engagement will be found in the letters, and though a slight misunderstanding existed for a moment, the arrangement was at once honourable

* The author of "Tullochgorum," whose life was written by Mr. Reid.

to the conductors of the *Telegraph* and creditable to the new-comer. He was now fairly afloat, and only needed the chance—the opportunity of being tested—to make his mark in London journalism. He always wrote and spoke to me in the most grateful terms of the prompt and generous recognition by Thornton Hunt, and the liberal and dignified treatment he received at the hands of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph.* He was justly proud of the position in which he was placed, and the respect and confidence were mutual and complete."

To this I need only add that Macdonell took with him specimens of his leaders, including, specially, the Permissive Bill articles which had set Newcastle astir; but the experienced and discerning editor never asked for them. In the youth of twenty-four he saw the making of a great journalist, and in this he was not alone. For the prince of northern editors, Russel of the *Scotsman*, also coveted the young man,—"Russel whose praise is in all the churches," Macdonell once remarked with a smile. He referred to the great part, not forgotten in Scotland, which Russel played in the endless ecclesiastical war, and by which, as may now be seen, he accomplished more than was clear at the moment. Without discussing controverted questions, one may be allowed to say that Russel, as a fighting journalist, stood in the first rank, and his admirable ability was appreciated by no one more keenly than by Macdonell. Indeed, as will be seen, he would have preferred the *Scotsman* to the *Daily Telegraph.* But the jealousy of a leading member of the *Scotsman*

staff (now dead) came in the way. Macdonell was simply incapable of fighting personal controversies. He shrank from them with all the distaste of a magnanimous and high-strung nature. Russel did his best to remove the difficulty, and succeeded so far that Macdonell would have joined him had he been set free from his engagement to the *Telegraph*. In the kindest manner, however, the proprietors of the *Telegraph* kept him to his bargain, for his sake as well as their own. The pertinacious editor of the *Scotsman* did not even then lose sight of him, but his roots were soon struck deep in London.

It is a notable testimony to Macdonell's qualities and his power of impressing himself on others, that his services should have been coveted by two such men. In each case it was his personality, rather than anything he had done, which fascinated; and, for those who knew him, it was the same to the last.

Had Russel's offer been accepted Macdonell's career would probably have been very different. At that period he was in full sympathy with the political position of the *Scotsman*, though in process of time he became a decided radical. Speculation is vain, but one thing is tolerably certain: he would have become a prominent figure in Scottish life. The editors of the *Scotsman* have become public personages in spite of themselves, and a Scot so liberally endowed with the *perfervidum ingenium* of his race could not have been hid.

It is a digression, but I may be pardoned in a Press biography for mentioning two interesting *ana*

about Russel communicated by one who used to work with him, and not hitherto printed (so far as I know). Russel's best articles were those written early in the day and liberally amended and enlarged in proof. This method brought out the perfection of his style. When he was driven to write at the last moment, his work was perceptibly inferior. He kept a note-book of phrases and sentences—many derived from Swift and the Queen Anne writers—which on occasion he used in his leaders, and of which he never made any concealment. I may add that Russel, in addition to his intellectual gifts, had a rare power of attraction, and Macdonell felt that he had sacrificed something in refusing the opportunity of being associated with him and the *Scotsman*. But he was soon absorbed in the thick of his *Telegraph* work, and he never looked back from the metropolis.

With these explanations the following letters will be intelligible.

ROSE COTTAGE, OLD ABERDEEN.
June 3rd, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

Many thanks for your kind notes of introduction to Hughes and Harrison.* I will, you may rest assured, call upon the former immediately after my arrival in London, and I value the introduction to the latter too much to delay the presentation of it longer than is necessary. If I can assist Mr. Hughes, through the *Daily Telegraph*, in his contest for Lambeth, I shall be delighted to do so.

* Thomas Hughes and Frederick Harrison.—H. G. R.

Since I saw you I have been at Dufftown, Rhynie, and Alford. I have greatly enjoyed the tour, and feel much better for it.

To-day I start for the south, and mean to arrive in London on Wednesday. You shall hear from me soon.

47, Leazes Terrace,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
June 5th, 1865.

My dear Mr. McCombie,—

You know, I suppose, that I have closed with the offer of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, and declined that which was made to me by Mr. Russel. I have chosen, I believe, the better situation, yet I had considerable difficulty in making the selection. The *Scotsman* is a paper with which I would like to be connected, and Russel himself is one of the finest fellows I ever met. To me he has been particularly kind. He did not conceal his strong wish that I should join his staff; expressed himself desirous to make me comfortable if I should do so; and offered me a salary of £250 a-year to begin with. In this sum, however, there was, he said, no element of "finality"; my salary would rise in proportion to the value of my services, and the higher it got the better. Anticipating, also, the objection which made me decide against his offer, he expressed, in the last letter I had from him, his strong desire to secure my independence from all control save his own. But I doubted his ability to do this. . . . . Reluctantly, therefore, I was obliged to decline the offer.

On the whole, too, the *Daily Telegraph* presents the better opening. For one thing, the salary is better, and is really very good for one so young as I. Then I shall have little night-work; eleven o'clock being, I was told, the latest hour to which I should ever be expected to remain, and nine or ten being the hour at which I can usually leave. Nor, since there are no less than three sub-editors, shall I have anything to do with the details—that is, with the drudgery—of the paper. My labours will be concentrated on the leading columns, the contents of which it will be my province to assist in mapping out, revising, and writing. But the prospect presented by the situation is the tempting feature of it. The Messrs. Levy are themselves the editors of the paper; but, tiring of so much work, they wish to train a man to occupy their own place. In time, therefore, if I play my cards well, I may be editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, in all but in name. So difficult and delicate will my duties be, however, that I may very likely fail to give satisfaction. I can but do my best, and I will do it.

As I have promised to join the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* about the 1st of July, and as I wish to spend a week or two in Aberdeen before then, I shall soon be north. I trust I shall find you all well.

Allow me to thank you for the kind testimonial you sent me. So far was I from deeming it "unnecessary,"—to quote your own word,—that I placed it first in a list of eight that I forwarded to Mr. Edward Levy, at his request.

P.S.—Have you seen John Mill's new book? I am dipping into it now and then. Hamilton's article on the Unconditioned, and Mansel's application of it in the Bampton Lectures, seem to me to get a fearful smashing. I trust some good and true Scotchman will, for the honour of our country, break a lance with Mill on Hamilton's behalf.

47, Leazes Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
June 6th, 1865.

My dear Reid,—

Don't, until you hear further from me, say anything in the *Observer* about my going to the *Daily Telegraph*. To-day I got two extraordinary letters, one from Joseph Robertson, the other from Russel. Mr. Robertson entreats me to recall my decision, and says, "The *Scotsman* would be only too glad to secure your services—giving better pecuniary terms than the Levys offer at starting, and removing the obstacle which —— so unwarrantably interposed."

This, however, is nothing to what Russel says. In the course of his letter he says, "I am sorry [you have declined my offer] for myself, *for I thought I had found at last a colleague before whom as years and work grew I could gradually give way.*" He adds that, had I given him an opportunity, he would have said, "*what I say now*—Come here and be my colleague, *under nobody*, helping me in writing on domestic politics and events [his own province, you know], which —— will not then (and nobody does now) touch, and taking certainly not

more than equal turns with him in supervising at night."

This, from Russel, is extraordinary. And I will certainly ask the Levys to release me from the agreement; if they won't, then I must in honour stick to the agreement.

47, LEAZES TERRACE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.
June 12*th*, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

I go to the *Daily Telegraph*, after all. Mr. Levy, on hearing my preference for the *Scotsman*, invited me to London to see him. I went on Saturday, and had a long interview with him and Mr. Hunt, —who, in a very kind letter, had earnestly advised me not to go to the *Scotsman*. Both were very kind, and did all they could to show how vastly better my prospects would be, as they conceived, on the *Daily Telegraph* than on the paper of my choice. I was firm, however, in my preference. I admitted that the situation on the *D. T.* would, in itself, be better than that on the *Scotsman*; but I denied that it would be better in relation to me. Did I feel then, asked Mr. Levy, that I could not discharge the duties that would devolve upon me in the *D. T.* office with the same zeal as I thought I could when I undertook them? If so, he would recommend his father, who is now on the Continent, to release me. But I felt nothing of the kind; I felt, on the contrary, that if I entered the *D. T.* office at all, I should work with the same zeal as I should have done had Mr. Russel's letter never been received. Feeling so, I said so. "Then," said Mr. Levy, "that settles the matter;

I hold you to your agreement," adding that he did so for my own sake as well as his.

Well, I regret that I am not to be editor of the *Scotsman*. Still, I've no reason to complain. . . . . I shall sit with Mr. Levy, and be his confidential helper. Gradually I shall be brought into contact with great people, — statesmen etc., — on the business of the paper. My salary, I was plainly told, would, if I gave satisfaction, rise without reference to the letter of my agreement, so that, if my health holds good, I shall face the future without fear. I have, as you say, had a wonderful run of luck. It is only three years since I joined the Press, and I'm only twenty-four years of age. So I needn't complain.

92, Guildford Street,
Russell Square, W.C.
July 9th, 1865.

My dear Reid,—

I have done the best I could for Grant-Duff, by mentioning his name, in eulogistic terms, in a leader which I have written on the Scotch elections for the *D. T.* of to-morrow. Perhaps you may think it worth while, if your space will permit, to extract the article; transferred to the columns of the *Observer*, it would do Grant-Duff a service it can't render him when in the *Telegraph* alone. It is, I may mention, the second article I have written for the *D. T.*,—the first, which appeared yesterday, being on the Pritchard case. It is probable that most, or many, of the Scotch articles which shall in future be published in it will be from my pen.

But how, I hear you asking, do I like the *D. T.*? Capitally; my situation exceeds in many ways my most sanguine expectations. I receive, for one thing, the most marked kindness from young Mr. Levy (his father is on the Continent), and am hardly, indeed, treated as a servant at all. Then, my work isn't heavy. I don't go to the office in the morning till ten, and in future shan't go till later. Then I may leave between one and two, and don't return till between six and seven. By ten, or thereabouts, my day's work is done. If I am not greatly mistaken, too, Mr. Levy is fully satisfied with me. Already I choose the subjects for the leaders, and indicate what I think should be the line of comment,—subject, of course, to the revision of Mr. Levy. At night I go over the articles, striking out and putting in what I choose,—subject again to his decision. This is delicate work, and takes much time, especially as my superiors are so fastidious in matters of style that every clause of every sentence must undergo a rigid examination. Last of all, I was set to leader-writing on the third day after my arrival; and as I was to-day entrusted with the discussion of so important a subject as the Scotch elections, I presume that my first essay was deemed satisfactory. I have formidable men, however, to compete with,—such as Edward Dicey, and a brilliant Oxford scholar, who has left the principalship of an Indian college for the Press. Still, I think I shall make way. Here, as well as in Aberdeen, people think I have got a fine chance.

I shan't forget, of course, to search vigilantly for some such situation as would suit you. As yet I need hardly say that I have had neither time nor

opportunity for inquiry; but I shall soon have both, and will make a good use of them.*

I haven't called upon Hughes yet, because it would be unmannerly in me to intrude upon him at a time like this, when the hurry of electioneering can leave him no time to receive any visitors but those furnished with votes. Immediately, however, after the election I will call upon him, and already I am very impatient to make his acquaintance. Harrison I will call upon to-morrow. The letter of introduction to Grant-Duff which you have so kindly promised will be most acceptable.

The Newcastle folks have been very kind to me, having presented me, on my way to London, with a very fine gold watch and chain. The watch alone cost sixteen guineas, and the chain is very massive,—too much so, rather, for my taste.

92, GUILDFORD STREET, RUSSELL SQUARE.
August 8th, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

I am very impatient to hear more about your Middlesborough scheme; and, but for excessive laziness, I should have asked you before now to gratify my curiosity. I did not, I must confess, regard the project with much favour when first I heard of it. For one thing, I distrust the stability of all provincial weeklies,—those of them especially that are published at so considerable a distance from London as Middlesborough. The metropolitan and the leading

* Mr. Reid declined offers to go to London, and purchased the *North-Eastern Gazette*, Middlesborough, which his energy and ability soon turned into a very valuable property.

provincial dailies between them seem to me to be surely and swiftly strangling the breath out of such papers as you mention; hemming in the area of their circulation, and sapping their influence, until they are degenerating into the mouthpieces of vulgar and illiterate local cliques. They must be local or nothing, in fact; to a cultivated eye they must be intensely, repulsively, degradingly local before they can succeed; and cram them as you may with paltry gossip, or give the biggest type and biggest adjectives you like to the illiterate harangues about the village parson or the village pump,—both of which are everlastingly in want of priming,—and still the tenure of their life is frail; still they stand in constant terror of being kicked out of existence by some petty magnate with a little money in his pocket or a little law in his head. Yes, there stands the local capitalist or local attorney; the paper is his—he started it; the editor is his, too—he bought him, talents, experience, conscience, and all the rest of it, for the sum of—what shall we say?—and will know the reason why, and no mistake, should the editorial investment presume to echo any but the opinions of his master. *You* are not the man to fill such a position; you would scorn, I know, to put your pen at the beck and call of a rural clique, composed of persons too ill-informed and too stupid to see what is morally straight. Therefore I conclude that your negotiations have been prefaced with the stipulation that you should be perfectly untrammelled, within certain limits at least, in the expression of your opinions. You may also have been exceptionally lucky in the kind of men you have to deal with.

But I confess I fear and detest above most things that bigotry which, alike in politics and religion, accompanies isolation or want of culture. And when I heard that you had some intention of connecting yourself as a mouthpiece with a local party, I doubted whether all the stipulations in the world would, in the long run, protect you from the dictation of a narrow, purse-proud, arrogant, illiterate, and essentially immoral creed. You must be the better judge, however, and if you can trust your men, and if you think the field is wide enough, then I don't deny you might do worse than settle in Middlesborough. You would, of course, be more visible there than here; in this vast crowd none but the giants are visible. Whatever your decision may be, you will, I am sure, excuse the freedom with which I have spoken.

When may I expect you in London? I am engaged for next Saturday, but I shall be at home in the evening. I am very desirous to have a long chat with you. London and the *D. T.* I continue to like very well—the latter especially. It is a pleasure to work with cultivated gentlemen.

I shall await with impatience a letter from you.

Ever yours affectionately,

JAMES MACDONELL.

H. G. REID, ESQ.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
October 9th, 1865.

MY DEAR REID,—

My excuse for not writing you sooner must be that I have had a very bad cold, which for a week has kept me in a state of stupefaction, and utterly

unfitted me for scribbling anything else than leaders. But so soon as you get this note, do show me a good example; do write me speedily; for I am anxious to hear whether the Middlesborough question is definitely settled. With all my disfavour for the provincial press, I would much rather see you in Middlesborough than in Peterhead; your field, though still too narrow, would be much wider than it has been in recent years; and you would be a long stage nearer the great city, which, I trust, is to be your goal. Now that my circle of acquaintances is widening, I shall, I have no doubt, be able, before long, to hear of some situation on the Press that would suit you; and if a vacancy occurs on the sub-editorial staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, I shall, for the most selfish of reasons, use all my influence to have it offered to you. Already, indeed, as I think I have told you, Edward Levy knows of your existence—knows that, when he wants a first-rate addition to the sub-editorial staff, I can tell him whither to go. On Friday, too—thanks to the kind offices of Edward Dicey and some other literary friends—I was elected a member of the Arundel Club; a club numbering about two hundred members, including barristers, men of letters, journalists, artists; so that, the instant a suitable opening shows itself on the London Press, I shall be able, perhaps, to place it in your way. Very likely, however, you have fixed upon Middlesborough as the place of your immediate future. If so, you will come to London, won't you, and stay a week, before beginning to enlighten the darkened understanding of the men of Yorkshire? Do come, now! I'll be able to accommodate you at my rooms.

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I wish I could invite Mrs. Reid to come with you; but, with your experience of a bachelor's existence, you will need no apologies for my inability to confer this double pleasure upon myself.

You are kind enough to ask how I am getting on. My success has surpassed my most sanguine hopes. The situation I hold in the *Telegraph* office is even more desirable than I expected; my principals treat me with the most marked kindness, indulgence, and confidence; and my hand appears in the leading columns with a frequency which, knowing the kind of men with whom I should be harnessed, I certainly did not anticipate. I have every reason to be grateful for the good fortune that is attending me, and if my health does not suffer, I shall, I think, have little reason to fear the future. Generally speaking, my health is good; but the cold of which I now feel the effects has such a depressing influence that I sometimes, in my moments of gloom, fear that my tenure of life is frail. Often do I think that, if I had only strength of body to supplement my desire for study, I might some day be able to produce a work that, to my friends at least, would serve as a memorial of one whose existence would have been cheerless without their unfailing kindness and undeserved love. My brain is full of schemes. The plan of a work has been simmering in it for years; there are also two Quarterly Review articles which, had I the strength for six months' incessant work, I think I could make readable; but the accomplishment of these designs seems to fade "for ever and for ever" as year succeeds year, without my having strength to cope with more than the demands of the day. Mine, I fear, will seem

a purposeless life—a life of dissipated effort—a life without a central idea; and yet, while the reality is not far different, I feel that it could be something better if I had not to pay for every stretch of prolonged toil with a languor that robs me of the power, and almost the wish, to carry further on the work of sustained thought or study. Even now, when my daily task is lighter than it has been for years, I labour under the same recurring depression. But I have no right to bore you with what you will call my whining complaints. Take your revenge, then, by coming up to town, and making me the merriest of men. Come, and we will have a week of lion-hunting and theatre-going; we shall dine at the club, sup at Evans', and not go home till morning; we shall go to see Jefferson act, and to hear Patti sing; and, in a general way, we shall cram as much enjoyment into the time as it will hold.

I was sorry to hear that Mrs. Reid had been unwell. Give her my kind regards, and believe me, my dear Reid,

Ever yours faithfully,

JAMES MACDONELL.

H. G. REID, ESQ.,
Peterhead.

February 22nd, 1866.

MY DEAR MR. MCCOMBIE,—

Excuse me for troubling you with a question relating to the land tenure of Scotland, on which I wish for some information. The subject of tenant-right in Ireland will, as you know, occasion much discussion during the session; and I have reason to

believe that the Government have serious thoughts of dealing with the matter. Now, I wish to know whether in Scotland there are any "rights" corresponding to those claimed by the Irish tenantry. For example: A. takes a farm from B. in Aberdeenshire, with a lease of nineteen years. Nothing is said in the agreement about compensation for any improvements that A. may make. A., however, drains the soil, builds new houses, and altogether, in the course of his lease, expends in improvements —we shall say—£2,000. Then the farm is given to another. Now, the question is, Has A. a claim at law for any part of that £2,000? Can he, in the absence of any written agreement to that effect, recover a penny? Or must each measure of improvement be the subject of a distinct stipulation between him and his landlord that compensation shall be given, before he can go into a court of law with a valid claim to reimbursement?

In some parts of England, it is said, there are local usages, having the form of law, which secure to a tenant compensation for such outlays. So, at least, Gladstone recently assured Hunt, in giving him notes for an article on Irish tenant-right. I am much interested in the question, and I should feel obliged if, when convenient, you would satisfy my inquiries. I shall probably have to discuss the subject before long in the *Telegraph*, as it belongs to the class of themes—hard and unsentimental—which are usually committed to me.

From the copy of the *Free Press* which you kindly sent me, I see that you are at issue with Mill on the subject of compensation for the losses inflicted

through the slaughter of cattle. Bright and he are evidently very "thick." They sit near to each other, and their consultations are frequent. Mill will never, I think, be a successful debater; his voice is too weak, his manner too dogmatic, and his matter too condensed. Of fluency, self-possession, clearness of expression, and quickness of retort he has no lack. Lowe, to my mind, is by far the best debater that I have yet heard,—just as Bright, not excepting Gladstone, is incomparably the best declaimer.

19, BEDFORD PLACE,
RUSSELL SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
March 17th, 1866.

MY DEAR REID,—

You must forgive me my long silence, in consideration of my aversion for letter-writing, my indolence, and my want of time. Thanks for the papers you have sent me,—from one of which I observed that you are becoming a local magnate. May you be Mayor of Middlesborough in five years, and member for it (it should be enfranchised, of course) in ten! I trust that the *Times* is rapidly making way under your management. Have you strong opposition to contend with? How do the Newcastle, and how do the London, papers affect you? Does the *Northern Daily Express*, for instance, or the *Daily Telegraph*, give you much trouble? Last of all, and most important of all, how is your own health and that of Mrs. Reid?

As for myself, I have not enjoyed quite so good health in London as I could wish. It is becoming evident to me that some change must take place in

the nature of my duties, or else there will be some danger of my breaking down. The Levys are exceedingly kind to me; but they have exaggerated ideas of the pressure which brain and body can bear. . . . All the leaders pass through my hands; and often they have to be so altered, added to, subtracted from,—sentences being struck out, others put in, sometimes the half of an article re-written, and often every second sentence re-cast,—that the revision of four leaders frequently takes five hours. You will have some idea of the extent to which the corrections go when I tell you that they cost something like a thousand pounds a year. Such is my nightly work; but all the forenoon, from ten till nearly two, I am occupied reading MS. and letters, writing epistles to contributors, receiving people who wish an interview with the editor, revising proofs of articles, and talking over the most fitting subjects for discussion with Levy and Hunt. Then, perhaps, I write a leader, or go to the House, and, after listening to a debate, write an article on the subject. Of late, however, my routine duties have grown so much as to put leader-writing out of the question; so that my work is operating badly in two ways—first, by destroying my health; and secondly, by destroying my power of writing, through letting it fall into disuse. Accordingly, in a very short time, I am to intimate, in the most civil but firm manner, that my position must undergo a material change. And such a change my principals will doubtless make, if they can; for, as I have said, they treat me with great kindness. It will, however, be difficult

to make, owing to the peculiar nature of the duties, which call for editorial skill, without being rewarded with editorial responsibility and power; and which occupy every hour of one's time, without yielding any permanent fruit. I wish to confine myself to leader-writing alone. By the way, Russel was here lately, and was again tempting me to go to the *Scotsman* as his colleague. That is impossible now; but the invitation will enable me to employ firmer language in addressing the Levys.

Forgive all this grumbling, which I have no right to trouble you with. If you come to London, I promise not to pester you with a word about it.

What do you think of the Reform Bill? For my own part, I confess I am not much in love with it. To my mind, it seems to bear marks of extreme haste, and the most paltry system of compromise. Nay—with all my anti-aristocratic leanings—I think that Disraeli's bill of 1859 was a much more statesmanlike measure. A reform bill of some kind I should like to see; and I am in favour of giving the working-classes more members of their own. On that ground I might, perhaps, take this measure rather than none at all; on all other grounds I should reject it. What do you think of Lowe's speech? I had the good fortune to hear a part both of it and of Gladstone's. Gladstone's was very poor; Lowe's, though not equal to his famous speech of last year, was a good effort. On the whole, the Chancellor's oratory has much disappointed me; it is so roundabout, so wanting in directness, so like Pitt's in being filled with sounding sentences that mean little, so vitiated with what

Carlyle calls "perorating." When I used to read the speeches of Gladstone and Bright, I never could understand how the two men were compared as orators; how the placid diction and rather commonplace thoughts of the one could be said to rival the terse, pointed sentences, the depth of feeling, the richness of expression, and the eloquent wrath of the other. Now that I have repeatedly heard both men, my surprise is greater still. Bright I regard as incomparably the greatest orator in the House,—just as I think Lowe incomparably the greatest debater. After Mill, I hold him to be the acutest brain in the Assembly. Intellectually he is developed till his arm has an athlete's strength; and I feel convinced that in a fair, stand-up fight between him and Gladstone, Gladstone would go down. At the same time, I am ready to admit that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has the greater mind, and that Lowe's most conspicuous qualities are those of a critic rather than of a statesman.

I see from the *Middlesborough Times and Gazette* that you are very radical in your politics. You and I start from different points,—you from complete trust in the people, I from anything but complete trust in the aristocracy; but we come to pretty nearly the same conclusion.

H. G. Reid, Esq.,
Middlesborough.

19, Bedford Place, Russell Square, London, W.C.
May 19*th*, 1866.

My dear Reid,—

It gives me great pleasure to know that you are so soon to be in town. When you are here you must

spend as much time with me as you can. I wish very much to have a long, long chat with you about many men and many things. Here, in this great wilderness of humanity, one has many acquaintances, but few friends. Every day one meets with a score or two of men well known in their own circles; and there is much pleasant, lively, rattling talk; but we are too busy to cultivate a closer intimacy with each other: life to the Londoner, especially to the journalistic Londoner, is a long or a short round of distractions. So, my dear fellow, I wish to have ever so long a chat with you. Allow me, meanwhile, to congratulate you on your appearance in the *Fortnightly*. The article was valuable and interesting, and I look forward eagerly to the papers by which it is to be succeeded. In Scottish life, political, social, and religious, you have a rich and almost unworked mine; a mine from which, I have no doubt, you will dig valuable ore, and beat it into shapes that will attract even the southerner's eye. Not less pleased am I to hear of Mrs. Reid's literary ventures. Why don't you let me see some of them? Her novel, when it appears, I claim the privilege of reviewing. Beseech her, meanwhile, not to pourtray her friends too minutely in its pages; for, as you know, it is the fashion of novelists nowadays to make their stories a species of album, containing photographs of all their acquaintances, especially those that squint, or are lame, or that walk "slantindicularly" before the world. I, of course, shall be guilty of no such sin when I write *my* novel. And when, you ask, is it to be written? Well, that is a question which I myself never think of putting now. "My novel" is an old, almost

forgotten dream. Once I thought it would some day appear; and I had planned many an episode to which fate, and some experience, and some thought, would, I imagined, lend a little vividness. I do not indulge in such visions now. I have long ago learned—at least the time seems long ago—that whatever faculty I have is critical, not constructive. I cannot create. After writing the first chapter of a fiction I should tear the MS. in fragments and pitch it into the fire—just what I metaphorically do with not a few pieces of writing that pass through my hands. Indeed, I have reason to regret that I was born with such a fault-finding disposition, and that my editorial experience has given it such constant exercise; for I feel that it paralyses my faculties at every turn. Joined to that incorrigible indolence with which I am gifted, it contributes to knock on the head most of my literary schemes; so that when I look back my life seems, so far as literary effort is concerned, one long blank. I wish I had the audacity, the ignorance of my own ignorance, the fearless readiness to grapple with subjects the very rudiments of which I did not comprehend, and the easy contentment as to polish and delicacy of style, which so disagreeably distinguished me in the days of the John Street Evening Class. In that case, no doubt, I should write much nonsense, and very often make a fool of myself; but I should do more than I do now, simply because I should attempt more. Impudence, believe me, is the basis of more greatness than most people imagine. So, at least, I fondly repeat as I sit lolling in an easy chair, admiring the consummate beauty of style with which the book in my hand is written, and disgusted

at my own inability to pen a single paragraph that will accord with my own canons of good writing. At last, however, I have taken a virtuous resolution, and sate down in something like earnest to prepare an elaborate paper on the philosophy of history, in which I design to review the theories of Comte and Burke, and the counter-theories of Goldwin Smith. On both sides, I think, there is much error, and I long ago hit upon a *via media* which I should like to describe. The task will be one of labour, since it will call for much more extensive reading than I at present possess, and will necessitate the discussion of various intricate problems, social, ethical, and metaphysical. Whether I shall ever finish it—whether, if I do, it will require the compass of a volume or the space of a Fortnightly Review article, is too profound a speculation for me to enter on just now. Anyhow, it will matter little. I fancy that society would survive the lack of my halting paragraphs!

75, ALBERT STREET, REGENT'S PARK, N.W.
November 6th, 1866.

DEAR MRS. ROBINS,—

Many thanks for your kind note. I have been intending to write you a long letter, week after week, ever since my return from Scotland; but my laziness has hitherto saved you from the infliction. I have so many things to ask your opinion about that I wish I could pay you a visit instead of having to use pen and ink. For one thing, I want to know what you think of Aberdeen and Dee Side. I don't ask you to admit that my city is the finest out of Ireland, or that its people are the most gifted, the most

polite, the best-bred, the handsomest in existence. On that point I tolerate differences of opinion; though, of course, I am puzzled to see how such can exist. But at the mention of Dee Side I am a bigot. That is peerless. Its trees are the greenest of trees, its river the most silver of streams, its mountains bigger, bolder, more picturesque, more beautiful than any others on the face of the earth. Do you know I have a theory that the Garden of Eden was somewhere between Ballater and Braemar? That our first parents spoke Gaelic you are well aware. And antiquaries have at last placed it beyond all doubt that Adam wore the kilt, and found out the secret of whisky toddy. Indeed, I have notions of my own about the peculiar character of the tree of good and evil, which I may some day submit to our learned and impartial friend, Mr. Brown.

But to leave theology for a moment, what are you all reading, thinking, and speaking about? Ritualism? John Bright? the Irish Church? Swinburne? or what? We in London are paying a good deal of attention to ecclesiastical millinery. Yes, eighteen hundred years after a certain notable event that happened on Calvary it has come to this: that men and women are proposing to convert England to Christianity by making churches as like theatres as decency will permit. Sentimental young ladies, and weak young men, and consecrated dolls who call themselves the priests of the Most High, are saying to themselves, "What a mistake the Reformation was, and how nice it is to coquet with Rome!" Poor things! they are idolaters but expressing or supplying a want. They are saying that Protes-

tantism is too bare and cold to bring them peace. Well, perhaps it is: but what a confession is this, that in England humanity has got no further than a species of fetish worship! Meanwhile, as the young ladies, and the young men, and the young curates, are fiddling in this fashion, what is going on under their feet? They haven't the slightest idea. Twenty years ago their most gifted mind left them and rushed to Rome; one of their bishops has since struck at the very root of traditional Christianity; and several other dignitaries of the Church hold opinions that, if plainly stated, would make the hair of the ritualists stand on end. Nor is that the worst. What about educated men? What about the bar and medicine? What about the men who, through the newspapers and reviews, are forming the opinions of the generation which is springing up? "Madam," I was reluctantly obliged to tell an accomplished and pious lady who asked me these questions when I was last in Aberdeen,—"Madam, I know a great many journalists, men of letters, and other educated people in London; but, to speak frankly, I don't know a single one who believes in Christianity. I know few who mention it for any other purpose than to ridicule its pretensions. And I know some who frankly shout out in a club-room that they believe neither in God nor devil." I should, however, have made one exception. George Sala is the most orthodox man I know, for he believes in hell, and warns his unbelieving friends that they will feel it some day. That is what educated London means. And, while the very foundations of all religion are thus being sapped, the ritualists think it the proper time for

quarrelling about the number of candles that should be burned at midday. The wells are poisoned, and yet they are saying how nice it would be to have spiritual sponge-cake all round! Poor, pious, well-meaning, weak, silly souls! They would make pilgrimages to a wooden image of the Virgin did they live in Spain!

And, to come down to one of the "animalcules," what have I myself been doing? Well, after I came back from Scotland I was very busy. For a while I and two others had to write all the leaders in the *Daily Telegraph*. But since then our other men have come back from their holidays in a rush, and I have had leisure, which I have been employing on work that is not exactly for the purposes of the mere day. My friends often wonder why I don't contribute to the magazines or the quarterlies. I fear the motive must be found in self-conceit. I would rather not sign or acknowledge so deliberate a deed as a quarterly review article unless I thought it passably well done; and hitherto I have never been able to give any bit of my writing what I conceive to be the requisite finish. However, here goes at last for number one—an essay on "Right and Copy-right." That subject brings up the whole question of property—a question on which I hold opinions that, I fear, would shock you. It brings up, too, the fundamental principles of ethics. It brings up, lastly, the question of literary property, which I maintain should be perpetual. The paper will be very long. I mean to send it either to the *North British* or the *Westminster*.

I wish I could run down to Newcastle to see you.

If I could I should take the liberty of inviting myself. I have so much to say to you, to Mr. Robins, to Miss Quinlun, and to Miss Paige, that I'd talk you all blind or asleep. I never pass such evenings now as I used to spend at your house. Of course I like London—only too well, perhaps. The men I constantly mix with and talk with are widely read, accomplished, very clever, very witty. Dulness they hold to be the one cardinal sin. And they so rain down epigrams upon a poor fellow's head that one has constantly to carry a mental as well as a material umbrella. But, still, I long much now and then to escape for a few hours from all this desperate cleverness, this flippancy that holds nothing sacred, this determination that no feeling of reverence shall blunt a joke, this rasping spirit which exacts an apology for a belief in heaven or in hell. When I mixed in Scotland lately with God-fearing men who were not at all clever, who had little reading and no wit, who could listen but not talk, I felt that, though they lacked much, they lived in an atmosphere of such purity as educated young London does not share. Educated young London is fast taking Heine for its model—Heine, the most brilliant intellect that Europe has produced since Voltaire, and also, perhaps, the most irreverent.

I have inflicted a long letter on you. Forgive me, pray; and in token of your forgiveness please send me a long letter soon. You will see that I have changed my rooms. I have gone to Regent's Park, for the sake of having constitutionals within easy reach. But I find the air damp, and damp is the one thing I have to fear. I shall therefore be obliged

to go towards Kensington or Bayswater, where the soil is gravelly and the air is dry. Meanwhile, my health is good. Lest I should have left my rooms before I hear from you, please address to the office.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Robins,

Your faithful friend,

JAMES MACDONELL.

November 26th, 1866.

MY DEAR MR. McCOMBIE,—

From the accompanying copies of the *D. T.* you will see that the subject of Martineau's rejection by the Council of University College is causing great indignation in London. When I heard of it I was amazed and disgusted, and pressed my chief to allow me to take up the subject. At last, after much delay, the permission was given, and on Friday last I struck out, without much respect for persons. The article, though poor enough, seems to have hit the mark, for letters on the subject are coming from most influential quarters. That in to-day's paper, signed "A London Master of Arts," and backing us up, is written by Hutton, the editor of the *Spectator*. To-day's paper also contains a second article of mine on the subject. My purpose in writing you, however, is not to tell you all this, but to let you know that the opposition to Martineau has come, not from the Trinitarians, but from Grote, Mill, and—Professor Bain of Aberdeen! Bain has left no stone unturned to defeat Martineau. And why is he thus hostile? First, as a sensationalist, he has no sympathy with Martineau's idealism; secondly, Martineau made his philosophy the subject of a slashing criticism in the *National*

Review; and thirdly, Bain wishes to obtain the vacant office for a young sensationalist pupil of his own, a Mr. Robertson, who is now, I think, the assistant professor of Greek in Aberdeen. Now Robertson is, no doubt, a very able young man; but to pit him against Martineau is tragic. What I want to know is, whether you sympathise with my endeavours to prevent the College from falling into the hands of a sensationalist clique, who would have rejected Sir William Hamilton himself; whether you desire the appointment of Martineau, despite the irrelevant fact that he is a Unitarian; and whether, if you do, you can give Bain over the fingers for his industry.

Personally I know neither Martineau nor any of his friends; I never spoke to him or saw him; I know him only from his writings, his masterly articles in the *National.* To these articles it was you that first drew my attention; and I remember you spoke of one on Comte as a display of the very highest philosophical powers. I share your admiration for them; and such is my burning indignation at the conduct of Grote, Mill, and Bain that, were my hands free, I would write a pamphlet, letting the patrons of the College see in the plainest of terms to what the philosophical and the ethical teaching of the school to which these gentlemen belong has, in practice, always led. I fancy that, were the story told, the religious people for whom they are so much concerned would deem Martineau's theological heresy trifling when compared with the practical consequences of his opponent's doctrines.

I wish from the bottom of my heart that in every part of the country thinking men would lift up their voices and protest against this act of philosophical bigotry, this discouragement of independent thought, this rejection of a great intellect in favour of a young man who in mental science has not won his spurs.

P.S.—Please to tell Miss McCombie that I didn't intend the article on the Permissive Bill in Saturday's paper for HER eye. Many thanks for quoting my puff of Aberdeen anent the bit of loyalty you did the Queen.

We are not without hopes of reversing the vote. It is not unlikely there will be a split in the Council. One of the members has written us an indignant letter against the decision of the majority.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.
November 29th, 1867.

MY DEAR REID,—

It is an age since I have heard from you, and, if I am not mistaken, the fault is on your side. You owe me a letter, I think.

Since I last saw you I have been living in the country, and I have been in Belgium, Germany, Prussia, Switzerland, and France. During my holiday I made a flying visit to those countries, and brought home with me a rich store of impressions. Come to London, and I'll tell you all about my adventures.

It's not about the Continent that I wish to speak; it's about the *North British Review*. The December

number of that quarterly, which is just out, contains a long article of mine on "The Natural History of Morals." In that essay I have attempted to investigate ethics in a fashion almost new to English readers—historically instead of psychologically. I have also applied the Darwinian law of Natural Selection to Morals, and I believe that I am the first who has made the attempt; at least, I have heard of no other. In the last number of the *Fortnightly*, it is true, Bagehot hit upon the idea; but his remarks were very vague, and my article was in type long before his was published.

I daresay my essay is heavy; but, as I had to cram into it the thought and the reading of years,—in some cases to put the pith of a whole book into a single paragraph,—it was difficult to make the paper light. I meant it to be a piece of calm, logical exposition. To condense what I had to say into forty-five pages cost me very great labour. A volume would have been required for the development of my argument.

I trust you will do me the honour of reading the article; and I trust also that you will be able to give some notice of it in your paper. That you will agree with what I say I have no right to expect; and, in your criticism, I invite you to hit me as hard as you like.

I should like my friends in your neighbourhood to know that I am the author of the essay, so I should feel obliged if you would mention my name in connection with it. I am the more desirous that this should be done, because, through a mistake on the part of my brother John, an idea got abroad that I

wrote the article on "Moral Theories and Christian Ethics" in the last number of the *North British*. The article was Professor Shairp's, not mine. What is more, I did not agree with it. Shairp's and mine are at the opposite poles of philosophical thought.

19, Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C.
December 25*th*, 1867.

My dear Reid,—

Accept my hearty thanks for your kind review of my essay. It was much too flattering. However, I am glad that you liked the article. Indeed, it cost me so much thought and labour that had you not liked it I should have felt disappointed. It seems to be attracting a great deal of attention, if I may judge from what has been said by the editor of the *North British* and my friends, and from what I have seen in the notices of the *Review*. The *Scotsman* and the *Daily Review* each devoted about a column to an analysis of the article. The most adverse criticism has appeared in the *Aberdeen Free Press*. It was good-humoured in tone, and sufficiently complimentary to me; but, of course, McCombie condemned my argument root and branch. . . .

I am very glad that you are to have an article in the *Westminster*, and that your subject is one which you must be able to handle so effectively. I have no doubt that the paper will be very telling, and that, if it contains some things from which I may dissent, it will contain much more with which I shall cordially agree. Of course, there is much

to find fault with in the religious creeds of our time,—in those of Scotland no less than in those of England; but you have no doubt borne in mind the immense good which they have done. Buckle saw only the black side of Scotch ecclesiasticism, and that side is very black; but there is a white side too, and I think it so white that we can afford to forget a good deal of the gloom. Buckle, as a friend of mine says, hated two men—"a parson and a fool;" in the Scottish pulpits he thought he saw the two rolled into one, and he was utterly blind to the austere nobility of character which Knox and his successors helped to develop in the Scottish people. How they could have done so without a dogmatic creed of some kind is more than I can see. I cannot, I confess, make out how living religions can be separated from creeds, nay, from hard creeds, so long as men and women are, morally and intellectually, such poor creatures as they have hitherto been. Among all the religious men that I have known, I can hardly name more than one or two who have seemed able to walk without the aid of a dogmatic staff. So far, I agree with Froude's objections to your views; I think there is a danger of destroying religion along with creeds; but with none the less pleasure on that account shall I read your essay, and perhaps I may be so overwhelmed by your attack as to become the captive of your bow and spear.

Don't imagine, because I set a high value on dogma, that I believe in dogma. On the contrary, I think that all the dogmatic creeds are false,—false in what they assert, and false in what they deny. Roman

Catholicism I hold to be false, and Protestantism false too. That is, the truth which dwells in both is overlaid with the error which asserts too much and denies too much. On this point, however, I speak with great hesitancy; for I live in an atmosphere of doubt; at one time I am begirt with so thick a fog that the very stars seem to be blotted out; at another time the clear air which brings out the tints of the far-off horizon is so frosty as to kill the plant of faith,—a plant so tender that in these trying days it seems to be forgetting how to grow! What a dead thing is English religion! There is not much of it, either. It's a long time since I saw it.

You ask me why I don't sign my articles in *Fraser*. Chiefly, because I am not satisfied with them, or anything that I write. My shrinking from the publicity of a signature seems to be growing. Let me add that I should like to sign very little of what is done by other men either. My paper in *Fraser* is totally different from that in the *North British*. It is a queer hash of the wildest radicalism, metaphysics, satire, fun, savage invective, and scurrility. If the *North British* essay lays me open to the charge of being a mere logician, which some of my friends call me, the *Fraser* article will take away the reproach with a vengeance. There is preciously little logic in it!

I shall do what I can to have your article noticed in the *Daily Telegraph*; but I regret to say that the task will be very difficult. The *D. T.* hardly ever writes on periodical articles; never, unless some turn in public affairs calls attention to them.

For instance, my own paper in the *N. B.* was naturally the subject of much talk in the editorial room, and two of my colleagues wished to write on it; yet only the merest and most passing allusion was made to it in the leading columns of the *D. T.* A witty Irishman, in a skit at the *Times*, lugged in Darwin, and then lugged in a word of allusion to a theory advanced by a writer in the new *North British Review;* that was all.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.
January 9th, 1868.

MY DEAR REID,—

It is to your kindness, I presume, that I owe the copy of the *Westminster* which the editor has sent me, with a polite note. Many thanks. Of course I have read your article, and it has deeply interested me. There is certainly no lack of emphasis in what you say; you have spoken out clearly and strongly; and the paper will doubtless attract much attention in Scotland. My chief criticism on the essay is that it is much too brief. Within the compass of eight pages you could not discuss so vast a subject, and you are constantly forced to assume that the reader has a much more extensive knowledge of Scottish ecclesiastical affairs than he is likely to possess. Want of space has also prevented you from developing your arguments; so that they will certainly repel many people who, had the statement been more full, might have gone with you. For example, you say that the Scottish clergy are badly trained, that they are poor theologians, that they are poorer scholars, that they have little culture, that they have less tolerance, that they are often mere

worldlings, and that in many cases they make religion a trade. Granted; but are the Roman Catholic priests of Ireland, or the Dissenting ministers of England, or even the clergy of the Established Church of England, any better? Nay, in many important respects are they not worse? Again, can you ever get a model clergy without a model people, and are the Scottish clergy not at least as good as the Scottish people? If so, why indict the Scottish Church for high crimes and misdemeanours, instead of charging the Scottish nation with the want of culture which tolerates the intolerance of their pastors, and which accepts the hard dogmatism of their creed? Such are some of the questions that rise up in my mind with an accusing voice. No doubt you could furnish an answer; but the want of that answer will, I fancy, subject your essay to criticism which it would have escaped had it been longer, and had the logical links of the argument been more sharply cut. Would it not be well for you to write a long and careful paper for the *Westminster*—to begin at the beginning of the subject; to show what can be said for the Church of Scotland as well as against it; and then to discuss the prodigious difficulty of changing the canons, the practice, or the discipline of any long-established Church? I should like to see such a discussion. I should like all the better to see it because I am keenly alive to the immense good which the Church has done to the Scottish people; because, while I am also keenly alive to her faults, I think that she does her work at least as well as any other Established Church on earth; and because I cannot make out how she is

to be changed for the better until something like a revolution shall have come over the habits and thoughts of the nation.

You know that we differ respecting the popular uses of dogma. You think that it is possible for a whole people to have a religion without a defined creed. I wish I could agree with you. But such a people have never yet appeared on this earth, and my hopes of humanity are not high enough to make me believe that such a people ever will. Among the religious men that I have known I can count but two or three who are not dogmatists of a hard type. Nay, even you, who repudiate dogma, admit that you hold by certain articles of the Christian faith. Well, supposing that you and those who agree with you form a Church, or at least agree to worship together; and supposing that you institute endowments for the preaching of the Gospel; will you allow a Pagan to occupy the pulpit, to preach on the divinity of Socrates, to argue that the doctrine of Christ's divinity was unknown to the first Christians, and that, in the person and creed of Buddha, the later Christians may find as divine a type of humanity, as sublime an ethical code, as in the person and creed of Christ? If not, you hold dogmatic doctrines, and the quarrel between you and the Church of Scotland turns upon a choice, not between dogma and no dogma, but between little dogma and much. Nor can I see where you are to stop if you begin to cut away the dogmatic trappings from the Scottish Church. Which bits of the Confession of Faith are you to draw your pen through? The non-essentials. But which are the non-essentials? That opens up

the whole question of what is Christianity. And that is such an ugly question that, I believe, no people will ever face it until the coming of another Reformation, with another Luther, and with convulsions of nations and creeds which, to the eye of prophecy, might seem to herald the Judgment Day.

But a truce to argument. When are you coming to London? Do come up, and let us talk about old days over a glass of old claret. Amid the hurry of London life, I often look back with a yearning eye to those old, sad, silly days of which we have often spoken. They seem so far off! And yet silvery voices ring clear like the echo of a far-off time! Such ideas are, of course, stupid and sentimental; and were my literary friends to hear them coming from the lips of such a cool, hard-headed man of the world as your obedient servant, they would fancy that I had taken leave of my senses. Still, even cynics have memories, and I should be glad, my dear fellow, if you would come to London and refresh mine.

You may be sure that I shall notice the article in the *D. T.* if I possibly can. Have you seen my *Fraser* essay?

Amidst these labours he found time to make some notable contributions to periodical literature. In *Fraser* for May 1867 (the magazine was then under the editorship of Mr. Froude) appeared an essay by him on the "Modern Spirit," in which he surveyed the religious tendencies of the time. He declared that the keys of the future were to be found in the

chief metaphysical systems, and rapidly reviewed the progress of thought since Hume, concluding that dogma was crumbling away under the influence of two currents of thought, the scientific and the spiritual. A much more remarkable paper—in some respects the ablest he ever wrote—was published in the *North British Review* for December 1867 (the *Review* was then edited by the publisher, Mr. David Douglas). The subject is, "The Natural History of Morals," and the writer deals with the conclusions of Buckle. It is an astonishing production when the writer's years and opportunities are considered, showing an extent of knowledge, a depth of thought, and above all a power of expression which make it a real contribution to philosophy. It attracted unusual attention, was eagerly read and discussed at Oxford, where it was almost elevated for a time to the rank of a text-book, and was made the subject of an essay by Mr. John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review*, of which he was then the editor. "The writer of a highly interesting article in the last number of the *North British Review*," said Mr. Morley, "has reviewed once more, in a manner which is very far removed from commonplace, the controversy as to the comparative progressiveness of the moral and intellectual elements in mankind. Mr. Buckle, in one of the most hotly disputed portions of the book, declares that the moral element is stationary. . . . To this the writer in the *North British Review* replies—with the greatest anxiety, it should be said, to do full justice to his opponent—that morality does advance just as knowledge advances. . . . The too unqualified and even crude manner in which Mr.

Buckle stated his doctrine has indisputably left him open to a decisive refutation of this sort." Mr. Morley contends, however, that Buckle was misunderstood. But he cordially recognises the ability of the article, and especially the highly original discussion of the question, "How do ethical systems arise?" a question which Macdonell answered by showing that "the Natural History of Morals is the history of social conditions." One criticism at least of Mr. Morley's the author acknowledged to be just. In the copy of the essay before me he has written on the margin of page 402, "Throughout this passage the word 'immutable' is used in a sense which is apt to mislead, and in a sense which is quite different from that usually attached to it by the *à priori* school of moralists. The passage has nothing to do with the argument, and ought to have been omitted. By John Morley in the *Fortnightly Review* for March 1868 it was justly censured." The discussion led to a friendly correspondence and an invitation to write for the *Fortnightly*, which pressure of work made it impossible for Macdonell to comply with. On republishing his essay, Mr. Morley sent the volume with the following letter:—

FLEXFORD HOUSE, NEAR GUILDFORD.
February 17th, 1871.

MY DEAR SIR,—

As I have reprinted, along with some others, the fragmentary piece in which I briefly discussed one or two points raised by an able essay of yours, I hope you will accept a copy of the volume in which it appears, and which I have directed my publisher to forward to you.

Your promise to write in the *Fortnightly* one day remains unfulfilled, to my sorrow, and the loss of our public.

Yours very truly,

JOHN MORLEY.

JAMES MACDONELL, ESQ.

The concluding paragraph of "The Natural History of Morals" may be quoted as a fine specimen of grave and musical eloquence :—

"It is no bare prospect, no dead mechanic past, that we unveil, but a past majestic with the sequence of ordered law and working through seeming confusion and unceasing strife and the din of angry voices to that 'far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves.' To the eye of the Moralist, the history of the race, with its restless life, its sins, its sorrows, its heroisms, its records of destruction, its immortal legacies of beauty, its faiths and its scepticisms, its Sodoms and its Babylons, its Jerusalems and its Romes, opens up some such stupendous world of progression as the inscriptions on the rocks summon before the eye of the geologist. Away into the boundless distance sweeps the mysterious swelling sea of mountain and plain, laying bare at intervals some slow deposit on which is written the history of dead and living moralities; of simple types, hardly organised as yet, that from the world of civilization have for ever passed away; of more complex types, that struggled with death for ages before they perished; and finally of the richly-organised types that came into being when life had gathered a myriad complexities, and that fight with each other for existence in this teeming, many-peopled, many-sounding age. Everywhere nature strews her path

with dead heroisms and dead nobilities, and sin, and suffering, and mysterious doom.

> "From scarped cliff and quarried stone
> She cries, 'A thousand types are gone.'"

The earth is a moral graveyard. The very dust is the ashes of the dead. The soil in which our virtues grew is the *débris* of a buried world, that sinned and suffered, and did ignoble deeds and lived heroic life, and watered the seed-fields of the future with its tears and its blood. And our virtues and vices will in turn be but fossils which the age of science shall curiously scan, and they will finally crumble into dust from which the moral harvests of the future shall spring; and the world that shall draw its moral life from our ashes will also in time form but one tiny layer of dead bones in the never-ending strata of existence; and thus shall it be throughout the weary generations of men."

Other essays contributed to *Fraser* were "The Politics of Young England," January and March 1868; "Trades Unionism in the City and Mayfair," August and October 1868; and "A Plea for Black Bartholomew," March 1873. The last is an attempt to show that the massacre was a tremendous theological triumph, justly conceived if the Church of Rome speaks the truth, and magnificently executed. He wrote it immediately after his return from France, where in the winter of 1872 the priests were compassing heaven and earth to pull down the Republic and to revive the clerical rule of Charles X. Hence his motive was political rather than theological. He came to acknowledge that, in strict fairness, it

should have been pointed out that all Christian creeds, if applied to the situations of life with logical rigour, would yield startling results.

With these explanations the letters may be resumed.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.
April 8th, 1868.

MY DEAR REID,—

I regret that I was not able to write a leader on your *Westminster Review* article. The editor is very reluctant to single out any article for special comment, and of course we who write can do nothing without his sanction. To me personally he is very kind, and he was very glad that his assistant should contribute to the *North British* and to *Fraser*; but even in my favour he did not break through the rule of saying nothing about review or magazine papers, except so far as to let one of my colleagues make a brief reference to one of my essays. The subject of your article was another barrier. We avoid ecclesiastical subjects. Especially do we avoid Scotch ecclesiastical subjects. But Scotch ecclesiastical subjects which are not "up" are the accursed thing. Therefore it has so far been out of my power to make your article the subject of comment. But I feel that I am in your debt, and that I am bound to take the first opportunity of giving you that recognition which you have so kindly given to me. Many opportunities will occur; for, of course, you have only begun to write in the higher periodicals. You must write much more. Give us a paper on the services which the Free Church of Scotland has done to religion, so that the timid people who shudder at

the coming downfall of the Irish Church may see the power of the voluntary system.

P.S.—The *Fortnightly* had a long article on my *North British* essay, which was favourable; and my *Fraser* essay got a slating in the *Imperial Review*.

19, Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C.
May 9th, 1868.

My dear Reid,—

Thanks for the *Middlesborough and Stockton Gazette*, which has just reached me. I am glad to see that you have plunged headlong into the struggle for the overthrow of the Irish Church. What you said in your speech I cordially agree with. Indeed, my earnestness on this question is almost fanatical; for I see that with the Irish Church must come down the props that give stability to a good many other institutions. I don't wonder that the Queen and the Lords are alarmed. Were I to believe in the virtues of a British monarchy, or a British House of Lords, I should fight against Mr. Gladstone's resolutions to the death; but as I don't believe in either, as I wish to see both destroyed so soon as the work can be done by peaceable means, I throw up my hat at the passing of the resolutions, and say, "Three cheers for a democratic victory!" I was at the great Bishops' meeting in St. James's Hall the other day, and in next day's *D. T.* I chaffed it on the score of its noise, its vast expanse of black-coated champions of the Church, its bad reasoning, and its brilliant array of pretty faces, come to do battle against resolutions which they did not understand.

Allow me to congratulate you on the addition to

your family, and to express my hope that Mrs. Reid and the new baby are in a state of beatific health. You are becoming such a family man, and you have already such "a stake in the country," that a poor forlorn devil of a bachelor like myself feels it little short of presumption to address you in familiar terms. And the worst of it is that I have no chance of ever addressing you on equal terms. It's queer, perhaps, that I, who am a devoted admirer of womankind, and who have had the good fortune to count some charming specimens of the sex among my friends, should be doomed for life to the most hopeless bachelordom; but so it is. I gaze at matrimony as I gaze at the moon; it's very pretty, but it's a long way off; and, instead of wasting time in making ladders that will reach to the moon, I spend my time in muddling my brains with blue-books. "Sir, what I want is facts." Them's my sentiments, as well as Gradgrind's. Meanwhile, I am tired to death of studying dull books, and listening to stupid debates, and writing newspaper articles, and talking politics from morning until night, and preaching Red Republicanism to every lordling or squireling that provokes me. From the bottom of my heart I wish I could get six months' total rest. I am thoroughly knocked up. My brain is jaded into a state of stupor, and years of toil have left their usual legacy in a state of intolerable weariness. I wish some one would be good enough to leave me a thousand a-year, free of legacy duty and income tax! Had I that snug sum—I couldn't do it for less—I would bolt, and not write a line for months. This morning I am tired to death. During the last six days I have

written five leading articles in the *D. T.*, and part of a long essay for *Fraser;* I have listened every night to the debates; I have lived in a chronic state of warfare with some of my friends on the subject of the Irish Church; I have been dining and living with friends in the country; I have been spending great part of my time in driving about the town at a Jehu-like speed, in hansoms; I have had, as usual, my share in the editing of the *D. T.*; I have been studying the proceedings of the third parliament of Charles I.; I have been supping every night at midnight on such digestible things as cold beef, salad, and sherry; I have been to see the Exhibition of the Royal Academy; and now, to-day, when I am as tired as a dog, I must write letters, go on with my *Fraser* essay, meet some friends in Kensington, dine with a man at my club, and, in a general sort of way, commit constructive suicide. It's a confounded shame. I wish I were a blacksmith or a country parson.

Here we may close this chapter. His "hopeless bachelordom" was destined to come to an end. A great and sunny change was soon to pass over his laborious life.

CHAPTER VII.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

HIS life hitherto had been by no means unjoyous. His work was a steady happiness. It was a delight for him to toil for his mother, his brothers, and his sisters; and their return of gratitude, affection, and confidence was never stinted. But all the same it was a time of unbroken struggle, and lacked that perfect restfulness which is only to be found in a home. For domestic life he was peculiarly fitted, for he not only loved warmly, but he had a generous belief as well as joy in the love of others. The crowning gift was now to come to him.

His sister-in-law, Mrs. John Macdonell, in a letter to me tells how he was introduced to his future wife. It was on the Christmas Eve of 1868. Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, with their family, were then living at Shirley House, Beckenham. Mrs. Harrison (who, as I have mentioned, was a sister of Mary Howitt) had previously heard of Mr. Macdonell through their mutual friends Mr. and Mrs. Robins of Newcastle. Mrs. Robins several times in her letters mentioned him as a most attractive young man. But it was at Chilchester Lodge, Beckenham, then the house of Mr. and Mrs. George Lillie Craik, that they first met.

"The first time I met him," writes Mrs. John Macdonell, "was at the house of our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Craik, when they lived at Chilchester Lodge. It was, I think, the first time he had been there. It was one of those quiet gatherings of friends—now, alas! but memories also—which drew together in her old-fashioned drawing-room, over which, though she talked little herself, her kind and potent spirit brooded with happy influence. I remember the impression the eager young Scotchman made upon us all—the rush with which he seemed to burst upon the talk; the real Highland charge that seemed to make the teacups jingle. But there was a simplicity, a sweetness, a generosity through all his fire which prevented his energy repelling or offending. That aggressive eager nature had in it, it was plain, also the generous swift forgiveness, the touch of extravagant honour and courtesy towards an opponent which disarms. Energy there was, unsparing invective at times; his words rushed on in a torrent, adding vehemence to the vehemence of his thought. He always meant much; he sometimes said more than he meant. But almost in the midst of his impetuosity he would be offering the sword hilt to his adversary. This sudden melting of apparent wrath into sweetness never failed to meet its response. Not long after this first meeting at the Craiks' he came to lunch with us. Some little passage of arms, such as I refer to, had happened between him and Professor ——. There was the quick offer of peace, the laughing apology for his heat, made with a grace that could not be resisted.

The Professor suddenly turned with a smile, and laid his arm affectionately over his shoulder. It was the first time they had ever met.

"'I must ask this ardent young Scotchman for a drop of his blood,' said a friend of my mother's,—a well-known microscopist,—one morning after breakfast, which had been prolonged by talk far into the morning: 'I am sure it will show unusual signs of energy.'

"After a time he came frequently to my father's house. He quickly took his place as what the Germans call a 'haus freund,' having his helpful place in the interests of each of us. He used to come with new books, poems, news. Any scrap of information wanted by anyone was sure to be found by him; a fact about church restoration, the local name of a plant, a disputed reading of Shakespeare, a bit of political gossip, anything, everything, whatever it might be, he could tell something about it. His knowledge was very various, and he was curiously accurate in giving it. He liked, too, to share all he possessed and enjoyed with his friends.

"Shortly after we first met James Macdonell my sister Annie went to America for a long visit. During this time he had become an intimate friend of us all, more especially perhaps of my mother, who exerted on all who approached her an invincible charm. To her he was always tenderly devoted. As I recall, now, times when I saw them sitting near each other in earnest talk, I think his face never had a happier nor brighter look.

"I was aware of the unspoken secret which made

his interest set towards America during this time, and a very sisterly regard sprung up in my own mind towards him. He was a wise and most helpful friend in my youthful literary work.

"He joined us in a pilgrimage which we made with a small party of friends to Canterbury. We went on foot, following as near as might be Chaucer's Road, breaking our journey at Rochester and Maidstone.

"The way, marked for miles by the pilgrims' yews, was often beautiful though it was mid-winter (we made our New Year's service at Canterbury). He intensely enjoyed it; the air, the sky, the stillness of the winter landscape, all seemed to arouse his mind like the best companionship. I never remember hearing him talk more strikingly. Ah, if it were possible to recall some of those bright, winged sentences that made our walk memorable!

"The evenings were spent round the fire in reading and talk. He had brought with him Tennyson's *Holy Grail*, which had just appeared, and read it aloud as we saw the old year out, sitting round the fire in the 'Mitre.' He was an admirable reader of verse, and had only one fault. He would constantly let fall the book to pour out a flood of comment, too bright to let one regret even the poem. I recall especially the wonderful impressiveness of his reading of the fate of Lancelot:

> "'But what I saw was veiled
> And covered; and this quest was not for me.'

He read also snatches from the *Excursion*, the

Sonnettes, and the *Leodamia.* Under these strains of 'passion remembered in tranquillity,' his voice became low and resonant, expressing

> "'What the gods approve,
> The depth, and not the tumult of the soul.'"

Mr. Macdonell made an immediate impression on Mrs. Harrison, and though she very rarely made advances to strangers, she said at parting that she hoped to see him at her own house. He walked with the Harrisons to their gate, and the question passed through his mind as he said "good-bye," "Shall I go backward and forward through these gates as a familiar friend?" Miss Annie Harrison went in the following July to America to visit her sister, Mrs. Ellis Yarnall, who lived near Philadelphia. Before she went Mr. Macdonell lent her one or two books to read on the voyage, and over these books began a correspondence which lasted through the fifteen months of her stay in America. From these letters, and others addressed to Mrs. Harrison and Miss Agnes Harrison (Mrs. John Macdonell), I am permitted to make the extracts which follow:—

New Club, 9, Spring Gardens, S.W.
August 12*th*, 1869.

My dear Mrs. Harrison,—

The question which you ask with respect to the Oxford Liberals is so interesting that, before rushing off to Switzerland, I must give it a brief answer. Yes, that school is the effect of the reaction that followed the publication of *Tracts for the Times.* On the one side were Hurrell Froude, Rose, Pusey, Keble, and Newman, who were fanatical Churchmen,

and who fancied that Christianity was inseparable from an extreme assertion of sacerdotal authority. As Newman says in his *Apologia*, what they fought against was "Liberalism," or the habit of mind which tests every belief and every institution by the standard of the naked reason. On the other side were such men as Copleston, Whately, and Arnold, who, although ardent Christians, detested everything like priestly claims to supernatural authority with all the fervour of healthy souls. Those men struck the "note" of Oxford Liberalism both in theology and politics. About the time that they were gaining power over the minds of the young men, the influence of Bentham began to be felt within the walls of Oxford, and that thinker's hard utilitarianism helped to bring back the minds of Oxford men from sacerdotal moonshine to the prosaic realities of life. When students began to recoil from Bentham's narrow and acrid creed, John Stuart Mill came to teach a broader system of ethics, and a system of political philosophy which, while sweepingly democratic, recognised the fact that man cannot live on such prosaic things as law, justice, and logic alone. In time the influence of Comte was added to that of Mill, and from Wadham College has come forth a race of men who are Comtists in religion as well as in politics. Such men as Congreve, Beesly, and Frederick Harrison represent the Liberalism of Wadham. Such men as John Morley represent that other phase of Oxford Liberalism which severs the religious from the political teaching of Comte. And men like Goldwin Smith, Freeman, and Thorold Rogers speak in the name of that third school

of Oxford Liberalism which aims at the creation of a Christian Democracy. When I return from Switzerland I shall have a talk with you about the other question that you raise. Don't take the trouble to return the *Troy Times.* Another copy was sent to my private address.

I leave with the express train for Geneva on Saturday morning. A few days' comparative leisure have made me fit and eager for a walking tour of twenty miles a-day.

I trust that you and Miss Lucy are enjoying yourselves.

With kindest wishes,

I am, faithfully yours,

JAMES MACDONELL.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.
October 19*th*, 1869.

MY DEAR MRS. HARRISON,—

Many thanks for sending me Miss Annie's note, which has greatly pleased and interested me.

There seems, as you say, not to be the slightest hope of Lord Derby's recovery. Although I regard the cause of democracy with all the fervour of a religious devotee, I had always an admiration for the old Earl; nor shall I soon forget that last speech of his in the House of Lords, when, addressing the Peers with what seemed a prophetic conviction that he was speaking to them for the last time, he exclaimed, "I am an old man;" and added, with pathetic simplicity, a few words about the events which he had seen. Politically, he is the last of his race. With him the grand old English Tory is extinct.

I have heard about the book of which you speak, and, as an admiring reader of *Peveril of the Peak*, I am, of course, greatly interested respecting the proud Countess. When I have next the pleasure of seeing you, perhaps you will kindly tell me more about a lady who, if Scott speaks truly, must have been strangely like the imperious Earl who is passing away.

19, BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.
Sunday.

MY DEAR MRS. HARRISON,—

You will not guess where I was on Friday. I was at Knowsley, attending the burial of Lord Derby. In the absence of a more brilliant pen, I was sent down to Knowsley as "special correspondent." The sight was very impressive. The great Tory chief was buried with a simplicity which would have excited notice even if the burial had been that of a country squire.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
Saturday evening, March 5th, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS ANNIE HARRISON,—

I wish very much that I could snatch a six months' holiday, in order that I might see America for myself, and study some of the thousand problems which it suggests. America is untying many of the knots which we in the Old World have often thought must be cut by the sword. She is teaching us that it is possible for a nation to get on very well without a king, or an hereditary aristocracy, or a State Church, or a great standing army; and, when she shall be graced with all the culture of England and

France, she may teach us things more momentous still. Entirely do I agree with you in thinking that the faults of the Republic are, for the most part, faults of manner, which the free play of free institutions will in time obliterate, through the process of natural selection that goes on in the world of politics and of culture, no less than in the world of nature. And, indeed, it is easy to forgive those faults of manner which occasionally signalise the Americans whom one meets on one's travels. What I find it less easy to forgive is the homage which too many Americans pay to the remnants of a semi-barbarous feudalism when they come to England. It is said that many are eager to be presented at Court, and in other ways to crowd round royalty. To me that is a sad sight. Were I an American I should be too proud of my country, and too conscious of the fact that a Republic is a much more rational form of government than a monarchy, to think of paying homage in a Court from which all reality of power has vanished, and which, in comparison with the Court of the Tudors, is but a gilded shadow. With what is called the *personal* loyalty of the Colonies I have no patience. Loyalty to a great man like Lincoln, or Gladstone, or Bright I can understand; loyalty to the interests and the Parliament of a great nation like America or England I can also understand; but what I cannot understand is loyalty to a crowned fiction. I could as easily understand loyalty to the figurehead of a ship.

But I did not mean to preach the gospel of democracy when I began to write. Pray forgive me.

And so you liked "The Holy Grail." I am very glad of it. In common with you, I don't think the poem equal, as a whole, to such idylls as "Guinevere," or the "Passing of Arthur;" and, like you, when I come to the words—

> "So all day long the noise of battle roll'd,"

I am stirred by an enthusiasm which I do not feel when reading the best bits of "The Holy Grail." And yet that poem contains passages which, to my mind, are all but as good as any that Tennyson ever wrote. In particular I single out that speech in which Lancelot tells how, cast down by the burden of a mighty sin, he strove to rise into nobility of life, and how terrible was his failure because he had not begun by casting the sin away. There is something inexpressibly pathetic, I think, in the lament of the great knight who had never known defeat in lists or battle—

> "My madness came upon me as of old,
> And whipt me into waste fields far away;
> *There was I beaten down by little men,*
> *Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword*
> *And shadow of my spear had been enow*
> *To scare them from me once.*"

And equally profound in its pathos is the recital of the knight's remorse :—

> "And in my madness to myself I said,
> 'I will embark and I will lose myself,
> And in the great sea wash away my sin.'"

Much as I like "The Holy Grail," I am not quite satisfied with Tennyson's treatment of the sublime legend, when I think of the many fruitful incidents which Sir Thomas Malory recites in his prose

version of the legend, and of which the poet makes no use. Do you know Malory's *Morte d'Arthur?* If not, pray read it. No doubt you can easily lay your hand upon it, but if you cannot, pray let me know, and you shall have my copy by return of post.

Yes, our pilgrimage was delightful in spite of the wet. Nay, when I think of our memorable walk into Maidstone, through darkness and torrents of rain, and when then I think of the bright fire, the tea, the talk, the laughter, the discussion, and the singing that gave a glow to the evening, I am not quite sure that the rain did not heighten the enjoyment by the force of contrast. We read, we chatted, we declaimed, we told stories, we sang songs, we sang hymns, we quarrelled, we debated the profoundest questions of ethics and theology, we rambled in twos, we went to church, and, in a word, we enjoyed ourselves—like what shall I say?—well, like a pack of young, cultivated, pious, Christian savages let loose! The experience was so delightful that we are already speaking of another pilgrimage. It would be a great pleasure were you to come home in time to form one of the party. We sadly missed you when we were at Canterbury. When do you return?

The mention of this reminds me of a villainous meeting to which I was lately drawn by curiosity, and of which you may like to hear. I had recently the honour of supping with two hundred and eight convicted thieves, who had, between them, been confined for one hundred and forty-three years, two months, and one week. One very interesting man had been convicted thirteen

times,—that man had taken first-class honours in crime. Perhaps you may wonder how I got into such distinguished company. At least Miss Malleson did; and when I suggested that possibly I might have qualified myself for the distinction by stealing ideas, she instantly accepted that solution of the mystery. The truth is, however, that I attended the supper, not as a "professional," but simply as a student. The supper was given in the New Cut, Lambeth, under the superintendence of Ned Wright, once a professional burglar, and now a missionary. Ned was once a great ruffian, but now that he is converted he devotes to the reformation of thieves all that physical strength which he employed in battering the faces of his fellow-creatures when he was a pugilist, and all that fertility of resource which he displayed when he was a house-breaker. Armed with the subscriptions of kind friends, he prepares a supper of nourishing soup and bread, and invites to the feast, on some nights, a crowd of female thieves, and, on others, a crowd of male. After supper he thunders out a strongly Calvinistic invitation to leave off thieving. Ned is a vigorous orator, and a racy story-teller; but his rhetoric is so undeniably sulphuric as to remind me of an American preacher who, after telling his flock that some people were so depraved as to believe in the ultimate salvation even of the wicked, added the touching commentary—"We, brethren, believe better things." It was also amazing to see how, in spite of Ned's manifest sincerity, his conversion had not in some matters told him the difference between right and wrong. In telling the thieves that he had paid all

his debts, he checked himself, and said, "except the score at the Waterman's Arms; and I never mean to pay a penny of that; for I am sure that they put down twice as much as I drank."

Amusement, however, was not the result of the evening. It was, I confess, with something like a spirit of levity that I had sought for a ticket of admission to the thieves' party; but that spirit did not survive a minute's contact with the reality. It was the saddest sight that I ever saw in all my life. Before me was a crowd of men old in crime, young men hardened in crime, and boys to whom crime had already become a profession. Some of the faces can be described by no other epithet than that of diabolical. The ploughshare of vice had cut indelible furrows into their beetling brows and sunken cheeks. And the look of depravity was intensified in some by an appalling lack of intelligence. Fearful as the thought may be, some of the men seemed to be, not only instinct with the very spirit of evil, but to be evil of necessity. Some seemed to lack nothing but intelligence in order to have the power of demons. Some were not only so bad, but so stupid that they would work only with the baser agencies of evil; and the dreadful thought struck me that, if they belonged to a state of existence altogether bad and altogether hopeless, they could be entrusted only with its menial offices. But it was the lack of resolution, rather than the positive passion for vice, which distinguished the faces of most. Weakness, not vice, was the prevailing note. Never did I see so vividly what appalling vastness belongs to the jurisdiction of weakness. On the other hand, many

of the faces bore no trace of badness that did not seem easy to wipe away. The face of one young boy who stood near me was fair and round and smooth; and his brow was white and broad; and his look was as soft and gentle as if he had newly heard the counsels of his mother's love. And yet the fair young boy was a convicted thief.

Most supper parties are joyous, but that one was appalling. Most of the men and boys, poor things, were ravenously hungry, and they shouted and yelled for more soup and more bread. As I looked at the crowd of pale, hungry, bad faces, and as I heard the chorus of demands for "bread," "bread," I could not help remembering the descriptions of those hungry, savage, howling mobs that heralded the French Revolution. And yet the meeting contained some elements of good. After the mass of the boys and men had gone away, some remained to say how eager they were to get work. They showed us the marks which oakum-picking had left on their fingers; they said that they would work for a shilling a-day, or for anything rather than continue to live a life of theft. A boy told me, with a modesty which was profoundly pathetic, that he once—only once—had work. Ned, who is the most practical of evangelists, told the boys and men to meet him next morning at ten, and he would then try to get work for them. If they do not get work, all the religious and moral appeals in the world will not reach their hearts, and most of them are as certain to live and die thieves as if they were the victims of an inevitable decree.

On leaving the thieves' party, I went to a large evening party of a very different description. The

rooms were brilliantly lighted; the crowd of ladies was gay with bright colour; jest, and banter, and epigram, and laughter were heard on every side; and I found myself drawn into a conversation on the refining influence of Art! What my reflections were, as I contrasted the two scenes, I need not say.

I have already written so long a letter that, I fear, you are wearied, and I cannot tax your patience much more. I must mention, however, that thinking men are eagerly looking for John Henry Newman's forthcoming philosophical work entitled *The Grammar of Assent*. I shall send you a copy on the day of publication. Newman has spent years of labour on the book, and he regards it as the great work of his life. Do you admire Newman? I do profoundly, although I find it difficult to agree with a single page of his writing. As you know, I have not the honour to agree with what is called the Catholic theology, whether held by the Latin or the Anglican Church. But, although I stand at the opposite pole from those who hold by sacramentarian and sacerdotalist doctrine, my admiration for the saint-like beauty of Newman's character, for the exquisite character of his genius, for his wonderful insight into human nature, for his marvellous command over the resources of the literary art, is such that I never think of him without mentally lifting my hat in token of my reverence. Character, personality, is so much greater a thing than mere intellect, that I think there is no living man in whose presence I should feel so much awed as in that of Newman. A mediæval mystic, with all the culture of modern Oxford, a Bernardine recluse born out of due time, he is the last great

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representative of a great race, and from his lips come the last notes of a faith that in the world of intellect and culture promises to be soon for ever hushed.

Tuesday morning.

We are in the midst of the debate on the second reading of the Irish Land Bill. It was my duty to attend at the House of Commons last night, and to write on the speeches. Never did I hear a duller, more trivial, or less real debate. The poor old Tory party is dead. Perhaps, in a future letter, you will allow me to say something about the state of politics.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
March 17*th*, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS ANNIE HARRISON,—

In fulfilment of my promise, I send you an early copy of Newman's eagerly-expected book. As yet I have had time to race over only about one hundred and fifty pages, to see what the land is like before I begin my study of its ups and downs; but I have read enough to get a general idea of Newman's drift. Two things strike me. The first is Newman's marvellous command over the resources of English prose. The style, you will see, is full of those negligences into which none but a master in the school of letters would dare to fall, and which would be sharply censured if Newman belonged to the unennobled throng. On the other hand, I note an imperial ease and power about the English which are at times Shakespearian, and which seem to give him an unchallengeable right to treat the technicalities of rhetoric with the easy disdain that befits the ordering of a vassal throng. In many cases

you will also note that exquisite tenderness and beauty of phrase which, in other cases, mark the gems with which Newman has enriched our literature.

The essay is a discussion of the logic of faith, if that phrase do not imply a contradiction in terms. Since Newman seeks to ground dogmatic belief on the basis of psychology and ontology, the subject is one of the profoundest that can engage the thoughts of men. And to tell the truth, the book is one of the stiffest that I have read for many a day. Although I do not find it difficult to master the successive propositions, I confess that, when I try to put them together, I don't see quite clearly what he is driving at. When I said that I would send you the book, I did not imagine that I should be placing before you so hard a task. And—shall I confess it?—the book somewhat disappoints me, so far as I have gone. It is at once logical in its method and mystical in its tone. Now, logic is good, and so is mysticism; but, as I find myself cast alternately from one to the other as Newman finds convenient, I confess that my sense of logical precision, and my faculty of faith, such as it is, are both irritated. Newman speaks like a Saint Anselm or a Saint Bernard, who, coming back to earth, should plunge into philosophical controversy without taking the trouble to ask what are the modern conditions of proof. And I confess that I never saw more painfully inconclusive reasoning come from a logical pen than that which I note on some pages.

That brings me to the second thing which I note. I once asked Froude, who was a pupil of Newman's, how it was that the great theologian

wielded so potent an influence over the Oxford young men of his day. "Well," replied Froude, somewhat puzzled, "when we consulted him, he never told us anything out of books;" he always told them something that came straight out of his own head and heart. Hutton (of the *Spectator*) told me a kindred anecdote. Hutton, who knows Newman personally, sent him some five years ago a theological tract from his own pen. Newman did not read the tract until the other day; and, by way of excusing the seeming negligence, he said that, when writing on a particular subject, he never read anything on that subject written by other persons. Only when his book on *The Grammar of Assent* had been got out of hand did he take up Hutton's tract. These anecdotes explain the character of the book. It is very fresh and original; it is written all out of Newman's own head and heart; but, for that very reason, it betrays a curious lack of acquaintance with the latest thinking on such subjects as the Genesis of Ethics, and an amazing readiness to take for granted propositions which some of the acutest minds now living hold to be the very battle-grounds of philosophy. Nevertheless, the book could have been written only by a man of noble intellectual faculty and grand personality.

I am curious to know what you will think of the book. I should also like much to hear about Emerson's lecture.

I am,
My dear Miss Annie Harrison,
Yours faithfully,
JAMES MACDONELL.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
April 11th, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS ANNIE HARRISON,—

Your kind and welcome little note and Goldwin Smith's article safely reached me on Saturday morning (this is Monday), and I have read the essay with such admiration that, although I have written to you twice lately, I must pen a few lines of thanks for your kindness in sending the article. It is by far the ablest and most brilliant ecclesiastical essay that I have read for many a day. Goldwin Smith has often produced more finished rhetoric, but never, I think, keener, subtler, or more trenchant criticism. Indeed, I am inclined to believe that, on the whole, the essay is the ablest that he has ever penned; and, since he holds a first place among the journalists of England, that is no slight tribute of homage. I am delighted that the article has pleased you. About the criticism there is a breezy freshness and a healthy vigour, which bring as great a sense of relief after contact with the sickly sentimentalism which calls itself religion, and the incapacity for logical thought which invokes the high name of reverence, as the cool winds of the sea bring to the brow that has been fevered by the air of the cloister. If, as I believe, the civilization of the future will depend for its noblest aspirations on religion, and if, as I also believe, the Christian religion is still laden with unimagined possibilities for good, then it is to such men as Goldwin Smith that we must look with hope. Did I think that the future must draw its inspiration from such a creed as that taught by the Tractarians, and now fashionable in England, then indeed I should

despair of religion and civilization, because I should despair of morality. But nothing is to me more certain than that the religious creed which is represented by the genius of Newman, and which now displays a spasmodic vigour, belongs, as Goldwin Smith says, to "an irrevocable past." If I did not think that, to a great extent, you agreed with me, of course I should not express myself with such strength.

You know with what admiration I regard Newman, although I stand at the opposite pole of thought from that which he occupies. But I agree with every word of Smith's criticism on the great theologian. And, strange as the fact may seem, I entirely admit the justice of the charge of moral obliquity which Smith casts at Newman when he says that Newman's mind seeks first "that which is good, and in the second place that which is true;" and when he adds that Newman's conception of a Deity shocks the profoundest instincts of justice. Such a dogmatic creed as that of Newman, held with such tenacity as he holds it, must ever, I believe, be incompatible with the loftiest type of morality. When I go from the ethics of the gospel to the ethics of the dogmatic theologians, I seem to have sunk not only to a lower plane of being, but to a plane of being which has not the capacity for upward progress. Newman is great and good and pure, in spite of his distinctive creed. And yet he is so great and good and pure as to inspire me with a respect and a reverence which I should find it difficult to pay to any other man.

Rather more than three weeks ago I sent Newman's *Grammar of Assent* to you. I hope it has reached

you safely. I am curious to know what you think of it. In the accompanying letter I sent an exquisitely beautiful passage on the English Bible, which, on the authority of hearsay, I assigned to Newman, although I had not met with it in the course of my own study of Newman's works. I have since heard that the author is not Newman but Faber. I have not been able to verify the information.

TO MRS. HARRISON. 14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.
Monday night.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

To-day I have had what the French call "the felicity" of an interview with the personal friend who happens to be my medical adviser on the few occasions when I need the advice of such a functionary. My friend has delivered a severe physiological lecture on the fact that the nervous system is not absolutely inexhaustible, and, with the despotic air which belongs to his caste, he has ordered me to go to the country, leave off work, give up reading, thinking, writing, talking. For a fortnight I have to transform myself into a vegetable. So when the House shall rise for the Easter holidays I must shoot off into space. In the first instance I mean to go to Newcastle, and perhaps to Durham. I am glad that I shall see you before I sink into the vegetable condition.

TO MRS. HARRISON. NEW CLUB, 9, SPRING GARDENS, S.W.
May 4th.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I send you the latest, and, alas! the last book written by my friend Mr. McCombie, of whom I spoke to you on Saturday night. You have so often testified

a keen interest in the strong individualities in which Scotland has been so rich, that I think you would like to see the writing of a man who, even while he held the plough, was studying speculative philosophy, and who, in loftiness of religious life, brings to mind the personality of the Old Covenanters. He is the last of that self-taught race which found in Hugh Miller its chief representative. Now that he is stricken down by what his own family believe to be mortal sickness, I turn to him with a peculiar reverence.

You will share my delight at the second reading of the Women Suffrage Bill. I confess that the result has taken me agreeably by surprise. I did not hear the debate, the question being one of those on which I do not agree with the *Daily Telegraph*, and on which, therefore, I do not write.

Have you been reading Disraeli's novel *Lothair?* I have finished it. I do not give it high praise when I say that it is incomparably better than the mass of fictions. At the same time it is really clever, and very amusing. Cardinal Grandison is Archbishop Manning; Lothair, the Marquis of Bute; St. Aldegonde, an idealised Lord Hartington; the Duke is the Duke of Abercorn; the Oxford Professor, Goldwin Smith; the Bishop, Sam. Wilberforce; and Monsignore Catesby is Monsignore Capel, who, you remember, converted, or perverted, the Marquis of Bute. I dined in company with Capel last night, and we joked a good deal about Lothair and Catesby. Capel is one of those very clever ecclesiastics of whom Rome seems to have a monopoly. A good talker, accomplished, polished, playful, a perfect man of the

world, utterly free from any outward sign of priestliness, he is nevertheless fanatically devoted to his order and his Church. At dinner the talk was almost wholly ecclesiastical, and he told me much that was interesting about the Council, which he has been attending. He and I did not conceal our theological differences, and flung arguments at each other across the table. I was amused to see myself once more assailed by the familiar arguments of my youth; and I think I took the Monsignore aback by the coolness with which I denied the assumptions that he asked me to grant, and by my expression of readiness to maintain on logical grounds propositions which he held to be logically contradictory. However, we parted good friends. He has cordially asked me to visit him, which I will do; and he has offered to give me a letter of introduction to Archbishop Darboy when I go to Paris, which I will certainly accept. He hates Manning as only one priest can hate another.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
May 16*th*, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS ANNIE HARRISON,—

Let me enter another protest. You assume that I do not "sympathise" with the theology taught by the "gentle Church" of the Friends. Now, I have a good mind to use, by way of retort, the alternative which you have flung at me, and to say rather that my words must have been quite unintelligible, or that you did not read my letter! I said that I did not "accept" the theology of the Friends. At least, I think that is what I said. But, in many respects, I have a deeper sympathy with the

teaching and the aims of the Friends than with the teaching and the aims of any other Church. To Fox, Penn, Barclay, and the other great men by whom the Society was founded, politics, morals, and religion are indebted, I believe, for priceless services. I certainly do not accept some chief tenets of their theology, any more than I accept some chief tenets of the theology taught by the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland; but when I am asked to take away my eyes from what theologians technically call the "Church," and to estimate the truth of doctrines by the light of my own reason and of ethical teaching which I find in the Gospels, I have no hesitation as to which body of doctrines, the "sacerdotal" or the "non-sacerdotal," I should give the higher place. If I had time I should write a long essay to show how much the political, and the ethical, and the theological teaching of the early Friends has basened that of modern England. The essay might be none the less effective because it would frankly state at the outset, and would show in every page, that it was written by an outsider, whom the early Friends, if they had not risen far above the brutalities of persecution, would have burned for the brevity of his dogmatic creed.

I am glad that you like Newman. I don't at all wonder that you find the *Grammar* difficult to understand. I am in exactly the same predicament. And, to tell the truth, the book disappointed me, although I could not be blind to its remarkable power. I do not think that you have the slightest need to apologise for the feeling that in some parts the *Apologia* was "weak and foolish." I entirely

agree with you. Parts of it *are* weak and foolish. Although the book displayed marvellous powers, it revealed a lack of manly strength and boldness of intellect, which, although not without a feminine beauty, was painful and almost sickly. Was that your feeling? I wish you would write an essay on the likeness between Pascal and Newman. I have often thought of the resemblance, and I drew attention to it last year in an article which I wrote in the *Spectator* on my friend Dora Greenwell's poems. Goldwin Smith, I see, notes the same likeness. Might you not write the essay? I could give you a good deal of material, and I need not say that I should be delighted to give you all the help in my power.

The only things which I have written on *The Grammar of Assent* have been leading articles, and these have dealt with the man rather than the book. They are not worth reading.

In going through the Lake Country lately, I paid a visit to the little churchyard of Grasmere, which you must know well. You remember the resting-place of the Wordsworths, with the grave of poor Hartley Coleridge in the background. I need not ask you whether you were struck by the pathos of the place in which the whole family sleep; for I feel that you must be an admirer of Wordsworth's poetry and character. To me the spot seemed the holiest that I had ever seen. Standing before it, one seemed to understand the motives by which Catholic devotees are driven to make pilgrimages to the shrines of saints. Was that your feeling? Thinking that you would like to have photographs of the church and

the graveyard, I bought some, and your sister, I believe, has sent them by your cousin. I have also sent some photographs of Durham, where I stayed for a couple of days with my friends the Greenwells.

14, Brunswick Square, W.C.
June 7th, 1870.

My dear Miss Annie Harrison,—

Accept my best thanks for the copy of the *Nation*, which reached me yesterday forenoon. It is very kind of you thus to remember the fact of my existence. Goldwin Smith's article I have read with pleasure; like all that he writes, it is clever and masculine; and the *Saturday Review* of America—for such I hold the *Nation* to be—is to be congratulated on having among its contributors the man who, in former years, was perhaps the ablest writer for the *Saturday Review* of England. Did you know that Smith was at one time a *Saturday Reviewer?* It was he who used to write the merciless criticisms on the French Empire in that periodical. And that is the reason why the *Saturday* spared Smith during the American war, when it poured all its wealth of scorn, and invective, and sneer, and falsehood on the other prominent Englishmen who took the side of the North, and who recognised in the Southern "gentlemen" no higher quality than the imperial brutality which comes with generations of licentious rule. Douglas Cooke, the late editor of the *Saturday*, once showed my friend the late Dr. Joseph Robertson (the greatest of Scottish antiquarian scholars) an album containing portraits of his best contributors; and on coming to Smith's likeness, "That," he said, "I count, on the whole, my most effective pen."

Do you know Smith's lectures on Pym, Cromwell, and Pitt? The article on Fairfax is a companion piece to the series. They are admirably written, very able, and, in their way, are models of lectures intended to be made up, half of narrative and half of disquisition. By book-post I send you a copy, which you will please me by adding to your library.

Through the kindness of your sister Agnes, I have been favoured with a look of a letter which you lately sent to your sister Lucy, and in which you describe a visit to a prison. Your picture of the young woman who, although she had killed two men, and been five years in gaol, could yet take an innocent pleasure in the pretty neatness of her cell, and could solace herself, in childlike fashion, with the companionship of a doll, is quite startling in its vividness. I, too, am to take the liberty of copying the passage, and—such is my audacity!—it is quite possible that I may some day take the further liberty of publishing it.

Have you thought of what I said in my last letter about your writing an essay on the points of resemblance between Pascal and Newman? It would give me the keenest pleasure to help you with the task in any way that I could. At present I am revising a MS. of your sister's. It is a New England story, filled with details of the social and the religious life led by the members of the Society of Friends. It traces, also, the growing existence of a young girl who stands apart from all that life, and grows up in secluded loneliness. The beauty and the quiet power of the story are very remarkable. I am charmed with it.

I am about to answer a note from your mother,

inviting me to meet Professor Blackie at lunch to-morrow. The Professor is a friend and foe of mine. Last year, he and I had a written controversy on the Genesis of Ethics, and the utilitarian theory of morals, in which the Professor denounced my ethical views with astonishing vigour of rhetoric; and this year—within the last few weeks—he has, in a series of lectures at the Royal Institution, been what he is pleased to think demolishing Utilitarianism. Whether he has been successful is a question to which he gives one answer and I give another! To-morrow we shall get on very well together if we keep away from the basis of morals; but if we reach that fighting-ground, the consequences will be disastrous. The Professor, who is the most pugnacious man "on the planet," as you Americans would say, will fight so long as the heels of his boots are left. Reviewing the few remaining splinters of the two combatants, the papers will have to record "A Distressing Case of Philosophico-Kilkennycatomania." I shouldn't wonder if we were denied Christian buria

TO MRS. HARRISON. 14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE.
June 12*th*.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Since you don't read the newspapers I fear that you may miss reading the speech which Forster delivered in the House last night on the Education Bill; and the speech seems to me to handle "the religious difficulty" with such ability, and in such accord with what I think are your own views, that I can't refrain from enclosing a full report. I didn't hear the speech; I had left the House before Forster

rose. I, however, heard Richard's, which advocated the total exclusion of the State from the teaching of religion in elementary schools. Richard—who is not only a Member of Parliament, but an eminent Nonconformist clergyman—spoke with remarkably good taste, ability, and eloquence. My only objection to his scheme is that it is utterly impracticable. The country will not hear of it. On the whole, I think Forster has hit on the only plan that will work in so curious a country as England.

I hope you are interested in the Education question. To me it is profoundly interesting; and as the discussion of the question in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* has been left almost entirely in my hands, I can at present think of little else. Miall is to begin the debate this afternoon.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.
Monday.

MY DEAR MRS. HARRISON,—

You will have been sorry to note the death of the Comte de Montalembert. To me he seemed the most interesting, as well as the most illustrious, layman of Roman Catholic Europe. When he, Lamennais, and Lacordaire strove to show that perfect fidelity to the doctrines of the Latin Church was compatible with a political Liberalism which verged on the creed of extreme Democracy, those three gifted men made an experiment which seems very tragic when viewed by the light of the present Œcumenical Synod. They failed, and could not but have failed. The Pope, although abused for driving Lamennais out of the Church, and for reducing Montalembert and Lacordaire to silence, acted, I

cannot but think, with that wisdom of the serpent which has seldom deserted the See of Rome. Such Liberalism as that of the three great Frenchmen must ultimately, I think, be found incompatible with a rigidly dogmatic or specially hierarchical creed, whether that creed be called Latin or Anglican.

On Saturday night I met at a dinner-party M. Louis Blanc, and I was curious to see what view of the Council would be taken by a man who has played so prominent a part in the political history of France, and who, as a Rad and a Socialist, represents what many persons hold to be "the Liberalism of the morrow." I need not say that he laughs at the doctrine of papal infallibility; but he fervently hopes that it may be affirmed by the Council. You know that I share his opinion, and I know that you think the opinion very wicked!

14, Brunswick Square, London, W.C.
July 13th, 1870.

My dear Miss Annie Harrison,—

How can I thank you sufficiently for your gift or your letter? It was most mindful of you to send me the book, and most kind of you to write my name inside. The inscription, I need scarcely say, makes the book doubly valuable. I wish that I had written your name in the books which I have sent to you; I did not do so because I had imagined that I was forbidden by the regulations of the Post Office; but I now believe that such is not the case, and so, in future, I shall be able to signify the ownership of the books which I send. When you come back to Beckenham, perhaps you will allow me to write

your name in the volumes which I have given you, including, of course, the Boswell's *Johnson*, which you took with you to America. I hope that book has given you pleasure. It is one of those books "without which no ladies' library is complete."

Thank you for your bright, pleasant letter,—which reminds me so vividly of our talks at Egerton House and Aubrey House. That picture of the American school examination,—held in the open air, with the blackboard placed against the sycamore tree, the little citizens catechised respecting the constitution of the United States and the election of the chief magistrates, the self-possession of the tiny politicians, the game of "French and English," and the tremendous, prodigious, colossal, appalling, sublime (my list of adjectives is exhausted) consumption of ice-cream,—gives me a more vivid idea of American school-life than anything else that I have seen. I could not help thinking of the scene when listening, on the evening of the day that brought your letter, to the debate on the great Education Bill which Forster is conducting through the House of Commons. As I heard our legislators squabbling over the trivialities of school pence and school rates, I thought of the mugs of weak tea and the butterless buns which you hold to be the emblems of our school life; and then I thought of that Mont Blanc of ice-cream which typifies the school life of young America. I did not put the ice-cream into my article on the debate, but I could not help whispering the words "eighty quarts of ice-cream" to a fellow leader-writer who was sitting near me; and, struck by so awful a revelation of the vigour which belongs

to young America, the man collapsed into a state of inarticulate amazement.

You are terribly severe on Disraeli and on *Lothair*. (By the way, allow me to mention, on the highest authority, that the word must be pronounced as if written "Lo*t*air." That is Disraeli's special desire.) I am not quite certain that he has not got a conscience—of a kind; although it is covered with so many rugs and great-coats of party-craft as to resemble a coachman of the old school, who was wrapped up in so many folds of drapery that his own proportions were quite undistinguishable. I entirely agree with what you say about Goldwin Smith. It was foolish to write that letter in which he called Disraeli a "coward." It was one of those mistakes which the smallest and most commonplace man of the world would not commit; but it was just one of the mistakes into which men who lead a cloister life are prone to fall. The fault springs from a lack, not of nobility, but of prudence; and the mistakes made by Mill when in Parliament sprang from the same source. Those who know Smith best speak most reverentially of his character, which has an austere nobility that men of the world find it difficult to understand.

Agnes, Mr. Yarnall, and I propose to go to Rochester on Saturday, and to stay the night there. When so near to Gad's Hill, we shall be bound, of course, to visit that dwelling-place of Dickens,—although, I think, no one of us is a rapturous admirer of the novelist. The journey will, no doubt, be very pleasant. We shall keep clear of theology, and the Church, and Mansel, and Keble, and the *Christian*

Year, and Goldwin Smith's articles, and all other inflammable subjects. We shall be good children, and agree all round. Luckily, I have a passionate admiration for Gothic architecture, and for the work which was done by the Church in the days that witnessed the building of such cathedrals as Rochester; so Mr. Yarnall and I shall agree wonderfully well. We didn't differ at all on Saturday in the course of our long ramble through the Parks. I wish you were to go with us on Saturday. May we not look forward to such a pilgrimage during the next Christmas holidays as we had during the last, and will you not be one of the company?

I am glad that you like Arnold. He always writes beautifully. I confess, however, that I resent the insolent condescension with which he speaks of Dissent, when, looking at the matter as a student of politics and of morals, I remember what Dissent has done for the manhood, the liberties, the virtue, and even the literature of England. For the English Church my admiration is also fervent, and my reverence deep; but that admiration and that reverence would be more intense if the English Church, or, rather, the English clergy, had less often been basely, wickedly false to the cause of civil and religious liberty, and had less often condoned the vices of such scoundrels as Charles II., and the follies of such consummate maniacs as George III. As I think of her political servility, I call to mind a terrible passage in which Macaulay (you will find it in the essay on Hallam) says that "once and but once, for a moment and but for a moment, she forgot

to practise the submission she had taught." That was long ago. At the present day, the English Church is more nobly alive to her duty, and more richly endowed with good men, than she has been for many generations. No doubt she will be split up at no distant day, and the more extreme of the High Church party will find a haven of rest in Rome; while the extreme Low Church party may separate from the Broad section when the bonds of the connection with the State are broken. Nevertheless, the present condition of the English Church augurs well for the future of Christianity. And, surely, we are coming to a day in which men will see that the words of our Lord meant something far loftier and holier and more catholic than the narrow dogmas of the sects. A witty friend of mine is so bold as to anticipate a day in which "Christians shall be converted to Christianity." This at least seems to be clear, that the world is not seizing fast hold of that cardinal precept which the Friends concealed under the veil of their peculiar phraseology—the truth that the individual reason and conscience were the supreme judges of theological truth, and that against the dictate of the conscience the pleading of no General Council or Church is of any avail. It is the recognition of what I hold to be that great truth that makes me sympathise so heartily with the teaching in Goldwin Smith's article.

But enough of theology. Allow me to send what you may deem much better—a collection of the poetical gems in our language. Perhaps you know the volume; it is the *Golden Treasury*. It is a favourite book of mine; and, indeed, I have so often

used the copy that it is somewhat soiled. Still, you may like to have it beside you. It will enable you to glance, in your leisure hours, over much of what is best in English song. With Mr. Yarnall I mean to send you Ruskin's *Lectures on Art*, which was published the other day. It contains passages of striking beauty, and also, I am presumptuous enough to think, much nonsense. In the *Spectator* I mean to say so. I sent you recently a copy of the *Spectator* containing an article of mine on "About and his School."

July 14*th*.

Here I stopped last night, being so fagged and sleepy, as you may see from the staggering character of my handwriting, that I could not fashion sentences.

Mr. McCombie's life is to be written by his eldest daughter—a very remarkable woman. I have promised to assist her, and to write one whole chapter containing my recollections of her father. I shall be very anxious to give you a copy of the book.

Allow me again to thank you for your gift. After reading several of the essays, I think you are too severe on Emerson; at least, it gives me great pleasure to have the book beside me with my name upon it. At the same time, I am glad to see that you do not put Emerson on so high a pedestal as he is put by the majority of Americans, and even of Englishmen. It amazes me to see him put in a higher rank as a writer than Hawthorne, who seems to me to possess by far the rarest literary genius among American men of letters. For power of

story-telling I doubt whether this age has seen anything equal to the *Scarlet Letter*. And I certainly agree with what you say about the inferiority of Emerson to Carlyle. He belongs to a different species. And after all, as you say, intellect is a poor thing when it stands by itself.

How do you like the Lakes? To me Ambleside seemed one of the loveliest spots on which my eye had ever rested. It seemed the very place in which to live the life of a scholarly recluse. As I passed such houses as that of Miss Martineau I confess that I broke the commandment which tells me not to covet my neighbour's goods. I confess, also, I thought very hard thoughts of those ancestors of mine, who, in their zealous pursuit of "cattle-lifting," that is to say, of stealing cattle on a large scale, or, in downright language, of thieving, forgot to prepare for one of their descendants the means of living a life of philosophic idleness. I suppose you know that, in the old days of our early grandeur, before the battle of Culloden smote us with the heresy of civilization, we Highland people never did a stroke of honest work if we could live by stealing. We Macdonells of Glengarry were all thieves—on a large scale, you know. We were the Overends, Gurney & Co. of our time; and that time was rather long, if I am to believe the family tradition that the Macdonells did not accompany Noah into the ark, but had a boat of their own at the Deluge. If I may also judge from other records of the fashion in which we filled up the interval after the Flood, we were the greatest rogues in the Highlands, and half of us ought to have been hanged. No doubt

many of us were. I have good reason, you see, to be proud of my ancestry. That is why I never let slip a chance of pouring ridicule and contempt, through the leading columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, on the pride with which lineage is traced to a gang of half-dressed thieves.

You fill me with envy by your account of the pilgrimage which you mean to make into the woods. How eagerly I wish that I could be with you, but I am chained to London at present, and have to go to the House of Commons night after night to write on the debate. We also, as I said before, speak of making a short pilgrimage. Need I say how much I wish that you could join us?

Allow me to make another addition to your library in Matthew Arnold's newly-published book, *Saint Paul and Protestantism.* It is, you will see, a curious contrast to the *Grammar of Assent.* You will be much amused, I think, by the high-and-mighty airs which Arnold puts on when he speaks of Dissent. In a savage article, written by way of retort to Arnold's fling at "the magnificent roaring of the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph*" (N.B.—I myself am a dull lion, and don't roar), I called him "an elegant Jeremiah." He didn't like the phrase; but it's true for all that, and he was never more emphatically an elegant Jeremiah than in the present volume. Still, Arnold is the most delicate of living English critics; he writes from a French elevation of criticism; and his style, if it lacks masculine strength, is, at any rate, full of beauty. Tell me, please, what you think of the book and of Arnold.

I send you also the last number of *Fraser*, which

contains an article by Froude on the *Grammar of Assent*. Froude was one of Newman's early followers; but, now!—the two men have taken strangely different paths. Froude's article does not seem to be particularly acute or strong.

I don't know what authority Goldwin Smith has for saying that Mansel regrets the publication of his Bampton Lectures. But I should not wonder if Mansel did. Although Mansel meant his argument to annihilate the critical weapons of scepticism, yet, in the opinion of such thinkers as Mr. Maurice, and, I suspect, a majority of Christianity metaphysicians, the reasoning, if it were tenable, would logically lead to the destruction of Theism. That is Goldwin Smith's own opinion.

TO MRS. HARRISON. 14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.
July 22nd, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Since you do not read the newspapers, I must now and then challenge your attention to points of interest, and I cannot allow you to pass unnoticed the melancholy death of Prevost-Paradol, the French Minister at Washington. As a brilliant member of my own profession, he, of course, interested me more than he would interest you; I had read his leading articles and his essays with the respect and admiration demanded by their lofty tone, their thoughtfulness, and their brilliant rhetoric; and, although I had never met Paradol, I seemed to know him as well as if he had been my personal friend. What makes his death so melancholy is that it is doubtless the protest of suicide against the present wicked war. When he accepted diplomatic rank, he fancied that

the Empire had finally departed from its old traditions; but on reaching Washington he found his hopes falsified, and a terrible force given to the criticisms of his foes, by learning that Napoleon III. had committed the most atrocious crime recorded in the history of this century. That, I cannot doubt, broke his proud heart. He could not endure the upbraidings of his friends or the sneers of his enemies; and so, in a fit of insanity, let us fondly hope, he died a death of ignominy. So young, so gifted, so successful, so certain to make his mark among the statesmen of France, he dies a death that makes his life one of the saddest of which I know. In the *Daily Telegraph* I have written an article on his career, which contains facts that may interest you. The passage in which I indicated the cause of his death has been softened until it is nearly meaningless. If you would like to know more about him I will tell you when I next go to Beckenham, and I will send you the lectures on France which he delivered last year in Edinburgh.

I might have known him, and, but for this most sad ending of his career, it is not improbable that I should. For if next year should not prove brighter than this has been, I will, in the autumn, carry out a long-deferred intention, and, accepting the invitation of kind friends, will visit America, with a view to the fixing of a future home. To Paradol I should, of course, have carried a letter of introduction. He is one of the men that I have long wished to see.

A friend of mine, who is an able jurist, thinks the present war so wicked, that, speaking with the precision of a police magistrate, he has expressed a

wish to sentence Louis Napoleon to 999, or 999,000 (I forget which), years of simmering in a place of which you may possibly have heard in the course of your theological studies.

The death of his honoured and dear friend Mr. McCombie of Aberdeen, took place in May 1870. It affected him deeply, and is referred to with great fulness in all his correspondence of this time. He wrote the following letter to Mrs. McCombie and his eldest daughter, the bond between whom and her father was peculiarly close and tender.

14, Brunswick Square, W.C.
May 6th, 1870.

My dear Mrs. McCombie,—

So keenly do I feel the powerlessness of words to soothe or to console, that I almost chide myself for intruding upon your sorrow, and would prefer to say nothing until the first bitterness of your grief should have passed away. But although I can speak no words of healing, perhaps you will allow me to mingle my sorrow with yours. The death of Mr. McCombie has affected me as much as if he had been, not merely my friend, but my relative. And, indeed, he did for me and mine kind, beautiful, unceasing, unrequited offices of friendship such as no relative of mine could fulfil. When I was friendless and needed help he encouraged me, aided me, fitted me for work, and, indeed, gave me that start in life to which I am indebted for every measure of success. In my boyhood he was a teacher and an exemplar to me. To him I am indebted more profoundly than to any other man that I ever knew.

And, although we had been separated in recent years by distance, neither time nor absence could dim the reverential admiration with which I regarded his character in my boyhood. I, who knew him as few outside his own family knew him, and who am able to judge him by the standard of metropolitan men, think of him as the man of most distinctive personal greatness and goodness that I have ever known, or ever expect to know. Now that he has passed away the people of Aberdeenshire will know for the first time how great a man had sprung from amongst them, and been sharing their ways of life.

What blessings he showered on our family, what benefits they owe to him, how hopeless it is even to think of a requital, I cannot even say.

It is a cause of great regret to me that I was not able to get away from my London duties in order to see my friend before he died. I keenly wished to see him once more, and bid him a last "Good-bye." And had I known during the Easter holidays that the end was so near, I should certainly have gone to Aberdeen. But I did not anticipate so swiftly-coming a calamity; and I was so much out of health at the time that I dreaded a long railway journey.

It would please me to hear that the last hours of my dear friend were painless; I know that they were peaceful. His life of goodness had fitted him for a death of peace. In his case the consolations that spring from the life beyond the grave are blessed realities. In the days to come you will feel that to be a hallowed truth.

I do not know whether I pain you by what I am

saying about the dead, or whether you would prefer me to be silent. But I am writing out of the fulness of my heart, and, even when your grief is still cruelly new, I cannot refrain from sending this token of homage to what will for evermore be to me a great and sanctified memory.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.
May 14th, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS MCCOMBIE,—

I have delayed writing to you until I should be able to send some printed token of the affectionate respect and admiration in which I hold the memory of your father. To-day's *Spectator*—one copy of which I send to you, and one to Miss Annie—contains, you will see, a long article by me on your father's life and character. It is written with all the calmness and discrimination which befit a journal that appeals to the most cultivated class; but it will not, I think, be the less pleasing to you on that account. It is my deliberate estimate of your father's work and character. With more time and room at my disposal I might have given the English people a more vivid idea of his real greatness. At the same time, it seems to be not unfitting that the *Spectator* should, of all English journals, be the one to give a special record of his intellect and work; for, of all English journals, the *Spectator*, if I am not mistaken, was the one with which he found himself the most in harmony.

The story of your father's life ought to be told without delay. It should be told in connection with a description of the class from which he sprang;

of Scottish religious life; of Scottish education as given in the parish schools; of Scottish politics and of Scottish farming. The book need not be long. Two or three hundred pages, if carefully written, would suffice. Such a book would be highly instructive and interesting; and it would help to keep the memory of your father green.

As I read over my article in the *Spectator* it seems to me cold and stiff. It was written under the depressing influence of the thought that I was addressing readers to whom your father's virtues were unknown.

14, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.
May 30*th*, 1870.

MY DEAR MISS ANNIE McCOMBIE,—

Although your father's life was not eventful, there is no reason why the story should lack the element of personal incident and anecdote and trait. Much must be said about Scottish religious life, Scottish education, Scottish politics, and Scottish farming; but even these subjects admit of being lighted up by details of Scottish personality; and, indeed, the book need not be darkened by a single page of dry or bare disquisition.

He was sent in September to France for several weeks as special correspondent, and among other adventures was arrested at Orleans as a Prussian spy, but no harm came of the mishap. He was at this time somewhat anxious about his health, and made up his mind that he must not compete with stronger men. The following letters were addressed to Miss Agnes Harrison.

TOURS.
Tuesday night, September 1870.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

My chief has telegraphed to me to remain in Tours for some days longer, and, probably, I shall not leave before Saturday. Perhaps I shall not bolt until I shall be driven out by the Uhlans! The Prussians are to-day at Orleans, where, as I told you in my last letter, I was on Sunday. They may be here in a few days. And then—"Glory, glory, hallelujah!" as John Brown's song says—I shall see the Prussians. If the letter which I sent to the *Telegraph* to-day should reach England, don't be frightened about me. It was an extraordinary scene. When standing between the loaded chassepots, which seemed on the point of going off, the situation, I confess, was slightly embarrassing. And yet I was intensely interested, and, indeed, slightly—no, not amused, but—well, slightly exhilarated by the expectation of what would come next. Had the officers not caught the barrel of the rifle there would have been a frightful massacre. The state of affairs is exceedingly interesting. It fires my Celtic blood. I confess that I like a row. We shall have one in a few days. I don't know when I may get back to England; perhaps it may be in a week, perhaps in ten days, perhaps in a fortnight. I long for a letter from you, dear Agnes. And yet I can't ask you to write to Tours, for the Germans may drive us out of this any day.

The war, dear Agnes, is, I fear, only beginning. The priests, the bishops, the heads of families, the noblest men, the mothers are all enlisting heart and soul. They will fight, I believe, to the bitter end.

And I confess that, after reading Jules Favre's noble proposal of peace, I hope they will. And yet the country is frightfully disorganised and demoralized. This war might seem to be like a judgment of God— and the cup of bitterness is not yet full.

TOURS.
Thursday, October 5th, 1870.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

I am far away from Beckenham, you see! You know, I presume, that I spent some days in Rouen? At least I wrote you from Rouen on Sunday, and I sent two long letters to the *Daily Telegraph* from the same town,—although I have not the slightest idea whether either has reached London. I left Rouen on Tuesday forenoon, and reached Tours yesterday forenoon. I need not describe the journey, for I have done that already in a letter which I sent to the *Telegraph* last night; and I wish to tell you, dear Agnes, with my own lips what I think would interest you. Let me only say, meanwhile, that the scene at the railway station of Le Mane, in which I wandered about all night, was one of the queerest I ever saw. War has its grotesque as well as its fearful side.

I have given up all hope of being able to dash into Paris. All the lines of railway are cut, and I could not get beyond the advanced posts of the French troops without a safe conduct from one of the Ministers; and that I am but too certain they will not give me. At a time like this French Ministers hate newspaper correspondents. When I called this afternoon on M. Cremieux, the Minister of Justice,

I found that my letter of introduction was powerless. However, it gave me the opportunity of seeing the Archbishop's palace, in which the Ministry of Justice is at present lodged.

Even if I got beyond the advanced posts I should fall into the hands either of the peasants or the Prussians, either or both of whom would, I am assured, seize me as a spy. I confess that of the two I should prefer the Prussians; for the peasantry are so terribly ignorant, that they firmly believe light hair and an English accent to be sure signs of kinship with Bismarck, and they have unpleasant ways of expressing that conviction. However, I must get a sight of the Uhlans—so to-morrow forenoon I am off to Blois, which they are expected to visit in a day or two. To my intense disappointment, the line is cut between Blois and Orleans; for I wished to spend next Sunday at Orleans, in the hope that I might see Bishop Dupanloup, and perhaps hear him preach. It is just possible that even yet I may reach Orleans. The Prussians are already there. It is very hard that I can't get a sight of a Uhlan after coming so far!

My journey hitherto has been very interesting. It has also been at times very fatiguing. Last night I had not been in bed for forty hours; and during most of the previous night I had been wandering about around a crowd of soldiers and fugitives from Paris.

I have a thousand things to tell you, my dear Agnes. How often have I wished that I could show you many of the sights—notably the grand cathedrals. There have been many sights of pain, which, of course, I should not have wished you to see. France is full

of sadness. France is in camp and in hospital. The prevailing tone of quietude and sadness—the utter absence of French gaiety—is startling! Be assured of this—the people are grimly in earnest, and, if well led, they will fight until the end. They are much troubled by the report that the King of Prussia means to restore the Empire. Of course that is a fiction. Whatever may be the wish of the king—whose political ethics are those of a Tory soldier—or of the nobles—who are demoralized by the spirit of caste—the great and educated German people would never be guilty of such a crime. Of course, if they attempted it, one would hope that, despite all her sins, France would still have virtue enough to prefer death to submission, and that every French mother would send her sons to the front, with the command not to return so long as a German remained on French soil. And I hope, also, that England would intervene, and the young men of England would volunteer to join the French army. For my own part, I confess that I should covet death in such a cause.

I like the German people far better than the French, and France was guilty of a mighty crime when she produced this war. Even yet I do not think that she has been sufficiently punished. If Alsace and the Republic could be saved, I should like, in the interest of France herself, to see the lesson deepened. But all the more bitterly do I regret to see the Germans allowing their Tory king and ministers to degrade the character of a magnificent contest.

In October 1870 Miss Annie Harrison returned

from America, and in the November the lovers were betrothed. During the next nine months Mr. Macdonell paid regular visits to the home at Beckenham. He used to arrive about eleven on Saturday morning and stay until Sunday afternoon, when he had to return to his work in town. Every week he brought Miss Harrison the gift of a book. "Through many an hour," writes his wife, "he sat and read aloud to me, and we had long country walks, all too short for the thousand and one things we wished to talk of. And his coming among us made a great change to the whole household,—new books, new subjects of interest, a new and fresh delight and interest in the world. Almost every one felt and yielded to the charm and fascination of his bright presence."

The following extracts from correspondence give glimpses of his life at this period. The first is an acknowledgment of Mr. McCombie's posthumous work, *Sermons and Lectures;* the others are addressed to Miss Agnes Harrison, who was then living in Germany.

14, Brunswick Square, W.C.
February 10*th*, 1871.

My dear Miss McCombie,—

Many thanks for the copy of your father's sermons. They will be a precious possession to me. I have promised to Mr. Hutton that I will write a review of the book for the *Spectator*, and I will keep my promise so soon as I can get free from the load of work under which I am at present staggering. This week I have already written seven leading articles, and I must write another late to-night; so you will see that I am not idle.

Have you begun to write the biography of your father? I hope that you will not delay the duty. Let me say again that such help as I can offer I will gladly give. I should be happy, for example, to give all my recollections of your father, in the form of a long letter to you, which might, if you thought fit, form a chapter of the book. That plan was adopted, you may remember, by Mrs. Gordon, in writing the life of her father, Professor Wilson. Could not Mr. Bell also write such a letter to you? I liked very much what he said about your father in the *United Presbyterian Magazine*, although the expression had here and there some of that Bellian peculiarity which used to puzzle us of old. Some of the touches in which he delineated your father's character were very fine.

NEW CLUB, 9, SPRING GARDENS, S.W.
April 18*th*, 1871.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

Heartily do I wish that Annie and I had been with you at Eisenach, for you know that the great Reformer is a hero to both of us. There is no one whose dwelling-place I should visit with feelings of greater reverence. To me the room in which he threw his ink-pot at the Devil would be the most interesting spot in Europe. As you say, dear Agnes, the translating of the Bible and the casting of the ink-pot were but two ways of doing the same thing. The Devil alters his shape in different ages. In Luther's time, he sat on the throne of St. Peter's, bought pictures, stored the Vatican with rare manuscripts, built the grandest of Christian temples, and sold passports out of Purgatory. Poor devil! one

almost pities him as one thinks of the fury with which Luther splashed his finery with ink. If the Reformer had been a polite man, he would have opened negotiations with the enemy, with a view to the conclusion of a treaty of peace. Did you ever, Agnes, read Professor Masson's essay on three devils,—Luther's, Milton's, and Goethe's? If I may trust to my boyish recollection, it is full of acute criticism, and is lighted up with as much humour as we can reasonably ask from a Scotchman.

The mention of the theological personage to whom I have referred makes my thoughts fly off to Paris, where he has broken loose. I have just seen a man who was in Paris yesterday, and who had the hardihood to go to the front with a party of skirmishers who were fighting a corresponding band from Versailles. He says that the fighting was desperate. The Commune men seem to have lost all regard for their own lives, not to speak of the lives of the Versailles troops. My colleague, who was in the midst of the fight, begged the loan of a rifle for a moment, so that he might see whether he could shoot coolly at the men who were only sixty or eighty yards off. A man handed a gun to him, then threw up his arms, and fell dead without a cry. He had been shot through the heart. My colleague carried his dead body to the rear, amid a shower of bullets, which whistled past his ears like swift wind.

Thiers and the Assembly are behaving disgracefully. And the worst of the matter is that, although the chiefs of the Commune seem to be flagrant

scoundrels, their main demands—if judged from an English point of view—are quite sound. They demand for Paris what is possessed by London—complete municipal freedom of government; they demand for the French towns what the English towns possess already—security against being swamped by the votes of an ignorant, superstitious, priest-ridden peasantry. Do not mistake my meaning, dear Agnes. I respect the French peasantry in spite of their ignorance; but, when that ignorance throws France into the grasp of a soul-destroying Empire, I cannot wonder that it should stir up the workmen of Paris to the pitch of resolving to win a Republic, and municipal freedom, or die. I think that they have acted with amazing folly, and been guilty of great wickedness; indeed, I would hang Cluseret and their other chiefs; but then I would grant their main demands. Thiers is acting like a coward and a traitor.

You charm me, my dear Agnes, by what you say about the primitiveness of Coburg, and I am especially charmed by what you say about the wondrous cheapness of necessaries and the dearness of luxuries.

NEW CLUB, 9, SPRING GARDENS, S.W.
May 3rd, 1871.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

I have just run from the House, where the Woman's Suffrage Bill has been under discussion all the afternoon. It is lost, of course—that was inevitable; but you will be glad to hear, dear Agnes, that it is as good as won. Gladstone has come over to our side; at least he has said that

he has no objection to the Bill if women vote by deputy, and so keep away from the riot of elections. That is a ridiculous qualification, which will soon vanish. He has not voted against the Bill. Disraeli has voted for it; so have Ward Hunt, Lord John Manners, and other ex-Tory Ministers. So the fight is virtually won.

14, Brunswick Square, London, W.C.
May 8th, 1871.

My dear Agnes,—

Essay writing of the highest kind seeks, perhaps, for a range of powers only inferior in width to that demanded by the drama, and for special aptitudes of much greater intensity. When I glance over Macaulay's *Essays*, I catch myself constantly saying, "Oh that the man had been a thinker, that he had been abreast of the highest thought of Europe, that he had employed his almost matchless powers of exposition and his peerless faculty of illustration to give lasting shape to something more noble than the Philistinism of England." I am half inclined to believe that, if he had been snatched away from Whiggery and Low Churchism at the age of twelve, and sent to Germany, as Gibbon was sent to France and Switzerland, he would have changed the course of English thought by the sheer force of his literary faculty.

You gave a charming picture, dear Agnes, of your life in Coburg. It is a strangely quiet and pure state of society that you paint. Life among such primitive people must seem to one who has felt the fever of London, and the restlessness which it generates, and the weariness which it brings, like a dip in the sea.

Your picture of the funeral is very pathetic, and brings to mind the last rites of lamentation which I have seen in the villages of my own land. You greatly interest me, too, dear Agnes, by what you say about the consciousness of the people that schooling is as grimly earnest a business as our common folk think the making of money. What would France be if her people were equally sane? If, in the days of the Revolution, France had been led by men as wise as the Reformers of my own land, and if their first thought had been to give the people knowledge, the world would, of course, have seen no Sedan. Poor France! one of her patriotic citizens, while sojourning in the land of Pharaoh, cannot steal even 4*s*. 6*d*. without giving a proof that his countrymen wanted to embezzle the Rhine!

You say that the men think the duty of church-going belongs to "woman's sphere;" and you hint that they would no more think of interfering with it than of taking part in the operations of the kitchen. "How shockingly human!" as Fonblanque exclaimed when he saw the monkeys stealing each other's food! The same story comes from every part of Europe, except Spain, Russia, and Turkey. And I see that, in the House of Lords last night, Lord Salisbury tried to make that august assembly mutilate the University Tests Bill by proclaiming that the educated German don't go to church. He quoted from certain letters which appeared in the *Times* the year before last. I give the extract which he read:—

"It is true there is a sprinkling of believers left in every part of the country, and there are whole districts in which Protestant or Catholic orthodoxy

may be said to prevail to this day. But these are exceptions—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.* The Wapperthal, on the borders of Westphalia, is a tower of Lutheranism; the adjoining Münsterland is more Catholic than Rome itself; but who expects belief on the gay Rhine, or in latitudinarian Brunswick, although situate in such close propinquity to these stricter localities? To take a broader view, who that knows modern Germany will call it a Christian land, either in the sense Rome gives to the term, or in the meaning Luther attached to it? Scholars have begun to denominate Christianity an Asiatic religion, and the public, proud of their vaunted European enlightenment, accept the degrading name."

Then follows a sentence pregnant with meaning to those about to vote on this Bill:—

"Already things have gone so far that men who have had a University education scarcely dare go to church lest they be taken for hypocrites or sentimental enthusiasts."

How far does your own experience confirm or contradict these statements?

The most graphic touch in your letter is that in which you paint the shop-keeping life. It is charming in its simplicity and quaintness. It is absolutely painful to think that the demon of competition will some day visit Coburg, and endow the little traders with the evil spirit of a thirst for gain. Some Luther is, indeed, required to pitch an inkstand at that enemy of mankind.

I spent a charming day at Beckenham on Saturday. Annie and I wandered through the lanes to West

Wickham, where we dined at a little inn on marvellously tough eggs and bacon. Then we went to the Oaks, thence to Hayes Common, and thence to Bromley, where we took the train. Our conversation during a great part of the walk turned upon a queer subject—Gladstone's scheme for paying off the National Debt by means of Terminable Annuities. The blunders of the Budget have brought that plan to the front, and it has been most roughly handled. To a great extent, I believe, it is a mere *hocus-pocus*, and illustrates Gladstone's marvellous power of confusing himself by subtilties. So intricate is the scheme, that, until the debate of Thursday last, I doubt whether it was understood by a dozen men in the House. On Wednesday last, after writing to you, I went to a dinner-party, at which it became the subject of conversation. The only M.P. who was present frankly confessed that he knew nothing about it; and, finding that I had studied the subject, he took me away from the smoking-room to the empty drawing-room, in order that I might coach him for the debate of the following night. But the attempt was fruitless. Operation A and Operation B, the jumble of Savings Banks, and National Debt Commissioners, the capitalizing of Terminable Annuities, the transformation of permanent into terminable charges, the puzzle of Bob Lowe's paying from his right hand to his left, left the mind of my poor M.P. in a state of chaos. Annie, however, was determined to understand the matter; and I went over the long calculation lot by lot, and figure by figure. She now fully understands Operation A, but she says that she is less certain about Operation B,

which is full of quicksands, on which, as we see from Gladstone and Lowe, more than one gallant intellect has been wrecked! However, Annie now knows more about the Funding System, Pitt's Sinking Fund, Consols, Terminable Annuities, and the puzzle for the redemption of the Irish Tithe Commutation Rent Charge than any other woman in Beckenham. She has a better head for finance than most M.P.'s. If ever I get into Parliament she will help me to prepare my speeches on finance!

14, Brunswick Square, W.C.
June 20th, 1871.

My dear Agnes,—

The thought of a few words which I said to you on Saturday night, about a doctrinal subject, has made me uneasy. I feared at the time that I had pained you, and I wished my words unsaid; while next morning I felt so grieved that I thought of going to you and expressing my regret. I refer, of course, dear Agnes, to what I said about the Real Presence. Perhaps my words seemed irreverent, or even flippant; if so, I beg you to believe that they were prompted by no corresponding spirit. I trust, dear sister, that I come to the consideration of the subject with a befitting respect for those whose faith differs from my own; and I think that, if I had explained in detail what I meant, you would not have been offended by my mood of mind, however widely you might have dissented from my creed. What may be your own views respecting this doctrine I do not know, dear Agnes, nor am I eager to inquire; for the details of your religious creed could not cast either a shadow or a gleam of new

light on the sacredness of my affection. My own belief is known to you, and it is none the less precise or emphatic because long study of the subject has shown me the utter insufficiency of the ordinary arguments with which the doctrine is assailed by the Philistines of Protestantism. But day by day I learn, when judging individual men and women, to look less and less at what they believe, and more and more at what they are. I trust, dear Agnes, that you share the feeling, and that, if you do, you will not visit me with displeasure when you differ from my belief. I need not say how profoundly grieved I should be to pain you. Pray believe, Agnes, that when I do speak of theological subjects with too much emphasis, I speak out of the fulness of long and bitter thought, and not recklessly or flippantly.

On August 22nd, 1871, a gleamy, soft, still day, they were married in the old church at Beckenham. The wedding guests were brothers, sisters, and cousins, the good old rector, Mr. Chalmers, and Mrs. Craik being the only exceptions. His sister-in-law thus describes the wedding :—

"His marriage with my sister took place soon after her return to England. Many still remember that pleasant day in August, full of sunshine, and all promise of good. Wedding-days are not, as a rule, the happiest days of life, even when they are the seal to life-long happiness. Too many emotions meet on such a day. The music, and ceremony, and decoration, seem sometimes only brought together to drown the voices of past and future which contend

for hearing. But this wedding-day was blessed into peaceful harmony by giving pleasure to some whose days have no 'surplus of delights.' My sister had wished to have present at her marriage her old pupils and friends of the Working Woman's College, of which she had been Lady Superintendent for some time. The addition of so large a number would have been difficult at Shirley House. Fortunately my brother lived near; a gate and pathway through the ground of our good neighbour, Dr. Morell, made the gardens communicate. The wedding-breakfast was served in both houses, and the bride, attended by her husband, passed through the gardens from one table to another to welcome the guests. It was a warm and sunny day, and their path was literally one of roses.

"During the breakfast a box was handed to my sister, brought by a messenger from town. It contained a necklace and locket set with diamonds, and a note from the editor and proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, asking her to accept the gift, and to add value to the locket by placing in it the portrait of her husband—'not only one of the most gifted, but one of the truest gentlemen I have ever known.'

"Such of the guests as were staying in the house went with us that afternoon, after the bridal pair had departed, a long drive over Keston Common, and saw the sun set in peaceful splendour over the heathery slopes."

About this true marriage, this bright companionship of mind and heart, the abiding sunshine and restfulness it brought into Macdonell's life, I cannot

write adequately. After all possible omissions there remains in his letters eloquent testimony of his love and pride, which no biographer's reserve could keep back, and the rest must remain untold. The warm attachment of his own relations was maintained, and even increased. He had large experience of the joys of friendships, and had drawn round him the brightest spirits everywhere. He lost none of these; the circle continually grew. But the days of loneliness were ended. He did not lay down the burdens he had borne so bravely, but their weight was lightened. The great and noble faith with which he entered married life was abundantly confirmed. Nor can I speak of the grace and joy of his household, the atmosphere of love and peace and purity, never to be forgotten by any who shared it.

The wedding tour was in Scotland. It was his wife's first visit across the Border. They went to Edinburgh, the Trossachs, Inversnaid, Dalmally, Oban, Staffa, Iona, Ballachulish, Skye, Strathcarron, Glengarry, Inverness, Aberdeen, Braemar, Edinburgh, and back to London. In all his busy life Mr. Macdonell had never had such a long holiday as these six weeks. The following letters are addressed to his sister-in-law:—

PORTREE, ISLE OF SKYE.
September 3rd, 1871.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

I write this, you see, far away from London. It is Sunday—the second we have spent in Scotland; and Annie and I are in our sitting-room, overlooking a bay which is land-locked by mountains that wind in

and out, or rather shoot out into bold headlands, so that the haven is broken into smaller bays. The scene is most picturesque. Straight before us lies the mainland, rising swiftly into mountain ridges ; on each side mountain peaks climb sharply from the sea ; and in the distance leap up, in soft blueness, the Cuchullin hills, famous for their grandeur of outline, and still more famous, perhaps, for the words of descriptive eulogy which they have drawn from Walter Scott. The scene would charm you, dear Agnes. But whether you would have been charmed by our experience of yesterday is a different question. We had arrived at Portree from Oban at five o'clock in the morning, after having been on board the steamer from nine o'clock on the previous morning. The voyage was made thus long by the stoppages of the vessel to take in and put out goods ; but we were not wearied. As headland after headland swung into view, as island after island passed out of the mist, and shook off the clouds that hung upon their peaks like weights, the scene was magnificent. At Eigg, in particular, the view was grand, when the Matterhorn-like top of its solitary hill rose in awful gloom in the evening sky, with a tremendous cloud hanging over the upspringing mass, like the shadow of death, and the edges of the inky covering set on fire by the sun that, hidden in the distance, was going down to rest in the sea. Annie said that the glory, the darkness, and the terrible sternness of the jagged cliff recalled to her mind the descriptions of Sinai ; and there was certainly an Israelitish awfulness, suggestive of the thunders of the Lord and the visitations of His wrath, with which He had armed Moses, in those

lonely rocks, that darkness, and the pitiless anger of that encompassing sea. You, dear Agnes, would probably have been more profoundly impressed than I was by the multitude of dread images that swung into view with the awful slowness of a funeral procession from some land of Titans. But even in my memory, the grandeur, the desolation, the death-like darkness, and the glory of the dying sun will live for ever.

But it is of our yesterday's experience, Agnes, that I especially wish to tell you. A few hours after we had landed we started for the Quiraing in a vehicle, with two travelling companions. A drive of fifteen miles, through one of the dreariest mountain scenes ever looked upon by mortal eye, took us to the hamlet of Uig. Then began a walk of six or seven miles to the object of our curiosity. Disdaining the aid of any conveyance, Annie gallantly determined to walk all the way; and she did it. But what, you will ask, is the Quiraing? It is a collection of rocks on the sea coast which nature, in some moment of tremendous convulsion, has torn into forms of awful ruin. From the mountain road, we four sightseers, headed by the guide, pushed up a path that winds round the base of gigantic cliffs, erect as a wall, black as night. Up we went, by a way so steep that we had often to seize grass or rock to make good our footing. Then tremendous rocks shoot aloft in solitary magnificence, naked, black, poised as if a touch would cast them into the abyss below. More rocks start up like giant house walls, and in the centre of the desolation stands a rock round like a table, and so vast that they say it could

give footing to nine hundred men. Down in the gulf below rise other rocks of gigantic size, shattered as if by the strokes of a Thor-hammer. As far as the eye can reach scattered cliffs hem in the plain that lies beneath; and from the table rock you look down and down into abysses of horrible blackness and depth. We seemed to be looking on the ruins of creation. And to us the scene was made more awful by a storm of wind and rain which overtook us at the top. The wind nearly blew us off our feet. Annie climbed with a gallantry which excited the admiration of our party, but she doubts whether she would have reached the top if she had not been aided by a shepherd, who gripped her hand like a vice when she was flung against the steep path by the gusts of wind. As the blast struck the cutting crags and spire-like rocks, as the rain swept over the towering masses and half hid them in a vapoury veil, both sound and sight contributed to invest the scene with an awful grandeur. Annie says that, to her mind, the sense that the earth was stable seemed to be destroyed by the visible record, in twisted, shattered, torn rocks, of what might seem the horrible ease with which Nature had flung hither and thither masses as large as cathedrals. The Quiraing is the place in which the Titans waged their war with Westminster Abbeys for missiles. As I think of its horrible grandeur, again do I call to mind the sublimities of Israelitish story, and fancy that it is to some such wilderness of piled-up rock, and in some such tempest of wind and rain, that Moses would go to bring down the Tables of the Law from the solitude of the Lord to the people that dwelt in the sun-lit plain below.

Our walk home, dear Agnes, was made disastrous by the storm of rain and wind. Waterproofs were but feeble protections. Dear Annie struggled on with the heroism of a Harrison under a mountain of wet clothes. If it had not been for a motive power other than her feet, she would have been left a melancholy and shattered fragment on the misty, windy moors of Skye. That's Annie—never mind what she says in the present case. That's me! At Uig we got some dry clothes, a good dinner, and much whisky toddy, some of which Annie took with a wry face. Then followed the dreariest drive to Portree that I ever experienced. Our wearied horses took nearly three hours to make the journey; and during the whole time the rain came down in pitiless gusts. Thanks to our wraps, Annie and I escaped pretty well; and thanks to the strength which we have gathered from our journey, the fatigue and the ducking have done us no harm. I was very frightened for Annie yesterday, but happily she is as safe as the kirk. Indeed, she and I went to the Free Kirk to-day, and Annie remained awake throughout as dreary and purposeless a sermon as ever acted like theological chloroform. I slept the sleep of the just.

INVERGARRY, *Sunday, September 10th*, 1871.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

Last night I got no further than this, and now I finish my letter at Inverness. Before closing it, I wish to tell you about Glengarry, which, as I think I have informed you, was the home of my ancestors. A lovelier mountain land it would be difficult for nature to strike into shape of earth. A

wide lake, hemmed in by high mountain peaks, that, clothed with birch and pine, rush swiftly to the clouds; a picturesque, feudal castle, grandly planted on a rock which rides out into the lake, and keeps watch over pathway of water and mountain; a foaming river, that dashes down from the hills to the loch, through a glen made black by its own depth and the gloom of the overshadowing fir trees; more mountains, shaggy with pine wood and birch; still other mountains, made blue by distance—that is a prosaic list of the pictures which rush upon the eye at Loch Oich and Glengarry. Annie and I went to the castle —the old place in which Prince Charles slept the night after Culloden, and which Cumberland battered to ruins. Proud of their history, the last of the Macdonells refuse to sell the castle, although their own fair country has now passed into lowland hands. The present proprietor, we were told, offered £12,000 or £16,000—I forget which—for the ruined walls and the little patch of ground on which the castle stands; but the offer was refused; and within a stone's throw of the fine modern mansion, at the end of the lawn, rises the curious memorial of the pride of ancestry. One other patch of ground is also held by the Macdonells—that on which is built the Well of the Seven Heads, a memorial of the summary vengeance dealt out by a chief of Glengarry to the seven murderers of the young chiefs of the Keppoch branch of the family. That little spot, about ten feet square, still belongs to the representatives of the Macdonells.

When wandering along the glen, Annie and I came to a little mountain graveyard, situated in a spot of surpassing beauty. The resting-place was all

overgrown with weeds, and so neglected that we could scarcely trace its boundaries. Rough, half-hewn stones marked the graves, and all, save one or two, bore no inscription. They belonged to a time in which the Glengarry folk had not yet learned to read printed letters. Some, however, bore the marks of rude sculpture, and one seemed to be the relic of a cross. On those that did bear an inscription, it was strange to mark the familiar "Macdonell." To-day we visited another graveyard: that in which the chiefs are buried. Their resting-place is cut off from the abode of the plebeian dead by so high a wall that it baffles scrutiny—as if the high and mighty princes of Glengarry disdained to mix their sacred ashes with the dust of the common dead. Through the quiet graveyard, there shot above the rank, tangled grass, rude stones that had kept alive, for a short space, the memory of buried clansmen. Most were bare of any written memorial; mute symbols of affection, silently eloquent in their praises of the dead. Some others recorded the resting-place of a Macdonell, and one had been erected two years before that Culloden in which the clan system was for ever destroyed.

You may smile, dear Agnes, at the interest which I, a utilitarian philosopher, a Liberal of the Liberals, take in the relics of a feudal life whose last vestiges I would sweep away. But everything is good in its place. Clanship was once good. Just as I am eager to visit Gothic cathedrals, although I fight against the distinctive dogmas which they symbolised, so I find it keenly interesting to mark the traces of my rude ancestors, although the system that they represented is repugnant to my soul.

In Glengarry, that home of feudalism, we saw a strange proof of the rapidity with which the ideas of Liberalism are spreading. In the parish church yesterday, the Presbyterian service was conducted, and the sermon preached—by whom do you think? The Lord Archbishop of York! Yes, and he did it very well. Nay, what is still more wonderful, the same part was played on the previous Sunday by the highest of English prelates—Samuel, Bishop of Winchester! What do you think of this?

The allusion in the last paragraph recalls a theological tempest, for which I am afraid Mr. Macdonell and his wife were in no small degree responsible. Characteristically, Macdonell took his bride to see the wonderfully beautiful glen which had once owned the sovereignty of the Macdonells. It was then owned by Mr. Ellice, who had as his guest, first the Bishop of Winchester (Samuel Wilberforce), and then the Archbishop of York. Near the opening of the defile, and half way between the river that roars over the great boulder stones below and the top of the pine-covered mountains that cut the sky-line above, is the little parish church—then, at least, plain, undecorated, thoroughly Presbyterian, and about the last place likely to be honoured by the ministrations of an Anglican prelate. Yet there on the Sunday previous to the Macdonells' visit Dr. Wilberforce conducted the service, and virtually conformed to all the usages of Presbyterianism. This attracted small notice; but on the following Sunday the same thing was done by the Archbishop of York, who

little recked that a "lion" of the *Telegraph* was in one of the humble pews. Seeing the importance of the event, Mr. Macdonell wrote a long letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, minutely describing the service, and lauding the conduct of the Archbishop in terms doubtless intended to provoke the wrath of High Churchmen. His wife sent a similar communication to the *Times*. The result was an ecclesiastical convulsion, every paper, from the *Times* to the smallest of village prints, allotting part of their space to the discussion of the "Glengarry Scandal." Some pages of Bishop Wilberforce's Life are devoted to explanations of his share in the business. They are of an ingenious and abstruse kind. "As to using the kirk, I no more encouraged Presbyterianism in that than if I had preached the Gospel in a cowhouse I would have encouraged vaccination. . . . . The truth is that if I was in fault it was rather in thinking myself in heathendom in a kirk than in anything else. I *could* not have read out our Communion Office in it." The Bishop, however, severely condemned the conduct of the Archbishop of York. "I *cannot* say that I think in what *I* did there was any ground for the offence. I think there was abundant ground in what W. Ebor did. He identified himself with the unapostolic intrusive Presbyterian ministry. I did nothing of the sort."

Their first home was at 3, Euston Square. "Here," writes his wife, "our busy married life began. My husband at this time wrote seven or eight leaders a week. In reading over my diary of this time I am struck with the variety and number

of our occupations. We attended lectures, crossed London to hear a great preacher, paid calls, received a succession of visitors, wrote and read, and talked —what endless, endless talks we had—of everything in heaven and earth, upon all the past events and thoughts of our lives. Among the many sad changes that followed my husband's death, one of the most melancholy is the sense of silence that has fallen upon my life. There seems no one now to speak with. I feel sure my husband did too much. In looking back I feel grievous sorrow that I did not try then to lessen the strain of his life. He was so full of life and energy, and all exertion was so delightful to him, that I did not recognise how hard he worked. I was young and energetic, and our busy life was charming to me. I see that we often would start off on a Saturday afternoon to visit friends or relations who lived a hundred or more of miles away, spend Sunday with them, and return on Monday in time for him to haste away to the office, there to sit busily writing till midnight. I may add that on the Saturday when we left home my husband would sit, hour after hour, writing as fast as he could to finish some task of work which must be posted on our way to the railway station. At this time he wrote, as a rule, six leaders a week for the *Daily Telegraph*, one for the *Leeds Mercury*, and one for the *Levant Herald;* besides this he had always articles in hand for London papers. In the following December, four months after our marriage, we received orders to go to Paris."

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE IN PARIS.

ON Friday, December 8th, 1871, Mr. Macdonell came from the *Daily Telegraph* office at lunch time to astonish his wife with the news that they must go to Paris the next day. They arrived to find the streets dumb with snow, and took comfortable rooms at the Hôtel du Louvre, which was their home for more than five months. They had letters of introduction to all sorts and conditions of men, —to the Ambassador, Lord Lyons, the Comte de Paris, M. Taine, Louis Blanc, a Jesuit father, American residents, M. Guizot and his Family, Communists in hiding, and others. I need not say with what interest and relish Mr. Macdonell studied the city which had so long been the subject of his reading. Full records remain of this visit, both in print and manuscript, and I have compiled from letters and notes; here and there I shall quote from his wife's journal.

The first ramble of the young couple was never forgotten. A page of living history was spread before them. The city had been last seen by one of them in the palmy days of the Empire. Now in 1871 everything told the story of war, convulsion, and fire. The Tuileries, the Hôtel de Ville, all the long line of public offices, the Palais Royal, were black-

ened and jagged ruins; on every stone, and ragged beam, and naked girder, lay a soft cushion of snow. Half the shops in the Rue de Rivoli were boarded up, the stately pillars of the Madeleine were cracked and chipped. The Tuileries were only slightly concealed. It was possible to see a portion of a noble staircase, and into several rooms, whose walls were covered with blackened gilding and tattered fragments of rich blue decorations. In the long picture galleries of the Louvre a cannon ball had gone straight through a huge canvas.

Another ramble was to the spot where once stood the Bastile. In the centre of the Voltaire Place was an interesting statue of Voltaire. The sceptic, "wicked, witty, thin," sat leering in a large armchair. The smile was still on his lips, but a shot had carried away a portion of the under part of his chair. This figure wonderfully impressed Mr. Macdonell, who remarked that the old man seemed some gnome, who had brought about by his wiles the confusion and dismay, and sat grinning at the results to poor mankind. Voltaire, he said, was the genius of the Revolution. I quote a passage from Mrs. Macdonell's journal:—

"The routine of our day is this. We breakfast about eleven; then start for a long ramble, returning to the hotel in time for dinner. After dinner we retire to our room, he to study the papers and despatch a telegram, and then write his letter. This we take to the post-office at any hour from eleven to two in the morning. To-day we wandered about to find all the haunts of Heine, for whose writings James has a great admiration. He always carries a

book in his pocket; on this day it was 'Reisebilder,' and from time to time he took it out and read parts aloud. Many passages he knew by heart, and these he recited as we walked."

Another time they would search for the places associated with some great event in the history of France, the Revolution, or the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, for instance, with Carlyle's book or Lamartin's "Girondins" for guides. Or they would wander, seeking for old books, by the riverside or in the Quartier Latin.

One bright sunny day they spent at the Sainte Chapelle. They were accompanied by an old man who had been in Paris through the war and its attendant horrors, and had much to say about the siege and the Commune. He took them out on the roof to show where the great fires had burned. These had come close up to the Sainte Chapelle on all sides. Blackened ruins could be seen on either hand, but the exquisite building was absolutely untouched. "How was it?" said Mr. Macdonell. The old man lifted up his hand above his head. "*C'est la Providence*," said he. Mr. Macdonell had followed the Franco-German war and the events of the siege and the Commune with the closest attention. He seemed to realize all he had read, and to have been an eye-witness of all that had taken place. As he went from scene to scene he would describe minutely all that happened—the arrangements made for defence, the seizure, one by one, of the forts, the entrance into Versailles, the action of the Communists, the burning of the buildings (which he thought was mostly done for strategic reasons, not from pure wanton-

ness), the place of the barricading, the last stand among the graves of Père la Chaise. All this, and much more, was vividly in his memory, and his intense and unflagging interest in going over the ground made him very happy.

"We have been to Père la Chaise. As we crossed the cemetery James pointed out the place where Thiers' *Versaillais* marched in—the wall still lies prostrate where they entered. All round hundreds of grave-stones lay strewn in pieces. Here and there the fragments were piled together in big heaps, but where the fight had been hardest they were in countless fragments, for here the Communists made their last stand. We went to one corner flanked by a great wall. James said, "Here must be the place where the Communists were brought, placed in a row, and shot at. The mound in front must be the spot where the mitrailleuse was put to do the butchery.' He was quite right, for we found the wall opposite pitted with innumerable holes. Standing at the place was a lad in a blue blouse. His sad face touched James, who approached him; the lad soon became communicative. He said, pointing to a long green mound, 'Here a deep trench was made, and the bodies were thrown in. I know it; and many of them were not dead when they were thrown in.' He gazed down in sullen misery and gloom. 'Doubtless,' James whispered to me, 'he has been in the fight and has escaped; probably his father or brother lie beneath the sod.'

"We left Père la Chaise and wandered away, through streets battered with shells, to La Roquette prison, where the Archbishop of Paris was confined

as a hostage by the Communists and killed. Standing outside, and gazing up at the walls, was a priest. We asked him the way, and got into conversation with him. He spoke bitterly of the death of the Archbishop, and said what a saint he was, how good to the poor, how devoted, how generous, and how he died a felon's death. The priest's face was as sad as that of the poor lad whom we had just left at Père la Chaise. As we went home James remarked to me that these two men were types of the two irreconcilable parties in France.

"We came home by Rouher's house to discover whether it was true that a spy was always to be seen about the premises. Sure enough a man was keeping a promenade up and down the opposite pavement in front of the house.

"To-day we went to one of the sales of the Imperial goods and chattels. These sales are held in the ground floor rooms of the Louvre, places that have been waiting-rooms and servants' halls. There, on long kitchen tables, were spread out for inspection and sale the linen, glass, and china of the Imperial household. James has always reprobated the Imperial *régime*. He always says those nineteen years of gaudy success have sapped the moral strength of France. Imperialism to him was a pure evil. He considered that Napoleon III. had always appealed to what was base and weak in the French nature. He thinks that of all the parties that are struggling for the mastery in France, Imperialism is most to be dreaded. But spite of this, the sales of the Imperial goods, the fine beautiful linen, the delicate glass and china, with the

blue and golden N's and bees and eagles, are a pathetic sight to him. We bought some of the glass.

Whenever in after years this glass was brought out, and Mr. Macdonell showed it to his guests, he would tell, with a half-humorous, half-pathetic tone, of the scene of its purchase in Paris, of the dirty Jew pawnbrokers, sharp shopkeepers, eager lodging-house proprietors, curious English and American tourists, all turning over and examining the things which had served the Empress and her friends.

One day was devoted to the study of the ugly gorgeousness of the *Invalides*. Wandering about round the big tomb, and gazing at the somewhat pagan ornamentation, he poured out his impression of the greatnesses and smallness of the genius of the place. To him Napoleon rightly bore the title of *Le Petit* as well as *Le Grand*.

"To-day we started with a friend for Mont Valérien. Those forts round Paris had always a great interest for James. He said they had fulfilled Heine's prophecy of becoming the 'iron shroud' of the city. Again and again he stopped and apostrophised them, as if they had been living things. They had for him most pathetic associations, for were they not made use of by the enemies of France for its subjugation and downfall? We found that entrance could not be gained without a written permit from a great military authority, so we had to be content with a walk round the ramparts. In one place the green embankment was so shallow as to tempt us to jump down on to the smooth gravel path below.

Once down we found that the bank was too steep to climb, and we realized, what we had not thought of before, that we were inside the fortifications! A few more steps brought us upon a sentry, who promptly took us in charge, saying he must carry us to the colonel. James laughingly said to the soldier, 'But we are not Prussian spies, we are only English.' The man grinned, and as just then we reached a gateway, '*Eh, bien, marchez!*' said he, with a meaning glance at the gate. We took the hint, and marched off as fast as we could."

He had an eager desire to become acquainted with every phase of life in France. He obtained from some of his acquaintances among the Orléans party tickets to see the marriage of the Princess Marguerite de Nemours. The marriage took place at Chantilly. The little chapel was filled by the Orléans family and their followers. The Comte and Comtesse de Paris and their children, the Prince de Joinville, the Duc d'Aumale, were present; also the Emperor of Brazil and other distinguished guests. By the door he heard, as he went in, a group of people talking the English vernacular, guiltless of an h! These were the families of the English grooms who had charge of the great stables of Chantilly.

Another pilgrimage was to the queer little picturesque town of St. Denis. A fine old soldier, who had fought under Napoleon I., showed them through the noble old cathedral. The tombs of the French kings had been ravaged by order of the revolutionary government; the windows had been broken by Prussian shells. Altogether the place had a sad,

neglected, and decaying look. If St. Denis was to be taken as an emblem of monarchical life in France, then indeed that life was almost spent. The woman of the inn, who was very intelligent, did not share this opinion. She and her family were strong Orléanists, and she had a warm belief that one day the Comte de Paris would be King of France. Mr. Macdonell listened with his accustomed respectful courtesy, and she consequently spoke freely.

He had a letter of introduction to a Jesuit Father, whom they one day visited at the Jesuit House. He was very kind, and showed them the chapel, and the tomb of the two Jesuit Fathers who were killed by the Communists. At this tomb, he said, miracles were wrought. He instanced one of a girl who had been lame for years, whom various doctors had tried in vain to cure. A friend advised her to go to the tomb of the Fathers. She was carried from her bed, put in a cab, and again carried to the tomb in the chapel. "Here," he said, pointing to the stone, "she knelt for a long time, and then she got up and walked home!" He then took them into a room above the chapel, where, in glass cases round the walls, were the blood-stained clothes of the priests, also their instruments of penance—hair shirts, a small whip with a knotted lash, and the breviaries they had used. The little whip was stained with blood. "Ah," said the Father, "you Protestant heretics don't use such things!" At one end of the room was the little pallet bed and wooden stool, the furniture of the cell in which they had been confined. This Father took a great liking to Mr. Macdonell, and one day showed them the famous

Jesuit College, Vaugirard. There they saw the big dormitories with their brown wooden cubicles. Each boy had a little wooden room to himself. Over the doors were the owners' names, many of them representatives of the great houses of France. Another day the Father breakfasted with them, and afterwards he and Mr. Macdonell had a long discussion in philosophy, moral and religious. Mr. Macdonell was inclined to avoid controversy with his friend, but found it impossible, the Father being determined to convert him. He lent Mrs. Macdonell books of devotion, and told her beautiful legends of the saints. Mr. Macdonell he tried with sterner weapons. Both were masters of intellectual fence, well versed in philosophy, in the Fathers, and in the early history of the Church, and so the battle lasted a long time. They argued pacifically, however, at first, through Mr. Macdonell's determination not to lose his temper, and the friendship continued for some little time. But one evening the Father came, and a long talk and argument ensued, in which he became very angry, and finally left denouncing Mr. Macdonell in warm terms. After this dispute he refused all invitations to the *Hotel du Louvre;* and the friends never met again.

Another expedition which interested him extremely was to a meeting of the Académie Française. It assembled to hear a eulogy read by Duvergier de Hauranne on his predecessor, De Broglie. Cuvillier Fleury read an address eulogising De Hauranne.

His interest in art was very keen. He had many a talk with M. Taine about the past and present art of France. One day M. Taine took him to see a

collection of the pictures of Henri Regnault. The one which made the greatest impression was Salomé. The girl has just ceased dancing, and holds the great gold salver in which rests the pale and bloody head of St. John the Baptist. The painting is wonderful—a mass of gold and yellow and jewels; but it is horrible in the extreme. Another memorable picture was "A Moorish Execution"—dreadful, but wonderfully clever. Although the ideals of the two men were quite antagonistic, Mr. Macdonell listened eagerly to hear M. Taine's exposition, being anxious to learn all that his friend could teach. It was a favourite saying of his that we ought to judge men, books, or pictures by their positive, not their negative qualities. Although he did not admire the school of art represented by M. Regnault, thinking it immoral and depraved, he insisted that it was right, at any rate, to try and see what the painter wished to do, and how he did it, before pointing out what he did not do. As the party were in the gallery Théophile Gautier passed through. His face was pale, and had the look of disease upon it.

From the position he then occupied, as well as his several qualities, Mr. Macdonell had exceptional opportunities of intercourse with the foremost men in France. His most intimate friend was M. Taine, and their correspondence was kept up through life. To Mr. Macdonell M. Taine was the most fascinating of companions. He read his books with eager interest, and always found him ready to answer any question or difficulty which perplexed him in his endeavours to understand French politics, French history, French morals, French modes of thought.

I put together, without much connection, a few notes gleaned from his wife's journal.

One cold bleak day in December they were present at a meeting of the Académie de Morale in the Institut de France. M. Jules Simon was in the chair; a tall man with a long face. He opened the meeting by reading the account of the last ten years' work of the Académie. Then M. Mignet took his place at the raised seat. He laid before him a bulky *cahier* of closely-written pages, which he proceeded to read. It contained, in well-turned and elegant phrases, a long and elaborate eulogium on the life and work of Lord Brougham. Page after page was turned, and still the even, well-enunciated, beautifully-chosen words flowed on. The audience was a distinguished one. There were present Renan, Drouyn de Lhuys, the Emperor of Brazil, Guizot, and others. The scene pleased Mr. Macdonell immensely. His wife remembers watching his face and delighting in his look of animation; his bright blue eyes eagerly taking note of all that went on, his heightened colour, and the quick change of expression which passed over his face as he followed the speaker's words. From time to time he would rapidly whisper to her a word or two of amused comment, or epigrammatic dissent, or enthusiastic approval. At all times she felt in his presence how vivid and intense was his intellectual and emotional interest in what was passing about him.

Another friend was M. Guizot, with whom they were connected by the ties of some English friendships. M. Guizot's daughter, Madame de Witt,

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introduced them to her family. There was a curious blending of English and French habits of mind and manners in the household. Mr. and Mrs. Macdonell had the *entrée* of their rooms on the days when M. Guizot "received." M. Guizot was in his eighty-fourth year, but looked still hale and alert, a little, thin old man, with an expression of acuteness and reserve. He went about among his guests all the evening, never sitting, but standing as he talked. General Ducrot was present, and many leaders of the Whig party in French politics. Another friend was M. Laugel, the Secretary to the Duc d'Aumale, who gave them much information as to the hopes and fears of the Orléanist party. Mr. Macdonell also paid many visits to the Comte de Paris, who was very pleasant and polite. He liked the Prince much, finding him always frank and kind. Lord Lyons and his *attachés* were also always ready with kindly help; but it was French men, and French society, and French ways of thought, that interested him exclusively.

On Sundays they usually went to hear M. Bersier, at the Chapelle de l'Etoile. Mr. Macdonell greatly admired M. Bersier as a preacher. They often went to Notre Dame, and also to the Madeleine. He attended many courses of sermons for men only, delivered by famous preachers. He was amazed to find, Sunday after Sunday, Notre Dame full from end to end, and side to side, of black-coated men—that is, well-to-do men. The fact greatly impressed him, as it is a habit with Englishmen to say that in France only poor people and women go to church.

One Sunday they had a strange experience

They went to the service held by the followers of Comte at his old home, 10, Rue M. le Prince. It was a small house in a dingy street. A narrow flight of stairs led to an upper room, or rather to two rooms united by folding-doors. These doors were thrown open. In the farther one was a raised desk; the room was set with chairs for perhaps fifty people. It gradually filled up with cultivated-looking and well-dressed men and women, with eager, melancholy artisans, and with women who had the appearance of schoolmistresses. All took their seats with a look of sedate melancholy. When the meeting was gathered, a tall and very thin man entered rapidly, a roll of manuscript in his hand, and took his stand at the desk. This was M. Lafitte, the head of the "Occidental Republic." For two hours and three-quarters, in a shrill, clear voice, he poured forth an eloquent description of the Robespierre epoch of the French Revolution. His voice, his manner never flagged, nor did the attention of his audience. When the last page of the manuscript was finished he closed his portfolio and descended from the desk. One of the audience, a kindly-looking lady, came up to them, and welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Macdonell, and invited them to some friendly gathering of the body.

As they walked home Mr. Macdonell criticised the meeting to his wife. There was always something about the Comtists that displeased him —their high-sounding titles, their assumption of originality, and so forth. They puzzled him, too, with their philosophy of negation, and yet their desire for the outward forms of devotion to a God. He called this meeting "the small band of devout atheists."

This was the only sect that he positively disliked. One of his strongest beliefs was that all morality is rooted in the sense of obligation to God, and that the only power strong enough to make human beings do their duty, when duty is painful, is the desire to obey the will of God; and this safeguard to society, he held, the Comtists would destroy. His wife says that often and often, through the years of their married life, in the innumerable walks which they took together—those in search of books in London shops; in summer rambles in Kensington Gardens, or Hyde Park, or Regent's Park; along dusty English lanes, amongst the lakes of Cumberland, or over the moors of Scotland; he would pour forth in impassioned language all his thoughts and feelings aroused by the history of the religious and moral life of man—what religion had made of Scotland, how it had softened and ennobled the hard and reserved nature of her people—what Catholicism had done for countless generations of mankind, how it had helped, how it had tempted humanity—how the two forces, spirituality and materialism, had struggled side by side in all the religions of the world.

All through the winter and spring months M. Thiers gave receptions in the Palace of the Elysée. Mrs. Macdonell gives an account of one of these evenings.

"The Elysée was filled with furniture of the time of the First Empire. In one room the chairs and couches were of gilded woodwork and cream-coloured satin, the backs and seats covered by delicate landscapes. The walls and doors were decorated with white and gold, and in the centre of each panel were

also landscapes. It was in the Elysée that Louis Napoleon, with the other conspirators, spent the night before the *coup d'état*. There the proclamations were concocted, and the orders issued for the arrest of the Liberal members and the investment of the State printing office by a battalion of gendarmerie. It is said that on that fatal night the courage of one of the conspirators suddenly failed him, when Fleury turned the key of the door, put his back against it, and drawing a pistol, declared he would shoot him if he would not go on. My husband and I wandered from room to room through the throng of gaily-dressed people till we reached the small *salon* which I have described. We seated ourselves on one of those dainty and luxurious couches, and in whispers recalled the events of that treacherous night, when the same gay crowd had filled the brilliant rooms; then gradually had dispersed, leaving Louis Napoleon, with his fellow-conspirators Morny, St. Arnaud, Maupas, and Persigny, to plot how the famous generals of France and the Liberal leaders should be seized in their beds and carried away to prison. One of these prisoners, now the President of the Republic, stood smiling and bright in the midst of generals and princes, chatting eagerly, and bowing politely to his guests as they entered. M. Thiers must then have been more than seventy years old, but no one watching him could think of old age. His whole look and manner spoke of intense vitality, his face glowed with animation; he talked, gesticulated, and laughed like a youth. Hour after hour he stood or moved about amongst his guests. And yet as we

were leaving about midnight, we heard him make an appointment with a gentleman for seven o'clock the next morning, at Versailles! And the old man had still to drive twelve miles before he could go to bed that night. The Orléanist princes and princesses were most of them present at these receptions, and the tall and soldierly form of Marshal MacMahon was constantly seen towering over the President's large head and shining spectacles.

On a lovely spring day they paid a visit to Villiers-Cotterets, to witness the re-interment of Dumas *père*, which Mr. Macdonell made the subject of one of his most brilliant letters. Dumas had died at Puy, near Dieppe, in 1870,—that is, during the war,—and had been buried in the neighbourhood. His son had the body brought to his native place for interment. A crowd of literary men, journalists, actors, and actresses went in a special train to the quiet little village which was the birthplace of the famous novelist. After a mass said in the village church, the coffin was carried, followed by a procession of priests and friends, through the sunny street to the small tall white house where a tablet in the wall told that Dumas was born. The building was hung with crape and wreaths of flowers. The coffin rested a few minutes, a hymn was sung, and then the procession moved on to the cemetery; the coffin was lowered, the priests finished the religious ceremony, and then quickly disappeared. The grave was then taken possession of by the literary men, who, one after another, declaimed eulogistic harangues to the memory of the dead man, the audience applauding with cries of "*Très*

bien! très bien!" Dumas *fils* responded, more applause followed, and then the crowd dispersed as fast as possible, to get some food before the train went back to Paris, for by this time all were very hungry. The one inn of the place was invaded. Here they found a feast awaiting the arrival of a bridal party. The crowd flung itself upon the food, and, like a host of locusts, devoured all before it. Amidst much laughter and sport M. About dashed from the kitchen with a dish of asparagus in his hand; half of this he put up to auction in the crowded *salle à manger*, the rest he carried up into a bedroom, where a small and select party had laid themselves out a meal. Mr. Macdonell secured a large *brioche* and a bottle of red wine, which was drunk out of a preserve pot at the end of the kitchen dresser. The mixture of sentimentality, literary skill, religious ceremonial, and buffoonery made the day a very strange one. Dumas *fils* had walked behind the coffin—tall, cold, handsome, well dressed. Mr. Macdonell watched him with great interest, although he had not words strong enough to stigmatise his writings. He considered them more disastrous to France than the siege of Paris, or the war indemnity.

The warmest friends Mr. and Mrs. Macdonell found in Paris were M. and Madame Taine. In their pretty home they were always most hospitably entertained. Among those they met there were M. and Madame Renan. The talk was of course brilliant, and intensely enjoyed by Mr. Macdonell. The large, heavy, and unimpressive-looking face of Renan entirely changes when he gets interested in the conversation

going on. It is all nerve, fire, expression: the eyes dilate and flash, the features become tense and firm with emotion and thought. A very kind friend was found in M. Louis Blanc. Mr. Macdonell had known him for years before in London, where, in his perfectly correct and eloquent English, he would, on his frequent visits, give careful answers to questions as to the present politics and future prospects of France. In Paris he proved of good service, again and again finding excellent seats in the National Assembly when there was a great debate. It is needless to say that Mr. Macdonell was most willing to give help to his French friends, by explaining their difficulties with regard to English politics or ethics. On one occasion M. Louis Blanc spent an afternoon with him, to obtain information as to the trades unions in England. This information M. Louis Blanc wanted for a speech he was to make in the Assembly, in the debate upon a new law proposed against the *Internationale.* This service M. Blanc acknowledged by many kind attentions, not only procuring admission to the Assembly, but coming from time to time out of his place to explain the intricacies in the strife of the rival parties.

The visits to the Assembly were naturally very interesting. The meetings were held in the Versailles Theatre. Among the speakers he heard were Gambetta, Casimir-Perier, Jules Favre, Jules Grévy, Pouyer-Quertier, Monseigneur Dupanloup, and others. One of the greatest speeches was that of Thiers, in the debate on the income-tax, an impassioned defence of his scheme for protectionist finance. That day in the Assembly was one of fervid excitement,

for M. Thiers had declared in one of the lobbies that if he were opposed he would resign. The following day there was great excitement at the Assembly. At three o'clock the President's resignation was read aloud, producing a profound sensation. It was at once proposed to send a deputation to wait upon him and implore him to withdraw it. Whilst this went on a crowd of excited deputies talked in every corner and passage. The Duc d'Aumale and M. Grévy were proposed as successors to M. Thiers. But as the evening was drawing on the news spread that the President had withdrawn his resignation. Peace was concluded; and, cold and hungry, Mr. Macdonell and a crowd of deputies hurried off to catch the first train for Paris, and their dinner!

For political meetings he had always a keen scent. He seldom failed to be present at any gathering in or near Paris where were shown the desires and interest of the French nation. Among other meetings, he was present at a monster assembly called to raise subscriptions for the Liberation of the Territory. About four thousand people were present. M. Coquerel *fils* and M. Legouvé delivered stirring addresses, and, contrary to the usual custom of most French audiences, there was great applause.

As a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* he had to attend the sittings of several courts-martial. By far the most interesting and sad of these was the trial of twenty-one men and two women accused of being concerned in the murder of the hostages in the prison of La Roquette. He did not like being present at these trials. All tales of sin and wickedness, all jokes that turned on anything wicked or profane

in the slightest degree, were at all times painful to him. The discussion of a murder or of any ugly trial was intolerable. No joke that had the slightest taint of indecency or profanity or license ever amused him. He would listen to one of these so-called funny stories with a look of unbroken sobriety and disapproval that was somewhat painful to the reciter, and equally so to those who stood by. He was, however, much interested by the trial of Blanqui, the uncompromising politician. The thin, fierce, white-haired old man defended himself well. Jules Simon, Jules Ferry, and Emmanuel Arago appeared as witnesses.

The most painful experience he had in Paris was the sight of the execution of one of the condemned communists. The authorities of the *Daily Telegraph* requested him to send an account as an eye-witness of one of those executions. The sight made him quite ill. In the evening the news was brought in that a condemned communist, named De Wedel, was to be shot at dawn next morning at Satory. At midnight Mr. Macdonell dined. He was awakened at two o'clock. Half an hour later a fellow-journalist called for him, and they started on their cold drive to the plain of Satory. About ten o'clock next morning he returned, haggard and ill. He had to tell the terrible experiences of the night—of the arrival at Satory in the dark, the waiting in the cold, and watching as the raw, grey March dawn slowly showed itself, then the distant sound of the tramp of soldiers' feet, then the vision of the small procession of death. De Wedel was quite a young man. He refused to have his eyes bandaged, but stood up bravely confronting the line of soldiers.

"*Je meurs innocent—Vive la Rep*——" His words were cut short by a volley; he sprang into the air, and then fell, a heap of clothes. At a word of command a soldier left the ranks and gave the *coup de grâce.*

Mr. Macdonell was constantly torn by conflicting sympathies. The logical bias of his mind prompted him to condemn much of the sentimentality and injustice of the party of reform in France, while his emotional nature keenly sympathised with the men and women individually who fought and suffered for liberal views.

The duty of seeing new pieces at the theatres often annoyed him. One of the plays that shocked him much was *La Princesse Georges*, of Dumas *fils*. Clever, witty, corrupt, it was as nauseous to him as a bad smell. It was put on the stage with every accessory of dress and appointments that lavish expenditure of money and skill could procure. The dialogues were brilliant, the actresses and actors were consummate artists; yet the verdict in any pure mind was that it was diabolical! He enjoyed the first sight of *Rabagas*, which was full of political allusions, the theatre resounding with mingled cheers and hisses. He greatly enjoyed Molière. The historical interest, the wit, the humour, the wonderfully clever acting of plays at the Comédie Française gave him keen intellectual pleasure.

This period was one of very hard and steady labour. The following diary of how one day was spent will show what his life in Paris was; it is taken from his wife's journal:—"After breakfast we walked to the Hospital Neckar. We presented our letter to

Dr. Beuregard, who was in command there. This gentleman received us very kindly, and showed us all of interest in the hospital. In the siege this building was crowded by the wounded. I remember he showed us a line of tents which were still used for amputations and severe surgical operations. During the siege and the overcrowded condition of the hospital, it was found necessary to put the wounded in tents. They then made the useful discovery that the patients in the tents made much better recoveries than those in the wards of the building. After our visit to the hospital was over, we returned to the Louvre, and my husband got to his work. For two or three hours he sat with bent head and absorbed face, filling carefully page after page with his small, neat writing. At six o'clock he went by invitation to see the Comte de Paris. With him he had a long talk about the state of French politics, especially the prospects of the Orléanist party, and their hopes of '*fusion*' with the Legitimists. After this my husband returned home, dressed, dined, and then accompanied me to the reception at M. Guizot's."

The strain of the work at last began to tell. When Friday, his weekly holiday, came round, he was often unequal to anything but a drive in the country. When dinner was over, he would sit down by the fire, book in hand, to have a long evening's read, but in five minutes he would be sound asleep, whilst a look of terrible weariness settled down on his face, which look often made his wife tremble for the future.

In the midst of great lassitude he would rouse himself, go to the table and get out his writing materials, and begin and finish letter after letter to

friends in England, or his mother, his sister, his brothers. He was always the most faithful of correspondents. He never neglected the letter of a friend, but would, soon or late, seize time out of his scanty leisure hours to write an answer. Often in later years when he came in from the *Times* office at three o'clock in the morning, he would write the answer to some letter that he thought should not wait, that it might go by the first post in the morning. This courtesy to friends and relations was one of the many things that made him so beloved. Perhaps his most prominent characteristic was *generosity*. He gave away freely, good measure, pressed together and running over, of all that he possessed—money help, the still more precious help of thoughtful and careful advice and active sympathy. He never turned any from him who asked aid, whether it was to correct a manuscript, or to help to find a situation, or to write letters of introduction. Of every book he read, or picture he saw, or country he visited, he always longed to pour the treasures he had discovered at the feet of those whom he thought would appreciate them. He gave away, with a princely hand, the treasures of his health and strength, his time, his thoughts. Whatever good thing he had, his first instinct was to share it.

The following letters were addressed to his sister-in-law from Paris :—

PARIS, *Saturday*.
(*The Early Spring of* 1872.)

MY DEAR AGNES,—

I snatch a minute, in the midst of my study of a tremendously long education report, to write you a line of deep thanks for your delightful letter,

and to say that I mean to write you a long letter in a day or two. For years I have not been so busy. I have to read as much as would give me work for a day; to go about as much as ought to excuse me for doing nothing else; and, late at night, sometimes after Annie has gone to rest, to write as much as two lazy London leader-writers hold to be a day's work. Only I don't do half of what I ought to do.

I think that we shall stay in Paris, dear Agnes, longer than we anticipated. The office seems to approve of the arrangement. And, really, we are fortunate young people. Paris is intensely interesting, with its fierce, political life. The politics of England, and in particular such trifles as the life or death of a petty young prince, sink into dwarfish insignificance by the side of the tremendous strife which is going on here; a strife which involves the fate of a republic, and perhaps of a nation. And do not, dear Agnes, fancy that Paris, and still less France, is truly represented by a bad play or a masked ball. I was deeply pained to read in dear mother's letter to Annie that Paris is a city without a redeeming point. I can hardly imagine a more groundless idea. Why, Paris is a far more church-going city than London. It presents far more outward signs of piety, and immeasurably less open vice. The streets of Paris are decorous in comparison with those of London. And you have on every side of you the deep family virtue which exists in Paris and France. I mean to write a long letter on "The Morality of Paris." It will certainly not be flattering to England, and especially to London.

What a pleasure—a moral pleasure—it is to live

in the free, open air of a republic, away from the sham and sycophancy of a monarch, away from the degenerating and slavish twaddle talked by pen and pulpit about that wretched young man who, thank Heaven, is out of danger.

Please tell dear mother that, unfortunately, *La France* is a Bonapartist paper—the organ of the Empress—and that the article on the Prince of Wales means simply this: Take back the most infamous dynasty in Europe.

God bless you, dear Agnes. Love to all.

Ever, my dearest sister,

Yours most affectionately,

J. M.

GRAND HOTEL DU LOUVRE,
April 19th, 1872.

MY DEAR AGNES,—

Our stay in Paris has been profitable in the highest degree, as a season of education. We have been thrown among people who represent all phases of French thought and life. I have met a concealed Communist, and men of all other grades up to a Jesuit priest! We have seen much of the Jesuit, and he made a desperate effort to convert us. One evening I met him when I was going out of the hotel to post a letter; he was coming to see us, and he took my arm. Instantly he plunged into the profoundest questions of religion, natural and revealed, and for an hour and a half we discussed with strange earnestness, walking up and down the pavement of the Place de la Palais Royal. It was a strangely sad talk. I felt it my duty to speak plainly, and I told him, with all earnestness and frankness, that I

dissented from him, respecting not merely his form of Christianity, but the profoundest questions of philosophy. He became angry—so I led him away from controversy to charity, and spoke of the beauty of life led by Protestants; the good pastors of England; the good men and women who keep alive the religious life of England; the sublime belief that God had revealed Himself to all men in all times. I failed to move him, but we parted friends. A few days afterwards he visited Annie and me, and bad luck turned the conversation towards the Roman question—the temporal power of the Pope. Wasn't there a storm! Annie will tell you of the scene. However, again we parted friends, and a few days ago he showed us through the great Jesuit college at Vaugirard. Poor Father F.! he is a devout, clever, and intensely bigoted Pagan.

At Taine's, of course, we did not meet our Jesuit friend; but we met the arch heretic himself—yes, Renan! Renan was there with Madame Renan, who is a Protestant and is a niece of Ary Scheffer. (This sentence looks uncommonly like "the Father of Chemistry and the brother of the Earl of Cork"!) Renan's face is extraordinary: large, heavy, profoundly thoughtful, it is lighted up by eyes that blaze. Renan is not only the greatest of living French thinkers, but he has, I believe, done more than any other man to keep alive the essential spirit of religion among the higher minds of France; and his writings breathe the noblest morality. It would be difficult for you, dear Agnes, to understand what a noble work Renan has done, unless you lived in this unfortunate country, and saw its extremes of

wild, shallow irreverence, and of that degraded superstition which is kept alive by some sparks of Christianity. As Taine introduced me to Renan, and I stood before the great philosopher, I felt, I confess, such reverence as, in this age of little men, is apt to become a rare luxury. Renan talked with strange eloquence and brilliancy about the revolts against Rome, and, after dinner, we all gathered round him. Madame Renan, to whom I talked much, evidently regards her husband with profound admiration and affection.

We also know Louis Blanc, a Socialistic Red; Langel, a *Revue des deux Mondes* Orleanist; Lemoinne, the best pen of the Orleanists. We also know (I mention the fact to show the vast range of our acquaintance) a professional betting man, who keeps a betting stand at the races, and calls upon us with a long white handkerchief round his neck; also a Legitimist Viscount, who plots; also Lord Lyons; two young diplomats; we have met Guizot; we have made our bow to Thiers; we have met the French soldier who took me prisoner at Orleans during the war, and who tells Annie that he saved me from the risk of being shot. I have had a long interview with the Comte de Paris, and also with a ragged Communist workman, who has narrowly escaped a visit to Satory; I know General Cushing, one of the lawyers whom the United States has sent to make us pay indirect damages; we have met Milner Gibson; and, finally, we know Burnes!

Mr. Macdonell's journalistic work was very largely on subjects connected with France. Looking over

the list of his leaders in the *Times*, I find he wrote often for days without a break on French politics. Thus in January 1879 his themes are French senatorial elections (two articles), French ministerial crisis (four articles), resignation of Marshal McMahon, French crisis (two articles). Then on February 4th, 5th, 6th, he writes on the new French Ministry, and the last article recorded in the list (February 27th) is on the French Clôture. His posthumous volume, "France since the First Empire," edited by his wife, gives an admirable summary of his best thought on the subject, and from a perusal of nearly all he wrote I can confirm the statement by Mr. Meredith Townsend, that the central idea of his whole judgment of France was: "Let her but be Republican, be organised in accordance with the instincts of her people, and civilization has nothing to fear from France." But his wife, who was thoroughly conversant with all his views, has kindly furnished me with the following valuable note:—

"My husband had an enthusiastic interest in France, and in all that concerned her. He felt for her language and literature a constant fascination, and the pathos of her later history stirred him deeply. For years he worked, early and late, until he wrote and spoke French with ease. He was much annoyed often by the insular impertinence and ignorance shown in much of the English criticism of France. What attracted him most was her religious literature. He had the deepest and most enthusiastic love for the writings of Pascal, Fénélon, De Guyon, Lamennais, and Lacordaire, and he

studied the history of the Port-Royalists with constant pleasure.

"Politically, his sympathies were with the moderate Republicans; the Legitimists and Orleanists interested him, and he felt for them respect and a certain amount of sympathy; but the Bonapartists he dreaded and disliked, as he believed that Imperialism had been the evil genius of France, that it had drawn out and encouraged the worst elements in French life. The careers of both the Emperors offended against his code of morals, and he thought that Thiers had injured the moral sense of his country by his defence of the gaudy tyranny of the First Napoleon. He often lamented over the absence of a strong moderate party in France—a moderate party in politics and in religion. He mourned over the irreconcilable hatred which burned between Liberals and Churchmen. He held that the absence of a moderate party was in great measure the consequence of the Protestant exodus in the seventeenth century. But he believed hopefully in the future of France. He used to say that if the Republic could only last for a hundred years, education and free institutions would teach the Church to have patience with Liberalism, whilst the natural good qualities of the French would foster a desire for religion, and reconcile them to the control of a Church. He believed the Republic would be in favour of peace, and that the wholesome atmosphere of peace would encourage the growth of all that was best in France."

Some of his careful and epigrammatic estimates of leading Frenchmen may be referred to. Thiers greatly interested Mr. Macdonell, who used to

describe him as a thorough Voltairean, busily engaged in proving the immortality of the soul, saved by a sturdy common sense and his immense practice in the management of men from the algebraical and geometrical lunacy which smites thin hard minds, but nevertheless a very prince of definite thinkers. "There never was a writer who had a smaller sense of the mysterious world which wraps round this little earth and all its creatures like a great ocean of mist. His thoughts do not shade away into indefiniteness, but they are absolutely clear as far as they go, and then they leave an absolute blank. We do not believe that M. Thiers ever had a doubt in his life. He is a glare of rhetorical sunlight."

I do not think Macdonell himself was much of a mystic, but he loved the dim horizons of some French writers. "The works of Lamennais," he said, "are charged with an almost Hebrew perception of the dark veil which hangs over mankind. Michelet lived in a spectral world, and peoples even his historical scenes with weird attendants, and no living writer dyes his pages more deeply than Renan with the ever-shifting hues of that world which, though unseen by the eye of sense, lives before the eye of mysticism."

Of Guizot's green and great old age, he himself had seen something, but he did not estimate the philosopher's statesmanship very highly. "His political career was a splendid disaster, and it was such because he knew books better than men. He boasted that he was a doctrinaire, but he meant that he was a philosophic statesman. In reality, he had so begirt himself with the armour of pedantry, that he

could not move from among the shifting throng of the world." Yet he was very sensible of Guizot's extraordinary achievements, and the will-force, labour, knowledge, and debating power which made him for eight years, in fact if not in name, Prime Minister of France.

He admired the lightness of About, the liveliness and lucidity, the simplicity and the wit of his style. "Even when dealing with the stuff which is the most untractable to the rhetorician, such stuff as hard, angular lumps of fact that thicken the moist clay of humour or feeling or stirring incident, he contrives to write with a ballad-like directness and simplicity. We see nothing like his style in our own light writers. Inestimable service would be done to the periodical-writing of England if M. Thiers and M. About were to open a class of rhetoric in London to teach the men who pen our heavy witicisms and our jokes how neither to be trivial nor dull."

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY MARRIED LIFE IN LONDON.

MRS. MACDONELL writes:—"We returned from Paris in May 1872, and settled down to our busy life in Euston Square, my husband writing hard every day and attending meetings and lectures, and dining out, and seeing endless streams of visitors at our house. When the summer came we both felt somewhat exhausted, and endured a couple of weeks' visit at the Hydropathic Establishment at Ilkley Wells, as a tonic. The baths, the walks, the heavy meals overpowered us both with a feeling of utter languor. I remember my husband laughingly saying that the water cure made him feel more ill than he had ever felt before in his life. After this wholesome but somewhat dull life we went to stay with some dear friends and relations in Cumberland. This visit, I remember, was a time of great happiness to my husband. These relations were Quakers; their quiet, refined, cultivated life was very fascinating to him. The long drives amongst the mountains, the quiet talks, or readings out of doors on the terrace or the lawn, rested and refreshed him. He jealously counted the days when our peaceful holiday should be over, and we should have to return to the heat and glare of London streets. At the close of our visit my sisters, who were settled at the Old Inn

in Patterdale, suggested that I should join them. I did not like the thought of my husband returning alone to begin his hard work in London, or his being left for a fortnight to the care of servants; but he would not hear of my refusing the pleasure of another two weeks' stay among the mountains. I remember his bright cheerfulness, and the cheery persistence with which he arranged with my sisters that I should remain with them. I knew well he very much disliked the thought of going back without me, but it was ever so with him, he always flung himself vividly into the needs and interests of those he loved. Every day I had a letter from him, written in the midst of his hard work, but full of sympathy with all that I was doing, and tender solicitude for my well-being."

The following letters were written in connection with this visit.

3, EUSTON SQUARE, N.W.
Sunday, July 22nd, 1872.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

This, dearest, has not been a very profitable day; in the way that I intended, I mean. I got a difficult leader to do on the French wars, and, just as I was finishing it, about four o'clock, I got a note from Levy, saying that Dicey had broken down, and that I must write a second. I had to choose one of two subjects—Spain or coal! So I went to the office after dinner, ran my eye over a long letter on the coal question by a man who knows one side of it thoroughly, and then I began an elaborate refutation of his arguments! I came home soon after nine, and began the article on Taine; but I was foolish enough to lie down on the sofa, and I fell fast asleep.

GRASMERE.
Sunday, August 11th, 1872.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

My journey yesterday was not wholly fortunate. So full was the coach that I was forced to go inside, and on the way to Grasmere the rain came down so heavily as to make it impracticable for me to walk any part of the way. On arriving here, I lunched, fell fast asleep in an armchair, took a short walk, and then wrote for four or five hours without lifting my hand. Thus I broke the back of my work. I meant to begin again after tea, but I was too tired and sleepy. To-day I feel fagged and weary, but I have gone to church, had a longish walk, and done a good part of another article, which I shall finish after dinner. I did not intend to stay at Grasmere all day, but the place is so quiet that I have changed my mind. As I don't know a soul here, and as I scowl at everybody in the hotel, I can work without interruption, which I certainly could not have done at Patterdale. I hope that I shall have finished all the articles before I reach London. To-morrow I shall walk, by way of Rydal Mount, to Ambleside, and then perhaps to Windermere.

Mountain scenery has always a saddening effect upon me, especially, dearest Annie, when you are away from me, and perhaps I was on that account the more fitted to enter into the spirit of the English ritual, as I heard it said and sung to-day in the quaint old church which is specially Wordsworth's, and within the shadow of which he and his family and Hartley Coleridge sleep. At least, I never felt the service to be so solemn and beautiful as I did this morning, although you know, dearest, how little I

am able to recite some parts of it with believing lips. The occasion was certainly striking, as the voices of the dalesmen and the visitors joined in the notes of prayer and praise, and, in the sight of Wordsworth's tomb, and of the mountains which he loved like living things, sent the mind to the thought of the sanctified genius which has hallowed this valley for evermore.

AMBLESIDE.
August 12th, 1872.

MY DARLING ANNIE,—

You see that I am a few miles nearer to London than I was when I last wrote to you. At Grasmere, this morning, the rain came down steadily and pitilessly; or if it stopped for a moment, it was only to give a breathing-time to the busy officials who work the rain-valves overhead, and down it came again as thickly as ever. Thus I was prevented from going to Easdale tarn, which, you know, is one of the scenes on which Wordsworth has shed the glory of the *Excursion.* I was forced to stay in the hotel and go on with my work. Would, my darling, that you had been with me! I thought much of you, as indeed I do at all times, and always with the same feelings. Although I did not dare to climb to Easdale, I did not stay indoors, but, after sending my luggage to Ambleside, I paid a parting visit to the churchyard—that "churchyard among the mountains," as it is called in the *Excursion*, which is to me the most sacred spot of ground in England. During my stay in Grasmere, I went again and again to the yew tree which Wordsworth planted with his own hand, and under the shadow of which

he now sleeps, with his beloved wife and his beloved sister; while the grave of Hartley Coleridge, only a yard away, seems as if, although shut out from the near kinship which death has given to that household, it claims a spiritual kinship with the sleepers through the strength of the memorial prayer which encircles the headstone, "By Thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us." It sometimes seems to me, my dearest wife,—and at Grasmere I felt it with special strength of emotion,—that I see a deeper truth, a sublimer symbolism, in such petitions than many who read them literally. "By Thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us." "Amen," I say, as I think, not only of poor Coleridge, but of myself. "Amen" will be the response of all the generations to come, however the merely material substance of the dogmatic landmarks may crumble in the grasp of criticism.

I suppose, dearest Annie, that in other days men stood before the graves of anchorites and saints with some such feelings as those that guided me to the resting-place of Wordsworth. I felt as if I stood on holy ground, and I seemed to hear whispers of a sanctity deeper, more mysterious, and more lasting than the truths which can be syllabled in logical speech; a sanctity that loses its virtue only when it is imprisoned in dogmatic fetters.

Although the rain has taken away some of my pleasure it has given me much, for it has unveiled the wonderful possibilities of beauty which lie imprisoned in the recesses of these mountain peaks. I felt this truth with strange force last night when I climbed a hill which overlooks the Vale of Grasmere.

The rain was coming down in pelting gusts; the clouds lay thick and low overhead; they seemed to ride away from the crests of the mountains in a long, compact, angry array of billowy surges; the heavens were black with the flood of compact rain; but the hidden sun was sending a faint, soft stream of light through some unseen rift, and the green fields of Grasmere were lighted up with a strange unearthly glory that borrowed nothing from the sky. It was just such a scene of mingled gloom and glory which De Quincey pictured in the splendid passage which tries to account naturally for the operation of the forces that struck down Paul as he journeyed to Damascus under the heat of the noonday sun. Perhaps it was on that very spot that De Quincey saw the revelation of light and darkness, for on one side of the hill lies the cottage in which he lived after Wordsworth, and on the other the cottage in which he lived with his wife and children.

To-day, dearest Annie, I walked from Grasmere to Ambleside by the hill road which ends at Rydal Mount, and along which the poet used to pass on his way to Grasmere Church. The rain was coming down pitilessly, and, as I went out of my way to scramble among the loose stones and bracken, I was soon wet to the skin. However, I had made up my mind that I should be soaked, and so I did not take the trouble to avoid the wet bracken or the pools. On reaching Rydal Mount, I went into the garden without asking leave. A lovelier situation it would be difficult to picture. Right away from the drawing-room, half hidden by the thick foliage, Windermere is seen in the distance shining like silver, and the mountains

come down on every side. I wandered through the garden, and burrowed in the most remote recesses, until I was startled by the angry growl of a dog. Having a wholesome fear of a bite, I got out of the way as fast as I could. The house is undergoing repairs at present, and the sole tenant was a carpenter, who was fast asleep. On going out of the grounds by a different gate from that by which I had entered, I found a staring notice that the place was private, and that the public were not admitted. Now, here is a case for the interference of Parliament. No man ought to be allowed to shut up Rydal Mount by the mere force of money. Would it not be a good subject for a letter signed "A Literary Pilgrim"?

D. T. OFFICE.
Tuesday, August 13*th*, 1872.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

After I wrote to you yesterday, I sat down to read the *Excursion* with the memory of Easdale and Grasmere fresh in the mind. I read the books entitled *The Pastor* and *The Churchyard among the Mountains*, which, you know, pitch the scene of their imagination and their story in Grasmere Vale. I confess that I blushed, or, to speak literally, I felt uncomfortable, as I remembered the criticisms on Wordsworth which I had flung out at Derwent Bank. That much of the *Excursion* should have been written in prose I am still convinced, and I point to the *Essay on Epitaphs* as a sample of the magnificence of hue with which prose would be shot when woven in the loom of Wordsworth's brain. But Wordsworth, as you know, is by far my favourite poet, and, as I read the sketches of the dead dales-

men which were painted by the pastor, I was deeply ashamed that my comments took so much the character of adverse criticism. What blasts of heavenly sunshine, as if blown direct from the gates of an austerely Puritan Paradise! What gusts of air, touched with the cold rigour of the mountain peak! What depth of moralising, touched with the hues of a masculine gloom! What felicity of diction, clothing in immortal brevity of phrase the deepest aspirations of the brave! Never did I read Wordsworth with such full delight, because never had I so charged my mind with the spirit of the mountains which were the food of his soul.

I bought a volume of De Quincey, giving his recollections of the Lakes. It contains an essay on Grasmere, which is a masterpiece of pathetic narrative, and also an essay on Wordsworth, which I have read with mingled admiration and amazement; admiration at the consummate power over the most hidden forces of the English tongue, and the marvellous felicity with which thought and emotion are clothed with Greek sharpness of detail; amazement at the lack of moral sense which, in Wordsworth's lifetime, could betray the most hidden recesses of Wordsworth's household, as they were confidingly revealed to one who, like De Quincey, lived at the poet's fireside. They say that Wordsworth never forgave the scandalous mixture of gossip and admiration, and I do not wonder at his anger; yet the latest generations of Englishmen will read the matchless description, and thank De Quincey for his unpardonable breach of the sanctities which preside over friendship.

At Oxenholme, a roadside station, I had to wait for a train last night, and, by the dim light of a waiting-room, I scribbled a great part of *your* letter with a pencil. To-day I sent to the *Levant Herald* a huge packet. You may judge how big it was when I tell you that the postage cost 3*s.* 6*d.* It contained about forty longish pages of *my* MS. So, you see, I have not been idle.

D. T. OFFICE.
Wednesday night, August 15*th*, 1872.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

You cannot guess whom I met to-day. It was no other than Stanley, the discoverer of Livingstone. I met him at the office, where Arnold introduced me to him. He is a fine, bold young fellow, a true American in coolness and self-possession, with a keen, frank eye. He talked about his adventures in a frank, straightforward, business-like way. The point about which he spoke most warmly was the occasion on which Livingstone's precious journal was nearly lost, when the negro custodian of the treasure was crossing a swollen African stream. He told us that great part of the journey had to be accomplished on the hands and knees of himself and his companions, so thick was the jungle.

3, EUSTON SQUARE, N.W.
August 19*th*, 1872.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

I send the *D. T.* The first article is mine. You notice, I presume, that I wrote a leader on Wordsworth, as well as a letter. You will see that Herbert Spencer refers to my British Association article, as well as Carpenter.

His work at this time was very hard. The main part of it, of course, was for the *Daily Telegraph*. The routine of the day was as follows. He had breakfast at eight o'clock, read the papers regularly, and wrote down list of subjects for leaders. The daily papers taken were the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Standard*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Echo*, *XIXème Siècle*, and *La République Française*. About eleven he would turn to the table to write, sometimes to make notes of the book he had read, or to prepare articles. At this period he was writing, besides five or six leaders a week for the *Daily Telegraph*, articles for the *Levant Herald* and the *Leeds Mercury*, frequent contributions to the *Spectator*, and occasional articles in the *Saturday Review*, *Macmillan*, and *Fraser*. About a quarter to one he went down to the office of the *Daily Telegraph*, where the editor and writers met in conclave. Here there was often much bright and interesting talk to be enjoyed. He then had a slight luncheon, perhaps called at Mudie's or the London Library for books, or went to his club. At three o'clock he returned to the office and wrote. Sometimes he might have previously written at his club. His work continued until six or seven, and then he returned home to dinner. After dinner he read or wrote till about eleven o'clock. This was the routine of his life when he lived at 3, Euston Square. Later, when he took a house at West Brompton, he went a great deal to the House of Commons, and then wrote at night either at the House or at the office, returning home about midnight. As he had left his house about three o'clock in the afternoon, and only dined

very slightly, this was a long period. He frequently wrote a portion of his leader while listening to the debate, and then drove to the office and finished it there. One night in the week he was accustomed to meet Mr. Hutton in the gallery, and had pleasant snatches of talk, which he always enjoyed. Occasionally a leader did not go in, or it might be discovered that it was not needed till next day. In that case it would be written or finished next day at home. Sometimes, instead of a leader, he would be asked to bring up to date the biography of some eminent person, or, if such person died, he would revise and finish the memoir which he had previously written.

Saturday was always a holiday from *Daily Telegraph* work. On Sundays the work was the same, except that he did not go down to the office at noon. Sometimes he knew beforehand what his subject was. Then he could write the article at home, or either take it or send it on Sunday evening. He wrote leaders for the *Levant Herald*, under the editorship of Mr. M'Coan. These were written very rapidly, in an hour and a half or two hours, at greater speed than anything else he ever wrote. He gave himself a loose rein, and said what he liked. Mr. M'Coan was a most polite and kindly employer. The principal quality in Mr. Macdonell's writing he admired was its brilliancy. Although the payment for these articles was not so high as that he received for some others, his whole soul was put into them, and they contained some of the finest passages he ever wrote. The work for the *Levant Herald* was intermittent, for the paper was con-

stantly being suspended. At any hour of the night or day telegrams would arrive from Constantinople, "Cease writing until further orders."

His connection with the *Spectator* should be specially referred to. He admired that journal, was an intimate friend of both the editors, and counted it a privilege to help them. Many of his most thoughtful and polished papers were contributed to its pages. He wrote sometimes on political subjects, especially on France and on Scotch ecclesiastical problems. Sometimes he would write a middle article, more often he reviewed an important book, his papers on literature proper being especially good. For his very pronounced Radical views he found a medium in the *Examinır*, then under the editorship of Professor Minto, and owned first by Mr. P. A. Taylor and then by Lord Rosebery. His brain was full of projects, many of which he was unable to carry out from sheer lack of time. The following letter from Mr. John Morley, then editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, illustrates this, for the articles it welcomes were never written.

PUTTENHAM, GUILDFORD.
June 6th, 1872.

MY DEAR SIR,—

I am extremely glad to hear from you again, and especially in such a manner. I should value your articles highly, as I can tell from the sketch you send me. You go to the root of the matter in touching the religious side, though I cannot persuade my social-republican friends that this is so.

The only difficulty between us is a point of detail: *space*. How many pages do you think you would

need? I should be sorry if you divide into two, first, because it breaks the thread of interest, and secondly, because I am pledged to a series of six papers on foreign matters from Castelar, of which one has already come out, to be followed by the rest in consecutive numbers. I would give you a very considerable space, if one number could possibly suffice. Of course, I would try to give you two, if necessary, but it would be eminently desirable—if at all possible—in your own interest as in ours, to present your view in one block.

I shall look forward with lively interest to your views. As for plain language, you will, of course, say precisely what you think proper and warranted.

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN MORLEY.

P.S.—I am glad you liked my Voltaire. A second edition is in the press, in which I have softened one or two expressions that were too highly coloured. If you have no copy, I should like you to accept one of this new edition, when ready.

In the spring of 1873 his first child was born, at Euston Square, and was named Philip. In spring he removed his household to 149, Farnborough Road, West Brompton, from where he writes to his old friend:—

149, FARNBOROUGH ROAD, WEST BROMPTON, S.W.
June 22nd, 1873.

MY DEAR REID,—

You will see that we have changed our address. We have taken a house in West Brompton, and that will now, I hope, be our permanent address. We are

still going through the costly and troublesome work of furnishing our house. It is already, however, in such a state that we were able to entertain nearly fifty of our friends the other night; and we shall soon, I hope, be able to do ourselves the pleasure of offering hospitality to you and Mrs. Reid if you should come to town. We should be delighted to see you.

He was greatly moved at this time by the death of John Stuart Mill, to whose memory he pays a tribute in the following letter to his brother-in-law :—

149, FARNBOROUGH ROAD, WEST BROMPTON,
LONDON, S.W., *May 27th*, 1873.

MY DEAR ELLIS,—

Americans have, I presume, shared the sorrow with which the mass of educated Englishmen have received the death of John Stuart Mill. No event, in my own time, has called forth so profound a note of regret among men and women who are distinctively students. I myself missed knowing Mill personally, although I should probably have known him if he had stayed a little longer in England ; but several of my friends were his close associates, and it is interesting to hear what they say about him. They dwell less on the qualities of his intellect than of his heart. According to one who knew him as few men can know each other, Mill's nature was such that no shade of untruthfulness had ever crossed it, far less tinged his speech. He was the most tender-hearted, the most generous, the most modest of men. In quick kindliness of feeling, in the impetuosity with which he struck at all cruelty

and wrong, he displayed the most beautiful feelings which we ascribe to women. He was the most bountiful as well as secret of givers. An American may be interested to know that, at least twice during your civil war, he secretly gave £500 to the Secretary of the Emancipation Society, to help on the crusade in this country against the sympathy with slavery. He did far more than any other man in this country to make the cause of the North clear to Englishmen. More than once, also, I am told, he gave secretly £500 to the fund of the Jamaica Committee, for the prosecution of Eyre, and consequently for the protection of the poor, friendless negroes of that island. You may also like to hear what Carlyle has said about him. They had been fast friends for years, but a mysterious coldness, for which Carlyle could not account, had separated them in later life. Nevertheless, Carlyle was deeply moved when the news of Mill's death was brought him, and he said that Mill was the noblest, truest, most generous soul that he had ever met in all his life.

It is interesting to know that Mill has left in MS. three works on "Nature," "Theism," and "The Utility of Religion," which touch the subjects about which he was studiously reticent in his published books.

The comments on his death have not been wholly eulogistic. One scribe gleefully indicates that Mill has gone to hell, and hopes that all his school will follow him; but I do not stop to say a word about such carrion utterances.

For my own part, I cannot write very calmly

about Mill, for I owe more to him than to any other teacher of our time, except perhaps Carlyle; and I am not quite sure whether I should make even that exception.

Yours affectionately,
JAMES MACDONELL.

P.S.—As you may perhaps be interested in the facts of John Mill's life, I send a copy of the *Daily Telegraph*, in which I wrote a hurried—a very hurried — leading article, and also a biography. Both are mine.

ELLIS FARNELL, ESQ.

In the autumn of 1873 he was again sent by the *Daily Telegraph* to Paris. On this occasion he did not find the work so congenial as before, and he chafed at the separation from wife and child. His work was exceedingly arduous, and occupied his whole time, so that his letters are brief and hurried. I append a few extracts :—

GRAND HOTEL (481), PARIS.
October 28*th*, 1873.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

To-day's *Daily Telegraph* will have shown you, darling, that I have not been idle. The long letter from "A Special Correspondent" was mine. Much of the special information I got from Louis Blanc. I am sure you will have been glad to see so emphatic a plea for the Republican party, and so hearty a denunciation of the reckless conspiracy against the Republic. I wish I felt sure of the result; but I do not. My Republican friends are quite confident that they will win, and, indeed, have

a considerable majority. The Royalists also count on a majority, although their language is not so confident as it was a few weeks ago. For myself I hesitate to form any opinion.

The evening at Louis Blanc's was interesting in the highest degree. We talked about France, the peasantry, the Assembly, England, the priests, everything. The Deputy whom I had been invited to meet is to call on us in London. He is, as I said, the French Wilberforce—and he is a most interesting man. In his austerity and devotion to his principles he resembles the men of the old Republic rather than the ones of our day.

GRAND HOTEL (481), PARIS.
November 9th.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

This forenoon the rain came down in torrents, and I stopped in the house to write part of my letter. In the afternoon I wandered to Pastor Bersier's Chapel, and the scene vividly reminded one of old days. The place was crowded with richly—alas! too richly—dressed ladies, many of them American or English. There was no standing room. Bersier himself was not at all changed; he was as like Levy as ever. His sermon—which I could follow easily—was on the Scriptures. For a time it went rather slowly. Then came an attack on the Jesuits. Then came—what I did not like—an attack on Liberal Protestantism — the Protestantism which holds by the spirit instead of the letter. But Protestantism itself was explained with powerful eloquence, and the Scriptures themselves were the subject of a beautiful passage. It was a powerful

sermon, but not so successful as some of his that I have heard.

GRAND HOTEL (481), PARIS.
Sunday.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

You will see in the *D. T.* of to-morrow my description of the exciting scene in the Assembly yesterday, so I need say nothing about it. It was the beginning of the storm which is to break to-morrow. I can scarcely think of anything else than this great and brilliant and marvellously gifted nation torn by the rival sets of wild fanatics, and the prey of the despicable selfishness of the Orleanists. Of all the parties they are the most guilty and the most contemptible. The Bonapartists have more rascals, the Legitimists and the Reds more fanatics and fools; but this would-be English party, led by Princes, are dragging France to an abyss for their own selfish ends. I have tried to make the fact plain to the English people; and, although a good deal of what I send has been cut out of the letters, I have contrived, I think, to make the fact clear.

Do you know Miss Scott's brother? He is editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and is to be the proprietor, I believe. He is here at present, and I have become acquainted with him. We have had a long walk this afternoon. He is an amiable, cultivated fellow. John knows him.

GRAND HOTEL,
Saturday evening.

MY BELOVED WIFE,—

This evening there is news from Versailles of a most important kind. I did not go there myself,

but I hear that the Republicans have gained a majority of votes in the Commission which is to consider the impudent proposal to grant MacMahon the powers of a Dictator for ten years. If that be true, the Commission will report against the demand, and the House will doubtless reject it. In that case the Duc de Broglie and Marshal MacMahon must resign office, and the Republicans will get office, and the country will be saved from revolution. The news is so good that I can scarcely trust it. But, darling, it is just possible that it may force me to stay in France for a day or two longer. I hope that it will not; but still it may. I shall not know until to-morrow afternoon. If I should not reach London until Tuesday or Wednesday, you will not chide me, darling, and you will try to bear with the disappointment. Still, I have great hopes of being able to reach Victoria about six o'clock on Tuesday. At least I think that six, or a quarter to six, is the hour. . . . We shall have the jolliest of evenings together after dinner. I shall get a peep at baby in his crib, perhaps. He will have quite forgotten me.

To-day, dearest, I went to Saint Germains, the Court, as you know, of the exiled Stuarts. It is a beautiful place. The forest, as it is called, is a fine piece of woodland, the walks interesting, and the views so fine, that the Stuarts might have been content to forego the sight of the Thames. One prominent feature of the landscape is Mont Valerien, which frowns grim and black.

Miss Agnes Harrison was married in the end of 1872 to his brother, Mr. John Macdonell, now

a Master in the Court of Chancery. She writes of their life at this period:—

"My own marriage followed about a year later. United by a double marriage, of two sisters to two brothers, we all seemed to taste a fourfold happiness, a happiness which 'stood four-square to all the winds that blew.' The closest sympathy united us, and either at Beckenham, where we lived, or at their home in town, we met continually. The recollection of those years which followed is full of brightness. I think his life at this time was intensely happy. But it was very arduous. Leader-writing of a responsible journalist taxes every faculty. Judgment, fluency, accuracy, literary skill, all must be there; and they must be always *ready*. No waiting for the happy mood. Write with speed, write at once, write well: only so many hours lie between you and the most critical and competent audience in the world. He was, I think, of all men I ever knew, most fitted for his work. He seized his subject—it seemed to seize him. He brimmed over with it; he talked, thought, felt nothing else. I recall his face sometimes, the keen light in his eyes, the pale concentrated look as he raised his head. He wrote with careful minuteness in a close, exquisite, small handwriting, compact as black letter. The only rest he seemed to give himself was to occasionally change his pen, from a huge bundle that lay near him. But he was always ready to help others. I have seen him at his desk with a pile of MSS. beside him."

The work was indeed hard—too hard to be continued. He was writing about ten articles a

week. Even to dictate as much in the most haphazard fashion is a sufficiently laborious task; to write them after his long preparation, and with his careful precision, meant a lavish expenditure of brain and heart. A huge volume lies before us containing his contributions to the *Daily Telegraph*. Nothing can call from the grave the great majority of leading articles; and often those that best meet the needs of the day perish with it. Journalistic efficiency is not to be measured by the quantity of matter that survives the hour; but whatever test is taken, he must be judged to have done for the *Telegraph* an extraordinary amount of brilliant and solid work. The stress of his life made it necessary for him to seek a position where his powers would be less severely and constantly taxed, but to the last day of his connection with it he did his best for the journal in whose service he had commenced his London life. But on this point I am glad to quote the testimony of his honoured friend and colleague, Mr. J. Herbert Stack, who thus writes to Mrs. Macdonell:—

30, KENSINGTON PARK GARDENS,
LONDON, *July 1st*, 1889.

DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

It is a great pleasure to me to comply with your request, and to revive my recollections of my colleague and friend.

I remember very well my first impressions of him when he joined the *Daily Telegraph* staff. His youth, his pleasant face, his bright eager manner, the interest he took in his work, attracted us all to him. I have been myself a journalist almost

exclusively during my literary life, having done very little in the form of books or magazine articles. For that and other reasons, public affairs, and especially politics, have had for me a very absorbing interest, to the exclusion of other and perhaps graver studies. To my great delight I found in your husband a colleague as eager as myself to study and discuss public questions, not only when they came up to be dealt with as a matter of duty, but in all places, and at all hours. Day after day we walked together from the office debating points suggested by the free-talk around the editorial table. We often differed, and both became warm, but not a shadow of personal feeling ever marred the "keen encounter" of our opinions. When he came to my house or I to his the varied debate was resumed. Later on, when you were "at home" on Thursdays in Gower Street, there were other and very able interlocutors; and then, with the true courtesy that always marked him, he seemed more anxious to elicit the ideas of others than to express his own.

What I have said may convey to those who did not know him the impression of a man always engaged in serious controversy. But underneath his earnestness there was all the playfulness he derived from his Celtic blood. I have heard him talk very lively badinage and very witty nonsense with ladies his guests, who refused to tolerate serious subjects; and no man could be more genial in general society, or more readily find points of concord with men of very opposite tastes.

Strongly Republican as he was by temperament and in opinions, he had a perfect intellectual

feeling for the chivalrous and picturesque associations of royalty and aristocracy. And though he was intensely anti-clerical, he could do full justice to the biting wit and vigorous intellect of Veuillot, the ablest Ultramontane champion of our time.

As to his work on the *Daily Telegraph*, it bore all the marks of his richly-furnished and refined mind. Sometimes when an able literary man becomes a daily journalist, he is tempted to put his best stuff into more permanent works than leading articles. Your husband never showed any signs of this weakness. Many of his articles, to which he could only have devoted a few hours, came out complete and finished essays, perfectly polished literary gems. This may seem excessive praise for anything so ephemeral as a leading article, but their republication would, I think, amply justify it. The explanation as regards his writings was simple enough. He wrote, as a rule, on subjects he had studied for years, and kept on studying day by day, for he was always learning; therefore he easily filled a column by pouring out a short measure of what filled his mind. To some it is surprising that a literary man can thus produce some of his best work to order and at once. But as there are men who speak impromptu better than they could speak with deliberation,—the heat of the moment striking out sparks of wit,—so there are writers who produce, in the stress of occasion, essays that show their genius at its best. In his case there was an additional reason for the finish that marked his articles as they came out. He attended at the office at night, and spared no trouble in revising his

own proofs; a task some of us are only too willing to leave to other hands.

I know from what my colleagues said at the time we lost him, and from our references to his memory since, that his genius, his impetuous interest in work, his eagerness to learn and to discuss, live still in our recollections. For me, I remember as if it were yesterday my sorrow at the terrible sudden death of one of the most lovable men I ever knew.

Ever faithfully yours,

J. Herbert Stack.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE STAFF OF "THE TIMES."

I HAVE already sufficiently expressed the feelings of regard and gratitude which Mr. Macdonell cherished, and always continued to cherish, towards Mr. Edward Lawson and others on the staff of the *Telegraph*. But, for reasons already mentioned, he desired a position such as in his judgment was to be found on the staff of the *Times*. To be a leader-writer on that journal had for years been his ambition.

In March 1875, Mr. R. H. Hutton, of the *Spectator*, gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Delane. In reply Mr. Delane asked him to write a leader. This was done on the evening of March 25th. He took great care and pains with the article, and when it was finished sent it to Printing-house Square by a special messenger. It appeared next day. Two days after Mr. Delane wrote, giving him a subject, and another article was carefully written and sent down. Every few days a fresh "subject" was sent from the *Times* office, and in the meantime Mr. Macdonell sent in his resignation to Mr. Edward Lawson. During the next few weeks he wrote regularly for the *Daily Telegraph*, and occasionally for the *Times*. He took, characteristically, special pains at this time with his work for the *Daily Telegraph*, seeking that

it should be as good as he could possibly make it. On July 4th his engagement with that paper terminated. That day was a Sunday. Every day during the following week he wrote a leader for the *Times*. The subjects were Burmah, Spanish affairs, Russia in Central Asia, Canadian affairs, ironclads. This list gives an idea of the variety of information necessary for a political leader-writer.

In about twelve months he was appointed a regular member of the staff of the *Times*. It is, I believe, very rare for any writer to obtain a regular engagement so soon. He had thus gained what he always considered the blue-ribbon of the Press, and with this set in the happiest and most tranquil period of his life. He had now a handsome income—and one earned without burdensome toil. He wrote four or five leaders a week—never six. He always had a rest on Fridays and Saturdays, and in addition was allowed the great boon of two months' holiday a year. In March 1875 his second son was born, at West Brompton. In the summer of 1875 he removed to 78, Gower Street. There his third son was born, in May 1878.

His day's work on the *Times* was as follows :—He rarely got to bed before half-past three. He lay late in the morning. The house was kept as quiet as possible, that he might not be disturbed. About ten o'clock his bell rang for the papers. He glanced through his leader and the important telegrams, and then got up. Breakfast awaited him downstairs. During breakfast he read the papers. He then wrote a note to Mr. Delane, with a list of subjects for leaders. He usually took the letter himself; some-

times his wife took it, whilst he went to the London Library for books.

After luncheon he usually read. If it were winter he sat by the fire, and had a small table by him with pen and note-book. He never read—and this was a life-long characteristic—without making notes. About four he went out, generally to Mudie's for books, and then to his club, the Devonshire, where he had a cup of tea. In the course of the afternoon a letter came by messenger with his subject and a few lines of instruction.

He liked to have a half-hour's play with his children before dinner. They were in the drawing-room at that hour listening for the sound of his latch-key in the hall-door, ready to rush out with jubilant shouts to meet him. They used to get possession of the strap-full of books which he invariably brought with him, and often, if they were not inclined for games, would unstrap them, and then get their father to tell them what each book was about. In this way a good deal of rudimentary knowledge of politics, history, and morals was inculcated. Certain books belonging to the children were kept for the father to read aloud. One of these was "Tales of a Grandfather." But often books were discarded, and romps took their place. However tired Mr. Macdonell was, he liked to have this half-hour's play with his little boys.

After dinner invariably came a game of bezique with his wife. His doctor had forbidden him to work or read directly after dinner. Sitting at a small table by the drawing-room fire, they played their game. All his life he had made fun of sensible

people spending time over cards, and to find himself sitting down deliberately to bezique always amused him. He did it because he thought it a wise direction of the doctor, but it was always under a good-humoured protest. These games were the most light-hearted times of his life. He looked upon the game as a joke. He would sing or whistle, tell funny stories, talk bad French, and enjoy chit-chat.

At eight o'clock came coffee, and then playtime was over. He went straight to the writing-table, which always stood in the drawing-room, gathered his materials about him, and began his work. His leaders for the *Times* were mostly written at the office, but sometimes at home between eight and eleven o'clock. He was particular about the paper he used, and his pens and ink. The ink must be thin, new, and blue-black. No other, he said, ran so smoothly. The paper must be unruled, thin, and smooth. The first quarter of an hour was a trial. He would write a few lines, and then tear the sheet across, begin again, grow dissatisfied, tear the sheet across, and begin again. Then he would make a satisfactory start, and after that work proceeded without a pause. He rarely consulted any book or made any stop. Sometimes in a low voice he would ask his wife to verify a quotation or a date or a geographical point. His head was bent over the writing hour after hour, while he laboriously filled sheet after sheet with neat writing. Sometimes he would complain of feeling exhausted, and be refreshed by a slight stimulant. He made no plan of work, no notes. He wrote smoothly and without a break.

Sometimes he would get up, walk to the bookshelves, take down a volume, and read a favourite passage, sometimes aloud, sometimes to himself. He said a fine piece of prose from De Quincey or Heine or Ruskin or Landor or Newman refreshed him. Then he would shut the book, take his place at the table, and the writing would proceed again without interruption. About eleven o'clock the leader was finished and sent to the office.

But, as I said, the leaders were mainly prepared in his room at the *Times* office, where he found it best to write, for there he got the latest intelligence. It was only when he was dealing with subjects of secondary interest that he could write at home. If he wrote on any question of European concern, he had to be at the office, that he might get the telegrams as they came in. The routine of his evenings was then slightly different. After the playtime of bezique was over, he went to the writing-table, and usually wrote and made notes. About nine o'clock he would often lie down on the sofa and sleep for half an hour, looking, alas! often very worn and tired, so that it went to the heart of the faithful watcher to have to wake him up at half-past nine. At that hour he started for Printing-House Square. He took with him a small flask of claret and a few sandwiches. He always walked to the office.

His large and comfortable room was that whose windows are the two furthest west on the third tier in the new building, and that looks into the broad street. It was suitably furnished with writing-table and writing-chairs. At his right hand was an electric

bell. After writing a few pages the bell was touched, a boy appeared, who silently carried away the copy. It was soon brought back in proofs, so he could correct the first half of his leader before he wrote the end. Often Mr. Delane or Mr. Walter would come in, perhaps from a great debate in the House, or from some dinner party where they had talked with the magnates of the hour. Or Mr. Delane would show him important letters from potent personages. He always waited to correct his whole leader before he left. About two or half-past he went home, arriving there about three. After a hot supper of bread and milk, he fell asleep at once. It is singular that he never suffered from sleeplessness, and no doubt his capacity for falling asleep whenever he wished prolonged his life.

Among Mr. Delane's excellent editorial notions was that his men, in order to do good work, should have plenty of holidays. Thus Mr. Macdonell usually had no leader on Fridays. This was a great boon, for it gave him two long nights, and enabled him to go out of town from Friday to Sunday afternoon. During the first two years of his married life he nearly always spent Saturday night and part of Sunday with his wife at her father's house at Beckenham. In these days they generally left London by as early a train as possible on Saturday for the country, having a long walk together through deep lanes or across the open heaths or through the woods and forests of the home counties. They used to get lunch at a wayside inn, and walk on to Beckenham at night on Saturday. All the time as they walked along arm in arm he would pour out a flood of talk about the subjects that then interested him: contemporary

politics, theology, Dr. Newman, the lake poets, the influence of Catholicism in various ways, the Scotch Church, education, ethics, civilization, the Game Laws, his own freaks as a schoolboy, Mill's philosophy, the pre-Raphaelite school, art, Ruskin, French literature, etc. "All through the seven and a half years of our married life," says his wife, "that generous flow of talk never failed. Exposition, epigram, argument, anecdote, followed on each other hour after hour in these long and happy rambles."

At the *Times* the "cellular" system of writing leading articles is pursued, and thus, though he and all his fellow leader-writers were on friendly terms, his intercourse with them was only occasional. With the editors it was of course different, and something may fitly be said of the two eminent men who held the editorial chair of the *Times* while Mr. Macdonell was on its staff.

Mr. Delane had nearly reached the term of his long and distinguished career at the time Mr. Macdonell became one of its leader-writers. He had been editor of the *Times* since 1841, having when he was only twenty-three, a year after leaving Oxford, succeeded Barnes. He raised the *Times* to the highest pitch of influence. He was noted equally for enterprise and foresight. Among his greatest achievements was the exposure and arrest of the railway mania, and his attack on the Government for the deplorable state of the troops in the Crimea. He was a prominent figure in society, where he gained much information that was useful to him, and every faculty he possessed was unsparingly given to the service of his journal, for each column of which he

made himself more or less responsible. Up to the last four years of his editorship, he practically reigned alone at the *Times* office, no one else having any voice. Then, although he still looked robust, his health began to fail. He would come down to the office and be overcome by sleep. Yet even in these days so competent a judge as Mr. Macdonell felt for him an enthusiastic admiration. He used to call him the heaven-born editor. He admired his unerring judgment as to the interest and wishes of the readers of the *Times*, his swift knowledge of men, his sagacious comprehension of public affairs and the tendency of events. Mr. Delane's foresight was one of his most remarkable qualities. He would perceive days and weeks ahead the subjects that were coming up, and instruct his writers to be thoroughly prepared.

Mr. Macdonell had this same quality of foresight in a marked degree. Again and again he would say that he must go to the London Library and pick out a number of books in French and English bearing on such and such a subject. He would go and spend a most happy hour in hunting them up, and carry them home. These volumes would be his reading for several weeks, voluminous notes being taken; and then most surely their theme would appear in the public mind, finding him ready with a vast store of digested knowledge.

Mr. Macdonell's interviews with Mr. Delane about the work to be done for the paper gave him great pleasure. He became a different man after he joined the staff of the *Times*, often saying that he liked the feeling that he belonged to the great organiza-

tion which helped to make English history; and the well-bred and gentlemanly tone of the whole management was also much to his mind. There was always a thoroughly good understanding between him and his chief, although they had occasional serious differences of opinion. I may give the story of one, as it has got into print in an inaccurate form.

During the time of the war between Russia and Turkey, Mr. Delane was staying at Dunrobin Castle, the Prince of Wales being also a guest. Mr. Walter was out of town, and the assistant editor in command. Mr. Macdonell was writing the leaders on the Eastern Question. The excitement in England was very great, and Mr. Macdonell was most anxious to commit the *Times* to a policy of sympathy with Russia. He was enthusiastically on Mr. Gladstone's side. Night after night he put his own views into the clearest and most forcible English at his command. When he came home at three in the morning he would to repeat with glee to his wife the gist of that night's leader, and express his anxiety that it should go in, and say with a laugh, "If they put this leader in, I think we are safe." One night he said he thought that the matter was settled; the paper was committed if the leader went in. The next morning he opened the *Times*. The leader was in. But there came a telegram with instructions that Mr. Macdonell was to write no more on the Eastern Question, but was to be shunted to safer subjects. This telegram was followed by a letter from Mr. Delane, in which he said how much he had been shocked at the tone of the recent leaders, and that he himself was coming up to town. He added that he would

rather have crawled on his hands and knees from Dunrobin to London than that this last dreadful leader should have gone in. Mr. Macdonell was not much perturbed by this catastrophe. His state of mind was rather one of thankfulness that he had done what he could to keep England from committing what he considered would have been a crime—the support of Turkey in her struggle against Russia.

But no difference of opinion ever affected Mr. Delane's kindness and courtesy. On one occasion his goodtemper was specially appreciated. Reading over his leader one morning, Mr. Macdonell found that he had made a slight mistake in it, having placed a town or river too far south in India. His chagrin was greatly increased when in the afternoon he found the *Pall Mall Gazette* made this error the subject of a disagreeable paragraph. He wrote at once to Mr. Delane, apologising for the mistake. In an hour came a kind reply, telling him not to distress himself. "I do not care what that cock-tail *Pall Mall* says."

He often dined with Mr. Delane in his house in Serjeant's Inn, a dark place on the south side of the Strand, near Chancery Lane. It was entered through a gateway, Mr. Delane's house being on the left-hand side. Sometimes he would be the only guest, but usually one or two others were present. He greatly enjoyed in particular a meeting with Mr. Hayward, the well-known *raconteur*, who knew everybody, had been in every court in Europe, and told most interesting anecdotes about past and present crowned heads and political leaders and men of letters.

Mr. Delane retired in 1877, when his strength had fairly given way. He built a house near Ascot, where he died on the 22nd November, 1879. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Chenery, who, although in the eyes of the public not a conspicuously successful editor, was nevertheless a man who had some singular qualifications for the position. He was born in Barbadoes, and after an undistinguished career at Cambridge, became Constantinople correspondent of the *Times* during the European war. When he returned to England he obtained constant employment on the staff as leader-writer and reviewer. He had a singular faculty for picking up spoken tongues—a faculty which has been compared by Mr. Lane-Poole with that of Lord Strangford. His Oriental attainments were such as to lead to his appointment as Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford, a sinecure which he resigned on his succeeding Delane. Among the languages he spoke with fluency were French, German, Modern Greek, and Turkish. He was an extensive traveller, and had made himself very familiar with European politics. On succeeding to the editorial chair, he proceeded to carry out a fixed policy. He thought Delane had made the paper too political. His ambition was to appeal to a wider circle of readers, to have articles appearing from time to time which would interest special classes. Thus the range of subjects handled in the *Times* was much widened; and, although the paper did not in certain respects compare favourably with what it had been under his predecessor, its outward prosperity increased. Mr. Chenery was a devoted worker, putting all his

powers into the service. He did not possess Mr. Delane's touch of public opinion, and was especially wanting in foresight. Under his editorship Mr. Walter took a more prominent position. Mr. Chenery was highly esteemed by Mr. Macdonell, although with Mr. Delane's death the charm of being under a great leader had gone. Mrs. Macdonell sends me the following reminiscences of Mr. Chenery:—

"He was a short, fair, stout, short-necked man, gentle and quiet, with a weighty manner of saying things. The last time I saw him was at a dinner party at our house. This was in February 1879, a few weeks before my husband's death. I was the only lady present. There were eight or ten gentlemen, and of the number I remember were Mr. Chenery, Mr. Froude, Mr. Charles Russell, Q.C. (now Sir Charles Russell), Mr. Townsend, and, I think, Mr. Smalley. Mr. Froude took me in to dinner. As we left the dining-room he said, 'The great man' (meaning Mr. Chenery) 'ought to take you in;' to which of course I replied that the great man was taking me in. Mr. Chenery sat on my left hand, next to Mr. Froude. By-and-bye I turned to talk to my right-hand neighbour, whilst Mr. Froude and Mr. Chenery began a conversation on the other. I remember I wondered what their subject of discourse would be. By-and-bye I turned again to them and listened. I found the editor of the *Times* and the historian of Henry VIII. discussing the rival virtues and vices of London and Paris tailors!"

Mr. Chenery did not long survive his friend. He died in 1884, toiling, as one who knew him testifies,

with the devotion of two, and still persevering with his duties when agonizing disease came upon him. He almost died at his post, for he continued to conduct the *Times* to within ten days of his death.

Mr. Delane did not write articles, but was accustomed, even to an unusual degree, to "write in" paragraphs and revise the articles of others. His letters of instruction to his leader-writers were highly characteristic. He managed always to put into them some epigrammatic phrase, which the writer would be only too glad to use, and round which thoughts might be grouped. On the other hand, Mr. Chenery wrote much. He was rather apt to be victimized by his good-nature, and would unthinkingly promise to put in a series of articles which would grow wearisome. His "letters of instruction" contained no epigrams, but his immense width of knowledge enabled him on the most unfamiliar subjects to contribute some fact. Thus (I am of course merely illustrating), if an insurrection broke out in Poland, he would inform his contributor that it was curious that five out of six insurrections, let us say, in that country had begun in the same place. Mr. Stebbing's letter to Mrs. Macdonell, which follows this, will be read with interest, and very happily touches on Mr. Macdonell's characteristics as a journalist. Mr. Stebbing, of course, is in nowise responsible for anything I have written.

"I did not know James Macdonell till he was already an accomplished journalist. Few could have had a more complete equipment, except health, for the

career. His style was at once fluent and incisive. He had keen analytical perception. His meaning was never obscure, and his information was peculiarly accurate. His acquaintance with political and social questions was not bounded by the United Kingdom. Not a constitutional problem could be mooted on either side of the Atlantic of which he did not seem to have made an especial study. Of French politics in particular he had a real mastery. If he had a fault, it was a tendency to look a little too far into the future; to be wise in advance of his public. Occasionally he was tempted to forget that a daily paper is expected both to prove a year hence to have been in the right, and not to be apparently in the wrong when the article is being read. Not that he was capable of the least superciliousness, or of a pretence to infallibility. Still less was any trace observable in him of the cynicism or intellectual weariness which the obligation of adjudicating on one important subject after another sometimes produces. It was delightful to find him continually returning fresh and eager for each new labour. The wide reading of his leisure hours, his original thought, the talk with friends, which was his chief recreation, all were, consciously or unconsciously, preparations for the delivery of his nightly discourse. There are writers of leading articles who are essayists, and there are writers who are debaters. He belonged to the latter order. For him the press was an arena in which the writer has to combat as well as instruct. At any moment it was possible to read between the lines of his articles, and to note how he was making head against a legion of adverse arguments. To a

curious degree, also, readers of discernment could always remark in them the working of a distinct individual spirit; for though there could not have been a more loyal colleague, one who more frankly recognised the necessity that to the public the voice of a great journal must have the same accent, James Macdonell never lost his own identity.

His career was cut prematurely short. But it was, while it lasted, eminently useful; and it was the career of his choice. He saw in journalism much more than a battle-field, more even than a profession. It was a life to which he had deliberately and spontaneously dedicated himself. Newspaper writers have a habit of drifting into their vocation. Circumstances make the majority of journalists: he made himself one. I remember he somewhat shocked a friend, himself an editor, by stating his occupation as journalism, when, on the eve of his death, he was a candidate for election at a political club. In our friend's judgment—doubtless in this case mistaken—it was to court rejection. To have described himself otherwise would have appeared to James Macdonell a derogation. The name of journalist in his eyes was a title of honour. I often have wondered what would have been his future had he survived to ripe middle age. Probably so ardent a politician would sooner or later have lapsed into professional politics, and a seat for a Scotch constituency. But he was destined to be, and to be recollected as, a journalist; and as a journalist he has left a record which it would be an abuse of terms to represent as merely promise."

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

IT will have been apparent from what has already been written that Mr. Macdonell specially delighted in social intercourse. Humanity as such was ever interesting to him, and there were few indeed whom he could not induce to render some tribute of information, suggestion, or stimulus; while of merit in every shape he was always intensely appreciative. His training had done many things for him, this especially—it had made him genuinely catholic. Honest worth in all forms he deeply respected, and met with unchanging courtesy. Wherever he went he made friends in abundance. He never, or at least very rarely, complained of the narrowness and monotony of his sphere. He had those in all his places of sojourn who became true friends, to whom he gave much, and from whom, as he was ready with eager generosity to acknowledge, he received in kind.

After his sphere grew wider, when he had gained full access to the intellectual world of London, his delight in society grew keener and keener. All dinner parties where the talk was good had a great charm for him. He said they brightened him up. If they took place on a working night, he was obliged to hurry away before the rest of the guests. He generally stayed until ten o'clock. When he was

enjoying the society of intellectual and interesting people, his face wore a singularly radiant look. His eyes were clear and blue as a child's, and blazed with light and animation. The colour came to his lips and cheeks, his hair seemed to crisp and curl, and his voice was full-toned and thrilling. At such times the whole man seemed to ray out light and life. An electrical influence seemed to be about him, which made his companions also burst into flame. He did not fail as a listener, being always sympathetically conscious of the individuality of others, and anxious to make them show themselves. It was a keen pleasure to him to make his companions express all that was in them. This is a rare quality among good talkers. It was a remark made by Sir Edwin Arnold that Mr. Macdonell's influence was greatly felt in Fleet Street: "he was like a crystal lamp of quintessential oil, which not only gives out light and heat, but draws out the light and heat of others." All men and women were interesting to him, unless they were vulgar or merely fashionable. He could make the dullest and most ignorant person talk, for he said everybody had one subject on which he was worth hearing. But he could on occasion be silent as a ghost. If talk were frivolous or coarse or vulgar, not a word would he utter. When the conversation grew hopelessly common-place, he became absolutely mute. He would try to be polite as far as little courtesies went, but join in the talk he would not, and his only reply to his wife's signals would be a slight shake of the head, or closing of the eyes with half a smile and an expression which plainly said, "It is impossible."

One characteristic which I ought not to omit was

his great charm for cultivated women. He loved their society, and they loved his. In conversation with them he was at his best. His friendships with such were in some cases both deep and tender, more particularly in the case of Dora Greenwell. With all his delight in female society, he was indifferent to good looks in women. He never noticed if a girl were pretty or not; if she were intelligent, and enthusiastic about books and art, she was charming to him. His stolidity in this respect was amusing. If in travelling a slight sign was made to attract his attention to a handsome or lovely woman in the carriage, it was ten to one he looked at the wrong lady. Miss Greenwell was much older than himself, and he regarded her with peculiar reverence. As all readers of her books—and it is to be desired they were much more numerous—are aware, she possessed the true mystic note of passionate religious feeling. This was intensely attractive to him. She had also explored fields of study and thought very little frequented before or after her time, and in particular had a wide acquaintance with Lamennais, Lacordaire, and the writers of the Quietist school. The rich and beautiful quotations in which her books abound are largely derived from these; and I have had in my possession the note-books which she left behind, in her exceptionally clear and beautiful handwriting, containing many more. She introduced Mr. Macdonell to these writers, and he took great delight in them. One of his projects indeed was a Life of Lamennais, which doubtless would have stood worthily by the side of his friend's Life of Lacordaire.

His sister-in-law Mrs. John Macdonell, recalls his

first bringing Dora Greenwell to the home of his wife's friends in Beckenham. "I recall his chivalrous manner to her as he came up the garden and up some steps with her on his arm (she was delicate and incapable of great physical exertion), his delight in the impression her wonderful talk made upon us. With that afternoon began a friendship between Miss Greenwell and our family in which through circumstances I came to have the greatest share, and I like here to record the fact that it was to him that I owed the knowledge of that most beautiful and original mind. 'The most remarkable woman,' says Miss Jean Ingelow, 'I ever knew,'—words which I can echo. My friendship with her ended only with life, and it has left me memories of undying sweetness and good.

"Between her and James Macdonell there was a friendship formed only by rare natures. The circumstances of life had given them few points of sympathy. She was much older than he; she was an English Churchwoman, and of the spirit of the English Church he had always, I think, little real understanding; his sympathies and associations led him nearer to the extremes of Puritanism and Romanism, which he both combated and loved, than that *via media* which to some of us is the true road of peace and safety. There were few opinions in common, but there was intellectual and spiritual sympathy in everything between them; and, above all, there was in the nature of each, especially in hers, the perfection of the *art de vivre*, the gift of companionableness, which, like gentle manners, may not perhaps make life good, but tolerable! Each had that

reasonableness, that light touch, which leaves the ties of life tenacious but unperceived, a pliancy of nature which allows intercourse to be graceful and peaceful as well as full of help. 'We agreed about scarcely anything,' she one day said to me after his death, 'but I would rather have him for an hour than any one else. He made me up, he *lit my mind*, as no one else did.'

"She one day, when she was expecting a visit from him, showed me a slate which lay upon her desk, on which was a queer medley of entries. I remember a few of them.

'Lamennais' "Parolles."
'Lessing's "Dramaturgie."
'Name of a good plumber.
'Athanasius contra Mundum.

"'These are things I want to talk to him about,' she said. 'There are always a thousand things to say to him, and I forget what I especially want if I do not put it down.'

"She used to laugh at his energetic denunciation of her pensioners, of the dreadful vagaries of whom she would at times tell him. Her little house in College Street was charming enough, but it had its drawbacks. It looked on to the greensward and old trees of Dean's Yard, and the grey buttresses of the Abbey; but close behind was the Adam and Eve public-house,—typical indeed of the fall of man,—and from the bosom of the Adam and Eve came at one time one of her servants, a wild creature, who attached herself with a sort of passion to her mistress, robbed her as she well knew, bringing back the money of her own accord at times

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with tears of contrition. There was also another old servant, a clever, exacting, cross old woman, whom James called 'the old man of the sea.' The only claim of these untoward dependants on her kindness was that which she urged with irresistible logic: 'If she were not good to them, certainly no one else would be.'

"The friendship between Dora Greenwell and him, formed almost on their first meeting, lasted till his death. It grew warmer and fuller after his marriage, and clung about my sister with redoubled tenderness after he was gone. Her lines, written after his death, and called 'A Threefold Cord,' in which this triple tie is recorded, are full of pathos. They have the deep resounding tone of passion which often touches her verses":—

TO THE BELOVED MEMORY OF

JAMES MACDONELL

(*Inscribed to Annie Macdonell*).

"A threefold cord is not quickly broken."

I EVER met thee at the door
  With welcome eager and elate,
Yet had I known, yet had I known
  How brief would be thy earthly date,
My steps had then my heart outflown
  To bid thee welcome at the gate!

I ever held the moments blest
  From out thy busy life ill spared,
With me, and her thou lovedst best,
  So freely and so sweetly shared.
Yet had I known, yet had I known
  Thy sun would sink e'er yet the sky
Should darken to the glowing west,
  I had not let the day flit by.
How often I had been thy guest,
How often claimed thee as my own!

I ever prized the love as gold
That lived within thine eyes sincere;
I stored it in life's closest fold
My lonely life to warm and cheer.
Yet had I known, yet had I known
That thou to us wert only lent,*
A treasure for the moment shown,
How many an hour had been enshrined
For ever from the world apart!
And thou wouldst dwell within my mind
As thou livest to my heart.

DORA GREENWELL.

LONDON, *April* 1881.

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* "His sun has gone down while it is yet day."—*Book of the Prophet Jeremiah.*

Miss Greenwell had a very true insight into her friend's nature. She said once of him that he delighted in the innocent glories of life—a touch the truth and tenderness of which will be easily recognised. I quote a letter written to Mrs. Harrison on a visit he paid to Miss Greenwell, who was then living with her mother at Durham, the beautiful city with which her name is indissolubly associated:—

NEW CLUB, 9, SPRING GARDENS, S.W.
April 25th, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Now that I have come back to town, I must send you some tokens of regard and affection with which I have been entrusted by Dora Greenwell. Last week I stayed for a couple of days at Durham, with her brother Canon Greenwell, and, of course, I saw much of her. In the course of our long talks on every subject under the sun, she again and again spoke of her visit to Beckenham; and she thanked

me so fervently for introducing her to you, your family, and Mr. and Mrs. Howitt, that I began to feel myself a benefactor of my species. For once I experienced the pleasant emotions of a philanthropist whose easy charity has been repaid by a statue in the market-place. In order that you may not forget her, Miss Greenwell sends to you and Mr. Harrison one or two of her prose writings, and to you specially she sends some verses. The article "On the Education of the Imbecile" seemed to me a really fine piece of prose when I read it in the *North British Review*, from which it has been reprinted.

Miss Greenwell is a charming talker. Her poetical defiance of logic is delightful. When she insisted on my leaving an argumentative throng, in order that she might talk with me alone, and make me listen to a written attack on the Ethics of Utilitarianism, I was so charmed by the beautiful invective which she flung at my moral creed that, although I heard it stigmatized as grovelling, and absurd, and detestable, I could not dream of offering a protest, or suggesting a reply. I was entirely delighted.

My visit to Newcastle, the Lakes, and Durham was very pleasant, and it has done me much good; but it has also made me very discontented. The sight of such places as Ambleside revived all my old passion for country life and primitive habits of society. Had my ancestors left me an independent fortune, instead of the records of wholesale sheep-stealing, I should rush away from London, never write another line for a daily newspaper, and live the life of a studious recluse.

In his latter days, in London, among the distinguished people he knew, and who often came to his house, were Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hunt—he the painter of perhaps the loveliest water-colours of the present day, she the well-known novelist. They lived on Campden Hill. Hither on Sunday afternoons Mr. Macdonell and his wife would wander. The air was clearer and purer than that of Gower Street, and a visit to the artist's studio was a great refreshment of spirit to the weary journalist, who spent many a happy afternoon in turning over portfolios of exquisite sketches of Durham, the coast of Northumberland or Yorkshire, of river sides, cornfields, lonely moors, blue hills. Mr. Holman Hunt he also knew. The famous painter was a frequent visitor at their house and his talk they greatly enjoyed. "It was," says Mrs. Macdonell, "so entirely unworldly and original." One morning Mr. Hunt invited his friends to his studio to see the completed portrait of his only son, a lad with long sunny locks rushing along a gravel walk with a bird's nest in his hand. At Mrs. Macdonell's request he called the boy down from the upper part of the house to see them (this was before Mr. Hunt's second marriage). Mr. J. R. Seeley was another friend. William Black he also knew, and greatly admired. He liked especially "A Daughter of Heth," "A Princess of Thule," and "Macleod of Dare." He thought Mr. Black possessed the real glamour of genius. At Mr. Black's he met for the first time Dr. Crichton-Browne, now Sir James Crichton-Browne. Mr. Macdonell and he took a great liking to each other at once, and the meeting was

the beginning of a warm friendship. Another intimate friend was Mr. (now Sir D.) Mackenzie Wallace. Sir Wallace spent long afternoons at Gower Street discussing with his host questions of philosophy and metaphysics. His work on Russia Mr. Macdonell considered the most able book of its season. On one occasion he met Mr. Ruskin. Mrs. Macdonell shall describe the meeting. "It was at a garden party at Miss Jean Ingelow's at Kensington, upon a lovely warm summer afternoon in 1875 or 1876. The guests had tea in the house, and then passed into the little garden, which was soon filled by a crowd of interesting people, among whom was Mr. Ruskin. After a time Miss Ingelow introduced us, and then followed a most interesting talk. My husband said something about his experience in France during the Franco-German war. Then Mr. Ruskin waxed eloquent and impassioned, and burst into a flood of talk. In his own inimitable English he sketched the character of the two peoples—the French and the German: their innate difference, their good and bad qualities. In burning words he declared his pity for the misery and degradation which had overtaken France, and in prophetic strain mourned over the hideous war-spirit which had possessed Germany. The beauty of phrase, the impassioned utterance, the flow of magical words, were wonderful to listen to. Now and then my husband would mention a fact or show some sign of sympathy, and then again poured forth the eloquent stream of denunciation, admiration, criticism, far-searching thought, sympathy, and scorn. For nearly an hour this delightful lecture continued.

Then Miss Ingelow came up, accompanied by a very pretty girl, beautifully dressed in an elegant toilette of pink silk and white lace. She was introduced as a great admirer of Mr. Ruskin, who was most anxious for an interview. The crowd was so great that we could not move away far, and were obliged therefore to listen to the conversation that ensued. Mr. Ruskin at once turned to the young lady with a smiling and devoted manner. I was greatly amused and interested to see the gifted and eloquent speaker plunge at once into the inanities of compliment and personal chit-chat. A little gossamer handkerchief slipped from the pretty small hand. Instantly Mr. Ruskin stooped to pick it up, and presented it with a compliment and an adoring look worthy of a love-sick swain of twenty. It was curious."

One of his most memorable interviews was his first meeting with Thomas Carlyle, who, as we have seen, had a greater influence over him than perhaps any other writer, with the possible exception of Mill. So much importance did he attach to this conversation that he described it in one of his note-books, an unprecedented proceeding, so far as I know. I copy the passage :—

April 10.—Annie had the happiness of seeing Carlyle. His niece, Miss Aitken, who lives with him, had told us that if we should call at 5, Cheyne Row, between two and three o'clock, she would introduce us to him. She warned us that he went out for his daily afternoon walk at three o'clock. Unfortunately it was nearly that time before we reached the modest house in which he has lived for

more than forty years. Miss Aitken, who received us in the pretty drawing-room downstairs, told us that her uncle was about to go out with Mr. Lecky, who was upstairs with him. However, after going to him, she brought an invitation from Carlyle to go upstairs and be introduced to him. We found him seated in a kind of drawing-room, looking towards the front of the house, and fitted up in the easy way befitting a student. Mirrors, blue china plates, pictures, a statuette in terra-cotta of Mr. Carlyle himself (the model of Boehm's statue), flowers, and the general air of order, betrayed the care of a female hand—not, alas! the hand of her who was the helpmeet for the best years of his life, and whose death, I am told, is an abiding sorrow to him. The old philosopher himself was seated in a large green armchair before the fire, with his back to the door. Rising, he courteously greeted us, and then I had time to watch his face. "How Scotch it is!" was, I think, my first thought. The broad and square brow, shaded by a thick mass of very grey hair, which fell down towards his left eye, the high cheek-bones, the well-cut nose, the firm mouth and chin, covered with a short beard and moustache, the bright blue eye, and the ruddy cheeks, made up such a type of an old man as I had often seen in Scotland, sitting in the parish church or driving to market in his gig. Had I seen him sitting by the fireside of a Scotch farm, I should have taken him for a remarkably intelligent farmer, the grandfather of the family. I can scarcely imagine any one less like a recluse or a man of letters. The ruddy hue of the cheeks rather suggested days spent in the boisterous open

air—visions of cattle-driving and ploughing in the face of rain and wind. But a second glance detected a look of refinement and dignity out of keeping with such circumstances. At the same time, both the head and the face would have disappointed any one who had brought with them the theories of phrenology. The head did not seem large,—and it was certainly not beautifully formed,—although, I daresay, it is long from back to front. Nor is the brow either high or particularly broad. But it does not lack massiveness, and it is certainly firm and square. The nose is a pleasant feature, on account of its union of strength with refinement; it would be Greek but for a certain curve towards the centre. I had heard much of Carlyle's eye, and I watched it closely as it was turned towards me again and again with a peculiarly full, steady gaze. It is of light blue colour, very clear and liquid, almost childlike in its transparency. There was a peculiar softness in it, and I can easily imagine it lighted up with fires of eloquent wrath or humour. But I should not call it a brilliant eye; it did not flash, as we hear of Burns's doing. I daresay that time has dimmed some of its early fire, although even time has not put out its old light. Time has also, I fancy, reduced the proportions of Carlyle's face and frame. The face seems somewhat shrunken. At least, I noticed that a (I think) crayon portrait of Carlyle downstairs presented a considerably larger and fuller face than that of the grand old man upstairs.

Lecky happened to be with Carlyle when we went in; and it was curious to mark the physical contrast

between the two men. Lecky's tall form, his large finely-shaped face, with its lofty and dome-like brow, makes him a striking figure. Phrenologically his head is much finer than Carlyle's, only it lacks the indescribable something, the fire, the force, the look of character, the nervous compactness, which make the symbols of Carlyle's genius.

But all this talk about physical form keeps us away from the real man himself. Annie asked him whether the weather agreed with him. In very courteous and kindly strains he said that it did; that he went out every day after his "wash;" and indeed that any kind of weather suited him except snowy weather, which prevented him from keeping his feet warm. Annie remarked how pleasant it was, and how remarkable, that after all the work he had done he should still be so well. "Yes," he replied (I do not guarantee the verbal accuracy of my report; I cannot reproduce the picturesque phraseology of the original). "Yes, and it is all the more curious because I have been ill all my life. There is nothing organically wrong; nothing but my digestion. But that gets worse and worse. I find it more and more difficult to find any meat that my stomach will take. It is ceasing to do its work. Till I was two-and-twenty years old I never knew what ill health was. After a sleep I then used to awake as if filled with ethereal fire [or light, I forget which he said]. But then I began to be troubled with questions of religion and economics, and my digestion quite gave way. It has never been well since then. But there is nothing organically wrong."

I remarked that he must have inherited a strong constitution from a vigorous ancestry. "Oh yes," he replied; and then he broke off from the subject of physical ailments to the moral characteristics of his father. "Oh yes, my father was a fine old man. He had to do his work every day. He had to do with the practicalities of life."

"Was he interested," I asked, "in speculative questions, like so many other Scotch farmers?"

"Yes," replied Carlyle. "But he had little time for reading. He mostly read but one book, and that was a book of Owen's. He was Cromwell's chaplain, you know. My father used to read it on Saturday evenings. He read it all his life. Owen was a real thinker, and his book was strong in Covenants." I mentioned the name of a Scotch friend, now dead, who, I conjectured, had been a man of the same kind, as he had begun by being the son of a small farmer, and had ended by becoming a considerable writer. Carlyle was interested by hearing of so vigorous a type, and he went on to speak of the Scotch character. "It owed," he said, "an inestimable debt to its Church, its Presbyterian form of Church government, its Covenant, and its great reformers." A passing word of admiration was given to Knox. "He, and such as he, had taught the Scottish nation to speak the truth in spiritual things, and to abhor mendacious compromises. The grand thing about him was that he hated lies." Turning round, and looking me full in the face, he solemnly and energetically said, "Lies are the very devil. Hold no communion with lies." "But the Scotch," he added "have sadly fallen off. They are

ceasing to believe in Christianity, and giving themselves up to money-making. Their Church is not what it once was." I mentioned the names of some eminent ministers, among others that of Dr. Wallace, now the editor of the *Scotsman.* "Oh yes, the man does not believe what he said." I referred to Principal Tulloch. "Yes," said Carlyle; "he would leave the Church if he had not so many children." Did he know of Flint? He did not; but Lecky did, and he and I exchanged a few words respecting the great learning displayed in his work on the "Philosophy of History." After a little more talk, the old man, who had stayed beyond his appointed time out of regard for us, said that he must go; and he bade us good-bye with a stately but hearty courtesy, as characteristic of himself as the tones of his voice, the turn of his sentences, or the vigour of his opinions. "Good-bye," he said; "I am glad to see you, and I wish you well." A few minutes afterwards he returned dressed in a warm great-coat and said, "Come, Lecky." So the old man and the young went away together.

During his short absence Lecky and I had been continuing the talk on Scotland. The most characteristic of Lecky's sayings was a reference to John Knox, "Whom," he said, with a humorous smile, "I don't admire quite so much as Mr. Carlyle does."

Of his intercourse with journalists something has been said already, and something has to be added. The great feature in his life at Gower Street was the weekly gatherings of his friends on Thursday afternoons. These meetings sprang from a talk with Mr.

Meredith Townsend of the *Spectator*. Mr. Townsend said he liked to have something definite to do every day. At the time, he told Mr. Macdonell and his wife, he had an occupation for every day in the week except Thursday. Mrs. Macdonell said, "Well, make it a rule to spend Thursday afternoons at our house. We will always be at home to see you while we are in town." He was pleased with the suggestion, and agreed to come. Other friends were invited, and for years every Thursday afternoon a delightful company in winter gathered round the fire, and in summer round the three long open windows that looked upon the trees in the garden. Mr. Townsend and Mr. Stack never failed. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hunt, Mrs. Cashel Hoey and M   Savage, a bright Irish girl and a keen politician, were constantly there, and besides these were a number of less intimate friends. Sometimes there were four or five, and sometimes as many as twenty. Mr. Townsend always came first about four o'clock, and he and Mr. Macdonell had always a good little talk before the others arrived. Mrs. John Macdonell thus describes these delightful meetings, which are fresh in the memory of many :—

"Every Thursday one was sure to find a circle of ten or a dozen friends—there were rarely more. One or two who brought the freshest political gossip and news, and also stamped their own character on the gathering, came regularly. The talk went on from week to week. The subjects were always changing. The manner of speech remained. Friends who meet thus often for the purpose of converse, like actors who act together, learn each other's strength and

weakness, and bring out each other's points. They also learn each other's play; and never was there better play of thought and fancy, of bright, even, genial talk, than in those meetings in the firelight of winter evenings, or in summer time with the windows open, looking into the spreading plane-trees, the topmost branches still frequented by persistent rooks that there built their nests, their cawings blending pleasantly with the muffled roar of London streets beyond. In numbers the men generally predominated, which is, I am inclined to think, a proportion to bring out the best elements of talk. James Macdonell could not but lead in great measure, but he was a good listener also. His own abounding energy and vivacity never crushed others. It seemed rather to fire and brighten all. He himself often said he had no sense of humour. This was not so, but doubtless humour was not his strongest point. I think the excellence of this afternoon's talk was due, in great measure, to one gift he pre-eminently possessed, that of commanding his company. He never allowed the talk to flag, or wander, or to fall into a *tête-à-tête*. He had more interest in the general success than in his own share in it. He had the instinct to see what each person could do, and the will to keep them up to their best. As my sister received each guest as they arrived and seated them, it was her part to say where the subject stood, and initiate them, and by a question or remark draw from them some response which launched them happily and safely into the current.

"France had always a large share in the talk of these times. His love of her, his sympathy with

French literature and French character, was always keen. With what passion he denounced the cession of the provinces, with what enthusiasm he looked forward to the future of the Republic, with what high expectancy he watched the course of some of the leaders. He has been spared the sight of those leaders now who

> "'*Hesitant peu sure d'eux mêmes et dans le doute*
> *Au nécroman du coin vint démander leur route.*'*

The last Thursday before his death we were all there. He looked very ill, but he never talked better. After the guests were gone the three little children came down and played about their mother. In reply to something one of us had said about the fashion of whitewashing historical ruffians, he made a defence of the one in question. Then breaking off suddenly he admitted that he had said too much, and catching up his little boy on his shoulder he said, 'Yes, Philip, we must own that Henry VIII. was an almost unmitigated scoundrel.

"The Tuesday following was the day Mr. Macdonell was buried. All the men who for many and many a long month had passed that afternoon in his presence saw his body laid in the earth at Beckenham churchyard."

A note on his Sundays may be fitly placed here.

If he were very tired or very busy, he stayed at home on Sunday mornings; but generally he went to church with his wife. She took sittings in Mr. Stopford Brooke's church while they lived in Gower Street, as it was near, and she imagined her husband

* This was written in June 1888, in the midst of the Boulanger excitement.

would enjoy Mr. Brooke's sermons. This was before Mr. Brooke had left the Anglican communion. He still used the ritual of the Prayer Book, and maintained the reality of miracles. The experiment was only a partial success, for, although Mr. Macdonell liked the literary cultivation of Mr. Brooke's sermons, he was not greatly attracted by them. Indeed, he was never drawn to Broad Churchmen, with the exception of Maurice and Charles Kingsley. He admired the beauty of Maurice's character and life, but he said he could not understand his writings. He liked Kingsley's stories, his sympathy with the poor, and the breezy freshness of his nature. But Broad-Churchism did not fascinate him. He perceived in it a kind of intellectual shallowness, and he could not see that men like Mr. Brooke were able logically to vindicate their position in the Church of England. Often, however, he listened to Mr. Haweis's eloquent and amusing sermons, though he would occasionally complain that it was hard to have to listen to a leading article on Sunday after writing leading articles all the week! The preacher to whom he was most drawn, was, perhaps, Canon Liddon. His wife writes: "Every year he liked to attend the sermons given at St. Paul's during Advent. The service always impressed him much. In the dark winter afternoons the vast cathedral's failings were hid in gloom; its wide and heavy shadows were only shown more vividly by the brilliant line of fire that lit the huge dome. All round was a far-stretching crowd of devout worshippers, who listened with rapt attention to the earnest eloquence of the sermon. The great

preacher's personality, his cultivated enunciation, his well-managed voice, his perfect English, and, above all, the pure, noble, and devout spirit shown in his utterances, moved my husband to enthusiasm. The first time we heard the Canon together, my husband pointed out the absence of doctrinal teaching in the sermon, saying that there was little that could tell to which section of the English Church the preacher belonged. He would often go over parts of the sermon he had just heard, remarking how admirably this point and the other was expressed." For Mr. Spurgeon also his admiration was very great. He used to say that Spurgeon was a real orator. He admired his command of Saxon English, his imagination, and the picturesque freshness of his style, though he strongly disapproved of his calvinistic theology. He called Spurgeon a nineteenth-century Bunyan, and said that passages in his sermons always reminded him of *Pilgrim's Progress*. He was accustomed to talk with admiration of the potent spell with which the preacher held his six thousand hearers. Occasionally Mr. and Mrs. Macdonell visited Regent Square Church, the pulpit of which was then occupied by Dr. Oswald Dykes. He said that Dr. Dykes' sermons roused the real Scotchman in him, that he found in himself when hearing them the combative theology of old Scotia revive, and he would laugh at his companion's criticisms, and say that English education had unfitted her for logical theology, which was the breath of life to most Scotch sermons. Now and again he would go to the pro-cathedral at Kensington. He was once

present at a grand pontifical mass, when Cardinal Manning, in full dress, walked in procession through the church, bowing right and left as he walked. The sermon was preached by the Cardinal, and a marvellous discourse it was, on the benefits of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. The Cardinal stood in the large pulpit, his white-and-gold cloak thrown back, showing the figure in rich purple. Behind him sat an attendant, holding the crosier and mitre. During the journey home Mr. Macdonell dilated on the wonderful fascination which the Roman Catholic Church exercised over human nature, how it had made its principal aim to master the instincts, good and bad, of poor humanity, and turn them with immense skill to the service and growth and strength of the Church. He went once or twice to the receptions given by Cardinal Manning at Westminster, where were to be seen the most prominent statesmen and ecclesiastics of the Roman power in England. He thought Manning more a man of the world than a theologian. For Newman he had the deepest veneration. He felt the attraction of his saintly character; he read his writings with the greatest interest, and was specially fond of reading them aloud on Sunday afternoons. His favourite hymn was "Lead, kindly Light."

CHAPTER XII.

"TIMES" HOLIDAYS.

SWITZERLAND—THE HOWITTS AT DIETENHEIM.—ITALY.

ONE of the greatest privileges of Mr. Macdonell's connection with the *Times* was the generous allowance of holidays. When he was first regularly engaged on the staff, Mr. Delane, probably recognising the strain which had been put upon him and the need of rest, insisted on his having a three months' holiday. The first month was spent at Littlehampton, and the last in a tour with his wife to Scotland. In the intermediate month he visited Switzerland, spending most of his time at Mürren. The daily letters addressed by him to his wife are before me. They testify to his exhausted condition, and are many of them written with obvious signs of weariness. The excursion, however, as will be seen from the extracts printed, yielded him keen delight, and did something, though perhaps not much, to fit him for the work to come. In Paris he took up his quarters in the Hôtel du Louvre, where he and his wife had lived five years before.

He writes on his arrival :—

GRAND HÔTEL DU LOUVRE, PARIS.
June 4th, 1876.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

You see, darling, that I write from our old hotel. I write in the long saloon, at a table looking

towards the courtyard, and near the door by which we used to come from our room. I think that it was our favourite table. Everything is much the same as it was in our day; and the old guardian of the newspapers and the salon, with his chain over his shoulders, is still here. I have been spending such a day, my dearest, as we used to spend seven times a week during those toilsome, sad, happy five months. I have wandered about the bookshops with covetous eyes, and I have refrained from buying anything merely because I should not know where to put it. I have wandered along the Boulevard des Italiens, the Boulevard des Capucins, and the Rue Royal, to the Place de la Concorde and the gardens of the Tuileries. The streets and the gardens are crowded with people absolutely enjoying this Sunday. I went into the Madeleine, which is now almost entirely repaired, and I heard the steely, hollow, fluent eloquence of a Carmelite friar resounding from the pulpit which once was filled by the Père Hyacinthe. They charged me three sous for my seat. It would have been cheap if I had stayed, for, seeing that I was an Englishman and a heathen, and that I was about to leave the church, a Frenchman whispered to me that, if I should stay for two minutes, I should see the procession and hear very fine music. But I went off to the neighbouring gardens of the Tuileries, and speedily saw a vigorous game of football. A few minutes before entering the Madeleine I was interested by the sight of masons hard at work in the Boulevard des Italiens. I did not see any Puritanism. The world, the flesh, and the devil were having a fine time of

it; and the Church was having a fine time of it too. They don't mind each other in this country. But I seemed to see Voltaire making faces at the clergy. And yet, what an incomparable city! What wealth of life, what beauty, what brilliancy! I don't wonder that the good Bostonians go to Paris when they die. They might go to a worse place,—although 2 fr. 50 centimes was disgracefully dear for the indifferent *déjeuner* I got in that same seraphic city. I could write an article right off, entitled, "A Sunday Afternoon in Paris," and I should make it a picture of France.

The next letter is dated from the Righi.

RIGHI KULM, Tuesday Afternoon, 3 o'clock,
June 15*th*, 1876.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

I suppose, dearest, that you have received both the tiny note which I penned at Dieppe and the long letter which I sent from Paris? As I was going to post that letter, whom should I meet on the steps of the hotel but Professor Masson. He had come to Paris in the same train as myself, accompanied by his wife and his daughter. After a cordial meeting we agreed to dine together at the *table d'hôte*. I was introduced to Mrs. Masson, and I sat next her. She is like Miss Orme, and is bright. We had much talk about many things. The dinner was very like what it used to be in the old times. I seemed to be eating an old friend. When it was over, I bade good-bye to the Massons, who gave you and me a cordial invitation to visit them when we go to Scotland. Away then, lifting my valise. I got

into an open cab, and went to the station. The journey to Basle was long, but very interesting, and I slept so much that it was not at all fatiguing. I put up at the Hôtel Suisse, a big house near the station. I was sorry to miss the Hôtel Trois Rois, because, dearest Annie, I wished to go to the places which you had visited; but I reflected that to go to the centre of the town with my luggage would cause unnecessary expense. I fear I must say that Basle slightly disappointed me in one respect. It had not that mediæval look which I had attached to it in my memory—probably because it was one of the first continental towns I ever saw. But the cathedral, which I carefully surveyed, is very interesting, and the view from the terrace is magnificent. I climbed to the cathedral, to see again a view which lived in my memory.

I have met some interesting travellers. Yesterday, on the steamboat, a stout Scotch gentleman and I had much talk. He did not mention his name, nor did I mention mine; but he was evidently a professor in Edinburgh University. We talked about every subject under the sun. Scotch architecture, "Jupiter Carlyle" (who was the minister of Inveresk, you remember), Calvinism, the Sultan, geology, Geikie's theory respecting aqueous formation, Sir William Hamilton, Mill, etc., etc. He was curious to know who I was; but I did not allow him to find out. At least I kept clear of all references to journalism, and, until I corrected him, he seemed to fancy that I was in some way connected with Oxford. To my amazement, however, he suddenly asked me for information about the writers

for the *Times*. He was curious to know about Delane, and the contributors. I gave guarded replies. My companion to-day was a French priest, who did not speak a word of English. He was travelling with a father and two sons. As they spoke French I fancied they were French, although one of the lads sometimes spoke English; but the young boy, with whom I had much talk, told me he was Irish! His father, a dignified, handsome man, is Irish, and lives in Lorraine; the mother is French. They are evidently strong Legitimists, and they are so Catholic that the priest attends the boys even in their rambles. It was a queer sight.

He declines to describe the scene on the Righi, declaring that it would need the pen of Ruskin to do it justice, and that he was too tired even to attempt to take Ruskin's place. After visiting Meyringen and Brienz, he found his way to Mürren, from which he writes:—

HÔTEL MÜRREN.
Friday, June 16th, 1876.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

I had to make so elaborate a defence of myself in my letter of yesterday that I had no time to tell you about this wonderful place. I think you know where it is situated. You remember that the Staubbach falls down the right side of Lauterbrunnen as your face is turned from Interlaken. Well, before you reach the fall, a road turns sharply to the right, and goes up, and up, and up, till it crosses the fall above the plunge, and then

goes further up, till you leave the pine woods behind you, and reach level ground. As Lauterbrunnen is 2,644 feet high and Mürren 5,347, you will see that the climb is stiff. Turn your face towards the valley, and you see it below you at the depth of nearly two thousand feet. You might think that you could fling a stone down to the bottom of the precipice. The hotel is built on the brow of the cliff. Look in the same direction again, and you see right opposite to you, and apparently half a mile away, the tremendous precipices of the Schwarz Mönch, which is the outer buttress of the Jungfrau. They seem to go up above Mürren for at least three thousand feet, and if a heavy body were dropped from the top it would fall at least a mile. Look in the same direction again, but towards the left, and in the distance you see the snowy cones of the Wellhorn, the Rosenhorn, and the Wetterhorn. Nearer, rising from a green ridge, which is called the Scheideck, shoots up the great, grim pyramid of the Eiger. A little further to the right rises still higher the rugged dome of the Mönch. The precipices of the Schwarz Mönch hide the Jungfrau; but its nearest peak, the Silberhorn, rises right above these rocks, a dazzling cone of snow. Away to the right stretches a chain of great peaks, so near that I can see the fissures of the glaciers, and hear the roar of the avalanches. At the back of the hotel rise green eminences, on which lie great patches of snow, and above these rise rugged, rocky, snowy ridges. Thus Mürren is almost like a high green island in the midst of eternal winter. The prospect is not so awful as the view from the

Wengern Alp, because it is not so desolate, but it presents a grander range of rock and snow.

Mamma will be interested to hear about the flora. It is, tell her, so rich and so wondrously beautiful as to make me ashamed of my ignorance, and if I were to stay here for a month I should seriously study botany. Never till now, dearest, do I seem to have seen the full beauty and poetry of flowers. Perhaps I am attracted by the contrast between the tremendous, pitiless forces revealed by the everlasting snow, and the meek, quiet beauty of the flowers which light up the mountain sides. This morning, after breakfast, I climbed the hill at the back of the hotel, and I waded among the loveliest of tints. In the neighbourhood of the snow lay great spaces of blue and white crocuses, so thickly strewn that they lighted up the grass, and so quiet in their beauty that I hardly liked to tread them down. On the hill sides the larger gentians lifted their blue bells by thousands, and alongside them grew, in wondrous abundance, a beautiful purple flower, not unlike a large forget-me-not. Here is a specimen of it. Further down the forget-me-nots themselves made the grass glow with their beautiful pale blue. Near the top of the mountain I noticed a flower not unlike in form to the gorse, but smaller, and more delicate in its two tints of yellow. Here is a bit of it. I also gathered bundles of yellow pansies, and I found a few white violets. At the top of the mountain I saw only crocuses, and a purple flower with a spiked cup. I shall try to send specimens of all the plants I gathered.

His object in describing Mürren so minutely was that he thought it suitable for a pretty long stay when he and his wife should be able to visit Switzerland together. He afterwards proceeded to Zermatt, arriving there after a very fatiguing walk in the hot sunshine from St. Nicholas. He was at first disappointed, longing for the glories of the Bernese Oberland, and declaring that Mürren was worth twenty Zermatts, except for men to climb. It is too evident that his health was not improving. He says: "I daresay that I am stronger than I was when I came to Switzerland, and I am sure that the stay at Mürren was beneficial. Yet I am unpleasantly over-fatigued,—I who was once a pretty good walker; and the long journey here too has not done me any good." His pleasure in Switzerland was considerably marred by the sight of the peasantry turning themselves into beasts of burden. At Mürren the spectacle was extremely painful, old men and old women, young men, boys, and even girls, carrying heavy weights from the vale below, two leagues in length, and rising on that distance nearly three thousand feet.

From Zermatt he went to the Riffel.

RIFFEL HOTEL, *June 26th*, 1876.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

At last, you see, I am at your beloved Riffel! And a pretty place it is, to be sure. The rain is coming down with a slow, steady pour, which hints that there is ever so much more of it in the reservoir above. The mist hangs so densely on the mountain that I cannot see many yards ahead. Gorner Grat,

Zermatt, Monte Rosa, Matterhorn,—everything is hidden. Add to this cheerful spectacle that there is not a soul in the hotel except myself and the servants. Between four and five o'clock I started from Zermatt with two men—my loud Austrian friend, who is a bundle of miscellaneous and inaccurate information tied together by prejudices, and a hee-haw youngish fellow with a brown tweed coat. Men who wear brown tweed coats are always disagreeable. When little more than half-way up their courage was chilled by a drizzling rain, and they decided that they would go back. I left them crouching in a cow-shed, and I came here with the man whom I had hired to carry my knapsack. To be quite alone in a big house 8,000 feet above the level of the sea may not seem the most cheerful of fates; yet I would far rather be here than sunk at Zermatt, which is about as cheerful as the bottom of a coal pit. Although I very much like the company of my kind, I would rather be alone than cooped up with so uninteresting a set of beings as I left down below. There I found it peculiarly difficult to kill time. I could not go out without running the risk of a ducking, and I could not stay in without being bored, or getting into a violent argument with my Austrian friend, whom I pretty nearly silenced by some merciless intimations that he did not know what he was speaking about. Here I can enjoy myself. I have had mutton cutlets, *pain-roti*, butter, and honey, and tea! Yes, tea! I have tasted it for the first time since we were on the Harfleur steamer. I have tried it because, according to Murray, it is the best thing

to take when in a state of bodily fatigue. Certainly it is very nice, and I daresay that Dr. Andrew Clark himself would say that it was harmless at this height. The tea has been served, not in the *salle-à-manger* on the left of the passage, but in the *salon*, because the *salon* had been warmed before my arrival. Do you remember what the *salon* is like?

Tuesday morning.

The day has brightened somewhat, and I have had some grand glimpses of the mountains. But the Matterhorn still refuses to show himself; and so soft is the snow that it is quite impracticable to reach the Gorner Grat. I think of beginning to go home to-morrow (Wednesday). Friday and Saturday I shall spend on the Lake of Geneva. On Sunday I shall be in Paris; on Monday at Beckenham.

How little real good the trip had done him, or rather, how much more he needed in order to be perfectly set up, is shown by his disappointment at finding that it had been arranged that he and his family should spend a few days at their house in Gower Street before going to Scotland. "I regard a stay in London for a week, and in a state of idleness," he says, "with feelings which it would be in vain for me to try and describe. I really think that I should much rather go to work at once. It is of no use to reason about the matter. I shrink with something like horror from going to that whirlpool until I shall go back either to sink or to swim." No one, he says, could have any idea of the almost sickly horror with which he regarded a week in

London in the midst of the holiday which was to be spent far away from the place in which he shattered his health. It was no doubt a proof that he was still an invalid, and he so understood it, that the prospect of spending a few days at Gower Street had "nipped the bloom off his holiday as with the chill of a sharp frost." Matters, however, were satisfactorily arranged, and his visit to Scotland revived him. He was able on returning to take up his work with zest.

Another *Times* holiday which he greatly enjoyed came near the close of his life. He visited Dietenheim, in the Austrian Tyrol, the home of William and Mary Howitt. As I have already mentioned, Mary Howitt was Mrs. Macdonell's aunt. He also on this journey got his first, and as it turned out his last, glimpse of Italy. There breathes through the letters that describe this journey a satisfying spirit of tranquillity, and they are written with so much vividness that I have ventured to make some large extracts from them.

He started with his friend Professor Gibb, of the Presbyterian College, London, who went on with him as far as Nuremberg. He remained at Dietenheim for a fortnight, and every day was marked by a long, restful, and bright letter to his wife. The lovely and still country, the charm of his aunt's and cousin's society, and the vigour and fire which still characterised old William Howitt, made a combination which at once stimulated and soothed him. It is well known that Mary Howitt and her daughter went over to the Roman Catholic Church, of which William Howitt

was from the beginning to the end of his career a resolute and even passionate opponent. In that quiet and beautiful home the controversy was carried on with perfect gentleness. It is not necessary to say more than this to explain the allusions in some of the letters.

On reaching his destination he writes:—

This is a singularly beautiful Sunday morning. The sky is bright and intensely blue. Great white clouds float about, and half cover the sides of the mountains, which strangely remind me, by their brown sides and their pines, of far-off Scotland. Everything has a look of intense freshness; the air is bracing, and almost cold; and, in truth, I might fancy, as I glance out of the lattice windows, that I am in Braemar. We had a thunderstorm in the night, and the lightning flashed with wonderful vividness, while the thunder rolled grandly among the valleys. All the time the church bells of the surrounding villages were tolling out a melodious wail. It is the custom here, in times of thunder, to sound the church bells, in order to prevent the lightning from doing any harm. Anton, the eldest son of the Hofbauer, has seen the lightning turned aside from a church by the sound of the bells. Anton, I should mention, is a very good Catholic, who thinks that Bruneck is full of dreadful people called Liberals,—people who read newspapers, and do even worse things. One time he went as far as Innsbruck, and stayed all night. "Would you believe it," he said to aunt and Cousin Margaret, "I heard two carriages coming along the street

after midnight?" That question seemed to exhaust his interrogatives of horror. The warfare between clerical and anti-clerical has reached even this peaceful valley. The Liberals have succeeded in building a school in Bruneck, which is to teach Latin, French, and arithmetic without the intervention of the priests. The Church naturally sees the hand of Atheism in such a thirst for secular knowledge, and thus Bruneck is convulsed by the same tea-pot passions as Beckenham. The priests are right, for the peculiar type of religion which flourishes in the district might be nipped by the frosts of secular knowledge. That is a very fervent type. Along the highways, at short intervals, stand crucifixes, some of them very horrible, and pictures full of Gospel woe. Gilded figures of the Virgin and the Magdalen are planted on rocks, watching the body of the crucified Christ. Frescoes of Christ in the garden, on the cross, and in the tomb, or of the Virgin weeping tears of blood, are painted over the doors even of peasant houses. There is a large fresco of the Virgin over the gateway of this fine old house. In fact, the symbols of religion are everywhere. And the bells peal from morning to night. Those of the many villages in this wide plain seem to keep up a kind of musical conversation all day long. At sundown every household goes on its knees to say the rosary, the head of the family leading the worship, and the sons and daughters and the servants making the responses with a monotonous singsong which is not without its solemnity. The worshippers, I am told, go as near to the windows as they can, and pray with their faces to the sky,

because thus, they think, can they most surely send their petitions to heaven.

All this is very poetical, and it is not without beauty. I confess I should like some addition to the dogmas of the valley in the shape of a belief in the blessedness of soap and water. But you remember the grime of the cottages in the Lews? Well, I think that, in many ways, the houses of the Tyrolese are worse. I should like also to know what is the moral effect of the poetical religion which I see on every side. I get contradictory accounts of that very important subject. But sure I am of this, that a very little secular knowledge will make sad inroads on the peculiar kind of devoutness to be seen in Tyrol. At present it is primitive, fervent, and poetical. In many ways, dearest, I am reminded of our experiences in the Lews. The power of the clergy, the submissiveness of the people, and the general piety are the same. But here life is much more sunny. The great houses of the Bauers tell of an easy life; there is a peasant proprietary, and consequently little or no poverty. Life is far easier, if not happier, than in our grim northern latitudes.

At breakfast this morning the whole subject of the effects of Catholicism was brought up at the breakfast-table. I need not say that your uncle was intensely emphatic in his condemnation of Popery. Aunt said some good words for its influence; Cousin Margaret was still more apologetic; and I tried to be philosophically impartial. I suppose you know that Cousin Margaret is writing the life of Overbeck. She is very pleasant and clever.

The next letter describes an accident.

DIETENHEIM, BRUNECK, AUSTRIAN TYROL.
September 3rd, 1878.

We had a delightful, and yet a melancholy, excursion yesterday. We drove in a carriage to see the devastations caused, a fortnight ago, by a great flood, about a dozen miles from this, in a glen called Taufers. Some dozen miles above the place to which we drove, the mountains rise into great fields of snow and glacier. The warm weather melted the glacier with unusual speed, and then followed tremendous rains, which flooded the mountain torrents. The immediate result was a landslip, which dammed up the principal stream. After a while the accumulating waters tore down the embankment thus formed, and, rushing with irresistible force, it carried with it rocks, trees, everything. A fine road which ran along the edge of the river was in many parts carried clean away. A copper mine was filled with water and ruined. Houses were immersed in what is now, and what threatens to remain, an artificial lake. Sweeping down, the water dashed through the embankment which protects the fine and exquisitely situated village of Gand, and in a few hours it was like a place which had been newly dug out of the sand. The streets were buried feet deep in sand and huge boulders and gigantic trees; the gardens and the neighbouring fields were ruined; what had once been a mill sluice was choked with sand, in which the mill wheel stuck with pathetic firmness; the ends of houses had been carried away, and in others we could hear the thud of the pump, with which the poor inmates were trying to empty the cellars. Such a scene

of desolation I had seldom or never seen before. Aunt said that, as she looked at the workmen digging out the old road, the scene reminded her of the excavations at Pompeii. Alas for the poor people! Many of them must be totally ruined. Yet most of them bear the infliction with great meekness. It had written, however, aunt said, deep traces on the face of the young woman who waited on us at the inn. She was one of two sisters who were the beauties of the district, and who were declared by a German noble to be as beautiful as Madonnas. She was oppressed, not only by the losses by the flood, but by the fear that visitors would not come to the village next year. And I daresay that she is right, for the village is so situated that it is fated to be destroyed by the water which periodically sweeps from the mountains.

I should have sent a description of the scene to the *Times* had I not learned that it had already been described in the *Daily Telegraph.* I gave my mite to help the sufferers. A young English lady, whom we met at *table d'hôte*, and who saw the process of destruction (she had to run for her life from the pursuing waters) told us that she had sent a description of the flood, and sketches of the scene, to the *Graphic.* Will you be kind enough, darling, to ask someone to see whether the *Graphic* publishes the sketches, and, if it does, will you send a copy here?

Life is delightful in this exquisite place. It would be perfect if you were here, darling. My kind—too kind—relatives are doing everything in their power to make my stay pleasant. They are very good. It does one good to be with them. To live with aunt is really as beneficial, in Dick Steele's phrase, as a

liberal education. The freshness of her mind and her feelings is a marvel. We have abundance of laughter and very little argument. How young your uncle is also! He thinks of writing a book on George Fox and his companions! Cousin Margaret, who often goes with me in my walks, is very pleasant.

He speaks of himself as busy with correspondence. "I have written such heaps of letters. Chenery, Taylor Innes, mother, Helen, Gibb, Miss Greenwell, all have had letters, and I hope, darling, that I have not neglected you. I am enjoying every hour of my stay." He finds that Mary Howitt would like to read and possess Carlyle's "Cromwell" and his "French Revolution," and commissions his wife to send copies, as he would like to make a gift of them to her.

Another excursion is thus described, with glimpses of subjects on which his mind was always dwelling. "We had a very pleasant excursion yesterday. After changing some money in the picturesque town of Bruneck, we took the train, and went for some miles to a village which is crowned by the castle of Graf Königle. That earl is the villain of the neighbourhood, and he is the head of a remarkable family. His ancestors have lived in the same place, with little intermission, since the twelfth century, and they have been great people. But the present man was wild in youth, and he is wild still. He is divorced from his first wife, and he has married again. A second union in such circumstances being contrary to the will of the Catholic Church, he has been excommunicated, and to revenge himself he has become a Protestant! As a Protestant is

deemed little better than an atheist in this Catholic country, Graf Königle must possess some strength of character. Yesterday, when we went to the pretty church, which is only a few yards from his mansion, and which may be regarded as his family chapel, we found it locked. Can it be that Graf Königle has revenged himself on the Papacy by turning the key on the sacraments? It seems that his brothers and his sisters are nearly as bad as himself. There are two side chapels which he has not shut up, and one of them is remarkably holy. I need scarcely say that it is dedicated to the Virgin. In this country the Virgin has practically dethroned her Son. The queer little pictures at the roadside are usually emblematic of the Virgin. In one of them, which I saw yesterday, she is represented looking benignly down on some highly respectable persons, who, in an attitude of extreme discomfort, are imploring her to lift them out of the very lively flames of Purgatory. Another image of her—that in the sacred chapel which I saw yesterday—is peculiarly ludicrous. I also saw a copy of the famous winking Virgin at Rome. This place, in fact, is about as Pagan as it would have been in the time of the Romans,—pagan, I mean, in the sense of its having a materialized religion; but Christian, I admit, in sentiment and morality. The whole effect is very poetical. Every house has on its outside walls frescoes of the Crucifixion, or the Virgin, or the Saints. Crucifixes are found at short intervals on every highway. Others, mounted on the top of high poles, may be seen at the distance of a mile. Everywhere there is symbolism. Your Cousin

Margaret, who has a very kindly feeling for Catholicism, insists that this place is full of poetry because the imagination of the people has not been stunted, and that the life of England is thin and meagre because we are crushed under masses of fact. We have certainly gained much; but we have also lost a good deal. How barren the look of England seems in comparison with the sunny richness of a Tyrolese village! And yet—notice how I see-saw—I should willingly surrender a few frescoed saints for some diurnal tubs of soap and water."

The next letter lets us see what was going on in the Howitt circle :—

DIETHEIM, BRUNECK, AUSTRIAN TYROL.
September 6th, 1878.

MY DEAREST LOVE,—

It is very good of our relatives to give so much of their time for the purpose of amusing me and showing me the country. I have had endless talks with them. Your uncle's hearty, old-fashioned hatred of Rome is interesting and amusing. To him she is the Scarlet Woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, Antichrist, and indeed the devil. His denunciation of popes, cardinals, and the whole machinery of Rome is as racy as it is vivid. But it belongs to the pre-philosophical period. Your aunt looks at Rome from a very different point of view, and your cousin has much sympathy with a great deal of its teaching—a sympathy which, strange to say, is largely the result of her past knowledge of spiritualism. The spiritualists, in fact, are feeding the Church of Rome.

Has Philip got his steamer yet, poor little fellow? How I wish that I could see all of you! It would be delightful to have all of you here. This would be almost a perfect place for children if it were nearer to England. I wonder, darling, whether you and I shall be able to come to it next year. I should propose that we should go from valley to valley, and from mountain to mountain, without visiting Italy. At least, the riches of Tyrol would more than exhaust all our available time. Dearest love, it would be inexpressibly delightful to wander through these valleys in company with you. I feel very lonely sometimes, in spite of the kindness of my relatives.

The intense Catholicism of the district greatly interested him. He longed to study its symbols more closely.

They are profoundly interesting to any philosophic student of history. Whatever may be said by Heine, the old gods are not dead, but are almost as much alive as they were when temples were dedicated to them in Athens and Rome. They are to be seen beside every highway and in every church, disguised as baby Christs, or as weeping Virgins, or grim hermits, or agonized saints, but full of lusty vigour, and rich in poetry. Here you find Christianity free from any atmosphere of rationalism, and springing straight from the pagan stem; Christianity such as it must have been when the earliest missionaries in these Tyrolean valleys gave a new name to the old gods of wood and stream, and bathed the old legends in the well of Nazarean sentiment. A short

stay in one of these glens casts more light on the history of Christianity than acres of philosophical dissertation. And there is much beauty in the symbolism of the popular faith. Here every event of life—birth and death, seed-time and harvest—has its appropriate symbol, which is full of poetry. At St. Vigel I saw the Nativity of the Virgin celebrated by a crowd of worshippers in the churchyard with a fervour of devotion which is a lost sentiment in our northern latitudes; and this morning, at the funeral of an old man who has died in Dietenheim, the same religious instinct was shown in the symbolism of the worship in the pretty village church.

On the other hand, many of the emblematic images are among the most repulsive objects ever fashioned by the hands of man. On Saturday I was taken to a chapel of the Passion in a village two or three miles from this house. I found all the incidents of Christ's agony—the bloody sweat, the scourging, the falling under the weight of the cross, and the crucifixion — represented by sculptured figures, nearly life size, and coloured to the semblance of life. Pile together all the horrors of blood and torn flesh into the reality of a shambles, and you have the sight which, in the opinion of men presumably educated, is fitted to elevate the souls of the village people. The chapel was the most disgusting chamber of horrors I ever saw. A cultivated man would feel more inspired in a slaughter-house.

I need scarcely say that I shall be very sorry to bid good-bye to Aunt and Uncle and Cousin Margaret They have been very kind to me. I shall likewise be sorry to leave this beautiful valley. It does one good

to drink in from day to day the charm of the mountains and the woods. Have I said in any of my letters that Mary would be delighted by the richness of this place in the memorials of old-world life? The costumes of the women, when they stick to their traditional dresses, would delight an eye nourished in the glories of the Pre-Raphaelites. At St. Vigel I saw a girl who might have walked out of one of Burne Jones's pictures. Carrying a small water barrel on her head, she had extended her elbows and planted her hands in her sides to balance the load. She wore a dark bodice, and her sleeves were of white linen. Her petticoat was of a bright, rich yellow, and round it was flung a blue apron, looped at the back with, I believe, a silver buckle. Add red stockings, and you have a blaze of harmonious colour. I burst out into admiration when I saw her. Some other bits of peasant dress are not so beautiful. In fact, the broad-brimmed, and low, flat-crowned hats of the women are ugly; and the beehive bonnets which some of them still wear on fête days are more quaint than comely. I should flatter if I were to say that many of the women are beautiful.

The costume, unhappily, is rapidly disappearing. The smoke of the railway train is chilling it into the neutral tint of the shy self-respect which is the first result of civilization. Disliking to seem odd amid the new fashions, the peasant women are throwing aside their yellow petticoats for dark ones, and discarding their red stockings. In a little while colour will have fled.

But the railway train cannot so quickly destroy the solid traces of a time which was filled with the

spirit of artistic beauty. Every considerable house in this district has its windows covered with iron-work of artistic design and finish. The bars are charmingly interlaced and curved, and they sometimes blow at the top into finely-wrought leaves. The white walls of some of the frescoes blaze with frescoes of the Virgin, and the Saviour, and the saints. Over the gateway of this house we have a large fresco of the Virgin and her attendant saints; and the next house is adorned with a life-size picture of the crucifixion, with the Virgin weeping at the foot of the cross, and a sword piercing her heart. Some of the frescoes have considerable merit. Some are of real beauty.

But frescoes, and iron-work, and beauty of architectural form are all vanishing under the iron hoof of this queer age. Everywhere they are giving way to the great god of stucco and whitewash. The people of Bruneck have recently built a large school, much to the disgust of the clergy, and they have built it after the model of Regent Street. The walls are covered with stucco; sham rough stones of stucco are put in at the corners; and the whole is covered with drab paint. The Germans seem to have lost their fine artistic instincts. The spirit of beauty is fleeing from them, and they are trying to make their land as vulgar as our own. Nay, it is we who are now acquiring the spirit of beauty, and some day perhaps we shall be the most artistically cultivated nation on the face of the earth. Perhaps I may find time to write to Mary; but, in case I should not, she would possibly like to hear bits of this letter.

The night before he left Dietenheim the Hof Baur's people, knowing the Herr was to leave, did him the honour of showing him their greatest treasures.

DIETENHEIM, BRUNECK, AUSTRIAN TYROL.
September 12*th*, 1878.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

After tea Francesca, the picturesquely dressed Italian maid, told us that the exhibition was ready, and then Cousin Margaret, Miss Clarke, and I went to what was once the strong-room of the great house. It is closed by an iron door. The first thing we saw was the crown which is placed on the queen cow when she and the rest of the herd come down from the autumn pastures among the hills. The cattle, I should observe, are kept far up among the mountains during the summer. One of them is called the queen, and, unlike our own sovereign, she gets the place by a vigorous system of competitive examination. After much fighting, one of the cows takes the lead of all the others, going first into every new place, and first out of it. That vigorous creature is the queen. When she comes down, she has the honour of wearing the wondrous crown which we saw last night. It is made of a multitude of pieces of coloured glass, some of it spun into long fibres like hair, some of it cast into pearl-like beads, some of it into red beads and green, until it is a blaze of colour. In the centre is a wax figure of St. Anthony, the patron of the family. The queen cow is said to be as proud of her crown as other queens are of theirs. We were shown other treasures. An old wardrobe being opened, we saw

the sacred ornaments of the chapel—a doll-like image of the Good Shepherd, a number of huge cow bells, vast old Tyrolese hats, and a multitude of other ornaments, full of the symbolism which is inseparable from the life of this poetical people. But then came the chief treasure store. Maria, the Hof Baur's daughter, a comely and immensely vigorous maiden of some twenty-five or thirty years old, opened another wardrobe, to show us the riches she had gathered together in view of a speculative marriage day, which may never come. It was a wonderful sight. The shelves were crammed with snowy linen, which she herself had spun on many a winter evening. Few English ladies, I fancy, bring a greater trousseau to their husband's home. Beside the linen lay little ornaments, mostly in coloured glass, the memorials of religious fêtes or marriage days. In the drawers below lay the dress in which Maria's mother had been married, and a wondrous attire it was. The stomacher was of bright green, trimmed with gold. The bodice had at the shoulders things like epaulettes, only much higher and sharper. Cousin Margaret put on the dress, much to the amusement of Maria and Francesca. Then came a collar of rich lace, and a huge broad-brimmed hat. But the most wonderful part of the garb was the skirt, which was made of dark cloth, so thickly padded and quilted that it was nearly as heavy as a coat of mail. Only the vigour of a Tyrolese bride could bear the weight of that tremendous garment. Even in every-day life the Tyrolese women still wear immensely heavy petticoats, and pile shapeless quilts round their busts.

It seems doubtful whether Maria would now wear her mother's dresses if she were to be married, for the fickleness of fashion has reached even Tyrol, and the people are learning to smile at the grotesqueness of the old garb. We were next shown the son's wardrobe, with its relics of fêtes and weddings, mostly huge ornaments of coloured glass, to be worn on the shoulder. One of the most characteristic articles was the grand brass-mounted harness which is put upon the horse that is sent for the bride. She comes to her husband's house to be married.

Here marriages are comparatively few, and the number of children born is small. Such is usually the result in a country of peasant proprietary. This house presents an instructive example. The Hof Baur himself has long been a widower. His brother is unmarried, and is merely the senior labourer on the farm. His sister is also unmarried, and is the housekeeper. His eldest son, a man apparently about thirty, is unmarried too, and, it is said, will not think of marrying during the lifetime of his father. So is the younger son, who is with the cattle among the hills. So is the daughter, Maria; and she also may never marry. That is not a good state of things.

Miss Clarke also leaves to-day. Did you ever hear of her? She is an American lady, about seventy years old, who has lived in Rome for many years, and is now going back to America. She is very pleasant and accomplished.

I linger in recalling this pleasant time. Both for

the sake of the writer and their contents, I make some extracts from letters written to Mary Howitt and her sister, Mrs. Harrison, during this visit.

DIETENHEIM, *September 1st.*

MY BELOVED SISTER,—

. . . Now I must tell you how heartily and truly we admire and love dear James Macdonell. He is a very charming companion—so wonderfully intelligent and bright, and such a good walking companion. William never was so well off before. He is as fond of walking as ever, but I have not the power to accompany him as formerly. A short walk seems all I can manage, though I am quite well, and dear Meggy, with her many occupations, has not time for the two long walks a day which William likes. They are out now, and probably will not return much before dinner. Fortunately, James holds the same politics as his uncle, and he has such experience and knowledge of the past and present state of the nation that they agree perfectly. Then, whether James's religious views, and especially his sentiments towards Catholics, are exactly in accordance with William's, he at all events has the wisdom and the courtesy not to contradict or cavil with those of the old man, which often appear to Meggy and myself somewhat narrow and wanting in charity. However, nothing can be more harmonious than these two, and our friends, our best friends and dearest here (or, rather, in these parts), the Von Hoffmanns, are charmed with him for his intelligence and general agreeableness. All, therefore, is as harmonious and delightful as you can wish. One thing only troubles us, and I daresay the

dear, good man will laugh at us about it. We are old-fashioned in every way, and are not remarkable, as we never were, for elaborate cookery and "the pleasures of the table;" so, if James makes a little fun of us in this respect, and wonders why we do not teach our cook to boil and roast and do all things in finer style, please tell him; and you remember that our cook is a simple Tyrolese woman,—faithful and honest, and very clean, but not accomplished in her art. Besides which, Tyrol meat is not first-rate, and fowls and poultry always poor. Strange to say, as yet they do not know how to manage either a poultry yard or a dairy. Till two or three summers ago we had great difficulty in getting good butter, and that was the case generally, for the butter is made up in the Alpine pastures, and is never fresh. Of late, however, this necessity being general, a dairy was opened some miles from here, on the railway, and the milk of many farms received there and made into fresh excellent butter, which is sold at about 1*s.* the pound, so that now our butter is as good, perhaps even better, than what you have in London. This, we will hope, is the beginning of improvements in this line, and in a few years we may have, or those who come after us may have, good poultry as well as good butter. So if James, in his sweet, good-natured way, laughs at our shortcomings, you can tell him that we were aware of it all, and sorry it was so, but we could not help it.

James is curious to know all he can about the old times which we remember in our youth. I tell him, and it is the fact, that you, dearest sister, know a great deal more than I do, because your memory is

so much better. But I find one or two things which he has not heard from you, as, for instance, about our mother, in the absence of Peter Price, and when the infuriated mob seized upon the hoarded store of corn and threw it into the sea, thus ruining the rich corn merchants, she bravely went down, conducted by a number of the mob, at the head of the fierce, angry multitude, with the keys of Peter Price's warehouses in her hands, and, opening the doors, showed them that nothing was there but a little damaged corn, and so pacified them as regarded the dealings of the Friend; and the mob, complimenting her on her good faith to them as well as to the merchant, re-conducted her to Peter Price's house. I have told the little facts in a cobbling sort of style, but I think, if you turn to Knight's *History of England*, or even perhaps to the *Dictionary of Dates*, if you have it, you will find the time of these Corn Riots; and the behaviour of our dear mother on that occasion seems to me a beautiful instance of heroism and truth. Then another incident which James does not seem to remember is that of mother saving the young sailor from the press-gang when she was just leaving Falmouth in the vessel for Swansea. But I am sure you remember it, and have written it down, though he may not recall it. I have amused him, I think, a little by telling him of our early literary attempts, —the great Epic of Quindrida, the British Princess, daughter, or niece perhaps, of the Druid priest, with whom the Roman soldier-general, or whatever he was, head of his legion, fell in love, and she was burned as a victim of sacrifice in one of the proper wicker baskets used for that purpose. I don't remember

how much of the poem was written, but it was a proper epic, written in heroic measure, like Pope's translation of the *Iliad*. Then, don't you remember how we thought we would write prose tales, under the title of *The Packet Unpacked?* But we were deterred by discovering how poor our language was, wanting, as we thought, adequate words. I remember it well, and it seems to me that we slept at that time in that little somewhat dark room in the passage, between the spare-room proper and the front chamber. I have asked James to inquire if there be not a lovely ballad of yours—*entirely yours*—yet in being: a Scotch ballad, which was printed. It was a perfect little poem, as I remember, and quite worthy of preservation.

How I should like to be with you for a little while, and to go over again all those old times; and, if it be right, I hope some time it may be so. I am so obliged to James Macdonell for coming here. It is the linking us all together so pleasantly and lovingly. I never know whether, at our time of life, one may return to this pleasant place, when the summer is over and gone, or to Rome for another winter, when the winter is past. Time is so fleet and deaths are so startling. Just lately we have felt stunned, as it were, by a visitation of death in the family of some pleasant friends of ours at Rome, who go to their lovely place in Perugia for the summer. There were the father and mother, a son, and three daughters, one of these daughters married to a gentleman we introduced to them, and they had a little son, the idol of all, about three years old. This summer, only a few weeks ago, diphtheria broke out in the family,

and three were taken, in about a week's time,—one daughter, the young husband, only twenty-nine years of age, and the little boy of three. Two of them died in one day; and in addition the nurse died also, making four deaths in a week's time. If I had desired to instance a happy, most attached and fortunate family, I should perhaps have mentioned them. They had all that can make life desirable; and one feels, when one sees a bereavement like this, that one cannot, ought not to, calculate on the permanence of anything here.

Father and James have now returned from their morning walk, and it will very soon be dinner-time. I will therefore bring my scrawl to an end; and please, dear sister, make sense of it, for I do not think I shall be able to look it over. However, one thing I hope is quite clear in it, that we are greatly pleased to have dear Annie's James with us, and that we send you all our tenderest love.

And so, my beloved sister, and oldest dear friend,

I remain,

Yours very affectionately,

M. H.

Tuesday morning.

MY BELOVED SISTER,—

James is writing to you this morning, and kindly gives me the opportunity of putting in a line. Now I am glad of this, as I want to tell you how much we like this dear, good, amiable, and wonderfully intelligent young man. We have become quite familiar with him now; feel no longer that he is a stranger, and do not trouble ourselves as we did just

at first about not being able to give him unexceptionable dinners. It seems ridiculous to us now—I mean to Meggie and me—that we at first were quite unhappy that things were Tyrolese, and rather humble, and very inferior in many ways to London provisions. Now, however, I am thankful to say, feeling quite at home with this good, dear man, we see him sit down with us to the table and have no anxiety. And the weather has broken up, and Meggie has given herself a holiday, and now and then takes a long walk with him, and indulges herself by conversations on various subjects of great interest to her, on which he, with his much reading and thinking, is able to converse with her. So altogether we are having a nice time, and we hope it is the same with him.

I had a letter from Octavia Hill two days ago. She now is in the Engadine, and she and her friend Miss Yorke think of coming into Tyrol. If they decide upon our part of Tyrol we shall, of course, see her here : which will be very pleasant, as one likes to knit up the dropped stitches in one's life, and of late years Octa—or Octavia, as we must call her—seems to have dropped out of our little sphere. But we have always felt the old love for her, though I thought, probably, we might never meet again.

When I wrote to you last I did not realize to myself that you were at the Leweses' cottage, of which, from dear Margaret Gillies, we have heard so much. It must be a nice place in a charming situation, and I hope you have thoroughly enjoyed the change and are the better for it. But how short a stay you have made ; if, indeed, you are now back at Beckenham. With dearest love to you, dear Mary,

and Annie and the children, if they are with you; and please tell Annie how charmed we are with the photos of the two elder children—sweet, noble children they are—and they must be greatly gifted by intellect and intelligence, I am sure, if they take after their father. Dear children, what treasures they must be to you!

Farewell, my beloved sister; and trusting that every blessing and comfort of life may be yours, with the eternal peace of God's love, I remain, yours affectionately,

M. H.

The following is to Miss Mary Harrison.

DEITENHEIM, BRUNECK.
October 8th.

MY DEAREST MARY,—

You now and your dear mother are at home, and, I suppose, settled down for the winter, for I know that in England thoughts of winter come early. I hope, however, that you have as fine an October as we have here. We none of us remember anything lovelier here than is the present weather—calm and cloudless, with brilliant colouring, and yet soft; the most delicious warmth of the sun; everything balmy and peaceful. Oh, if one's old age could always be like it —and yet, surely ours is so, to a degree at least, and one must bless the dear heavenly Father that a season of rest and peace is given to one—I mean equally to your dear mother as to we two old folks here.

I wonder whether you have read—I mean you and your beloved mother—*The Autobiography and Memoirs of Ann Gilbert.* She was Ann Taylor, one

of the authors of *Original Poems*, *Hymns for Infant Minds*, etc., one of that remarkably gifted family of Taylors, latterly of Ongar. If you have not I wish you would get it from Mudie's, or whatever library you belong to, and read it for your mother, and you would greatly enjoy it; she especially, so strongly do the earlier years of the life in that industrious and gifted family resemble our early life—only ours was in so much narrower a circle. Our friend Josiah Gilbert, the son of this Ann Gilbert, author, as you know, of *Cadore; or, Titian's Country*, and joint author with Mr. Churchill, the geologist, of the *Dolomite Mountains*, was here the other day, and, finding that we had not seen this autobiography of his mother, was kind enough to send us a copy, and just now we are deeply interested by it, especially by the autobiographical portion, which I very earnestly beg that your dear mother may read, if she has not already done so.

Dear James Macdonell told us how much you had all been interested by the autobiography, which your dear mother had read to you in your peaceful sojourn at Crockham. I wish I had been with you to have heard it; but please the Divine mercy, if we are spared, I hope some time even yet that I may have that pleasure. I have thought a great deal of that autobiography, and wondered whether your dear mother was made at all prominent in it,—our little longings after the beautiful, and our small attempts in art—the transfer of any Wedgwood figures on tea-pots or vases which came in our way, by making a sort of *papier-mâché*, of thick paper dissolved in boiling water till it was thick paste, laying on the

raised figure, and so letting it dry. It was but a poor hunting after beauty. Then our etching on glass, and our transparencies in cut paper, really, as I remember, very carefully and nicely done. I wonder whether your dear mother has the one of Tintern Abbey—the best we did—which was the size of a pane of glass, and used for that purpose. Then your dear mother's drawings of flowers, which were really very lovely—most faithful and loving copies from nature, not "young lady" drawings at all, but really and truly honest and lovely transcripts of Nature's work. She was, I do assure you, dearest Mary, a rarely gifted and most elegant-minded young woman; and if she, or if we, had been surrounded with an artistic atmosphere, as the young Taylor girls were, in their old-fashioned primitive home, she at least—your dear mother, I mean—would have become a lovely and first-rate artist. So I now beg of you, if you have not already seen it, to get this *Autobiography of Ann Gilbert*, and read it; for, as I said before, your dear mother would feel intense interest in it. I have thought a great deal about those old times and our dear mother and her peculiar character just lately,—since, indeed, that dear James Macdonell was here; for he had such delight in talking of your mother, and such interest in the autobiography and the old-fashioned verses that, he said, she remembered from the old times. I have such a very bad memory that I can recall very little, only that amongst those queer old-fashioned verses I wonder whether she remembers one that mother used to repeat about

> "A famous wedding
> At the noble town of Reading;"

when some young gentlewoman—whether it was the bride or a bridesmaid I don't remember—but—

> "A young gentleman she saw
> Who belongèd to the law—
> 'Oh, my heart!' she did cry;"

and straightway her heart was inflamed with love for him. Next day, I think it was, she sends him a challenge, and he must either fight her or marry her. It, as I remember, is very full of detail and incident, and, of course, ends in his marrying her.

Another, of a similar kind, I think must have been one of old Nanny's ballads. It was also about a wedding, when a young lady sees a young farmer and falls in love with him. The next morning—

> "Coat, waistcoat, and breeches this lady put on,
> And she went a-hunting with her dog and her gun;
> She hunted all round where the farmer did dwell,
> Because in her heart she loved him so well."

Then she drops her glove where he was sure to find it; and afterwards, perhaps that same evening, she gave it out that she had lost her glove,

> "And the man that will find it and bring it to me,
> The man that will find it, his bride I will be."

Of course he finds it, and she marries him—but that part I cannot recall.

These things are not worth remembering, but they belong to those foolish old days. Another is—

> "Sweet Mary was a beauty, On Richmond Hill did dwell;
> Young William was a farmer, In love with Mary fell;
> But fate it was so cruel, His fortune to decay;
> His barns were fired, his cattle died, Which drove him to dismay."
> [Or, perhaps, "drove him far away."]

The rest I don't remember—but it is old rubbish.

Then does your mother remember one of our dear mother's?—

> "There was a little man, and he wooed a little maid,
> And he said, 'Little maid, will you wed, wed, wed?
> I have little more to say—will you have me, yea or nay?
> The least said is soonest a-mended-ed."
>
> "Then the little maid replied, 'Should I be your little bride,
> What have you got for to eat, eat, eat?'"

(the next line I forget),

> "'And the little god of love turn the spit, spit, spit.'
>
> "Then the little man replied, and, they said, a little sighed,
> For his little heart was filled with sorrow, sorrow, sorrow:
> 'My wealth it is but small, but I give my little all,
> And what we have not got, we must borrow, borrow, borrow.'"

The above is all nonsense and rubbish, so I won't write down any more of it; and I am half ashamed of having done so at all. But the remembrance of those old times brought it back. Mrs. Gilbert's autobiography does not, however, deal with such trifles.

To-morrow, dearest Mary, is, as I remember,—and I hope that I this time remember rightly,—the wedding-day of your dear parents; a day which to your dear mother, perhaps, may have a sacred sorrow about it. But my love will be with her in any case, and with a tender heartfelt love I shall ask that the day may be blessed to her.

I have had very sweet letters both from James Macdonell and his dear wife. I am very glad and thankful that he paid us that pleasant little visit, as it has brought us still nearer to you all.

It is a long time now since we heard of the dear people at Mayfield. I hope all is well with them. Meggy had a very nice letter the other day from

Edith, your niece, Charles's daughter, who is shortly about to become one of the happy group at Mayfield. She must be a very sweet, as well as clever, girl.

I believe that we shall, if all be well, spend one more summer at this pleasant place, which has become such a perfect and happy home to us. William had thought of our returning to England next year, but in many ways life in England is difficult to us. We have but a circumscribed income, and living at Esher (and dear William seems to fancy no other English home for us) needs more money than we can command. We are therefore very thankful to dear William that he is satisfied for us to go on as we now are; and though I believe it much wiser every way to ask only that our "daily bread" be provided, without scheming and looking forward, yet I cannot help thinking it would be very pleasant if dear Annie Wistar and her little Emma saw their way open to join us here next summer. I hope also that our Annie and her husband may do the same.

But now I must say farewell to you, dearest Mary, and with tender, dear love to your beloved mother from us all, and to you also, and with sincere thanks to you for your kind present to me,

I am, my dear Mary,
Your affectionate and obliged aunt,
MARY HOWITT.

In her very interesting autobiography Mary Howitt refers to him as "the large-hearted, nobly-endowed young writer, James Macdonell, a son-in-law of my beloved sister Anna. His lucid, rapid thoughts,

expressed in easy, polished language, had charmed and enlivened our little domestic circle."

He thus writes from Verona :—

HÔTEL DE LONDRES, VERONA.
September 13*th*, 1878.

MY OWN DEAREST WIFE,—

At last, you see, I am in Italy! I feel so crushed beneath the weight of all that I have to say that I can scarcely stop to tell you of my parting from Dietenheim. How Anton, the son of the house, arrayed himself in the old gala costume of Tyrol, and dined with us in his gorgeous array of red and green; how Francesca, the handsome and picturesquely dressed Italian maid, kissed my hand at parting; how Maria, the daughter of the house, presented me with a parting token in the shape of a carnation, which is the Tyrolean badge, and rosemary; how Aunt and Cousin Margaret came to the garden-gate, and waved their handkerchiefs so long as I was in sight; how Uncle William came with me to the station—all these incidents, which would make up a long story, I must leave for the blessed time when I shall see my darling wife. Meanwhile, I must say a few words about this wonderful city. Under a sky of incomparable, indescribable blue I am living in the third, the eleventh, and the fourteenth centuries, with the old Romans, with the mediæval Church, and with Dante. This morning I walked through the great fruit market, which was once the forum of Verona, and the centre of its fierce, civic life. Picture palaces covered with rich carvings or with half-obliterated frescoes, and now given up to

the needs of grocers or lodgers; a mighty tower, which swings itself into the air from the top of the old municipal palace; houses that once were lordly, and that are now miserable; all the rich fruits of Italy piled on stalls, beneath gigantic white umbrellas; market women with the olive skins and dark eyes of the South — group together all these things, and you have the wonderful Piazza delle Erbe, in which the Veronese at one time held their meetings. Go through a passage, and you come to the Piazza dei Signori, which is the very centre of old Verona. I took my coffee in front of the Café Dante. Before me was a marble statue of the poet. To the left was the palace in which Can Grande sheltered Dante after the poet was banished from Florence, and in which Dante found how steep are stairs to him who eats the bread of patronage. Can Grande now lives only as a human association with the eternal song of the man whom he sometimes treated unworthily. Before me was the old palace of the municipality, and round the corner was the famous tombs of the Scaligers, who ruled the fierce democracy of Verona. I was taken back at a bound to the civic strifes of the thirteenth century. In the evening the Piazza rang with the nineteenth century. It was crowded with people of all ranks, drinking coffee, sipping ices, and walking, while a grand military band gave forth, in crashing style, operatic music. Dante looked grimly down on the noisy scene. He saw many like it in the time of Guelph and Ghibelline, and he will see many more, until perhaps Verona shall have passed away, and the future will remember

it chiefly for its connection with his everlasting song.

But there is one monument in Verona that will surely last as long as human history. Of course I mean the Roman amphitheatre. I wish, my dearest, that you had been with me as I went round and round that mighty monument of old Rome, with its tiers of seats for the old populace, with the dens from which the lions were brought out to fight with malefactors and Christians, with the dark cells in which the poor prisoners were confined, and with the raised seats in which the emperors saw their subjects butchering each other to "make a Roman holiday." The completeness of the arena is marvellous. It has been built for the Judgment Day. Although it has been pillaged to give materials for palaces and churches, it is as firm as the Roman law, or as the municipal institutions which we may trace to Rome. Nay, it may outlive what we call local self-government and mediæval Catholicism itself. The arena was a type of historical progress, from the Roman days to our own. It set my imagination on fire by its symbolism. My darling, you must come to Verona, and see the marvellous union of Catholic and pagan relics. Had you been here to-day, the enjoyment would have been perfect.

I cannot stop to tell you of the many churches which I visited. Some of them are of surpassing beauty and interest; but all of them are very different from the Northern Gothic. All show traces of their Roman origin. All have a touch of paganism. They are emblematic of their nearness to Rome.

And yet there was something peculiarly mediæval in the sound of the monkish voices reciting, with low, monotonous song, some devotional exercise this morning in the Monastery of St. Bernardine. I am sure that, if you had been here, you could scarcely have been pulled away from the cloisters and altars.

How shall I speak of the wonderful country which surrounds Verona? Span a broad and rapid river with bridges, one of them rich with the quaintness of the fourteenth century; put palaces, and churches, and towers, and domes, and picturesque hotels along the banks; lift the neighbouring hills into grand round lines, and clothe them with cypress and olive; let the distant Alps fade away into misty, golden light; make every eminence grim with the menace of the white bastions of a mighty fortress which will some day be the Plevna of Italy—and you have the setting of this marvellous city.

Venice, as will be seen, equally delighted him.

VENICE, *September* 14*th*, 1878.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

You can easily imagine my feelings when, after straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of the towers of Venice, I at last entered the station, and in a minute more I was at the Grand Canal. It was night, and the moon had not yet risen; but I could see the glistening surface of the great waterway, and the domes of some churches. In a moment more I was lying back in a gondola, and gliding away amid a crowd of boats. How silent was the passage; nothing was heard but the mournful plash

of the oars, and an occasional word of warning, from the boatman. I seemed to be gliding along through a city of the dead. Away went the gondola, past great palaces, whose pillars and arches I could dimly see. Away it went, till right before me rose the Bridge of the Rialto. Then with a *gia è* the boat shot into one of the narrow water-lanes which pierce the city in every direction, and, winding about and about, under huge houses which rose sheer from the water, it at last glided past one long and stately palace. "Le Palais des Doges," says the boatman; and I straightway saw in the flickering light, high above my head, the Bridge of Sighs. In a moment more I had shot under that symbol of Venetian rigour and vengeance, and next the gondola breasted the broad waters of the Lagoon. To the right rose the grand and familiar façade of the Palace; a little way further off I could dimly see a pillar—the pillar which bears the Lion of St. Mark's; and, as I turned round to land at my hotel on the Riva degli Schiavoni, I caught a glimpse of one gigantic tower, which I knew as well as if I had seen it a hundred times, for it was the world-famed Campanile of St. Mark's. An hour later I was sitting on the Place St. Mark's, looking at the Doges' Palace, at the immense sweep of the Palaces of the Procurators, at the upspringing Campanile, and the wondrous façade of St. Mark's itself.

To-day I have been wandering about from morning till night, and I am so overpowered by the sights that I can scarcely write about them. Let me give a mere catalogue of what I have chiefly done and seen. I have sailed from end to end of the Grand

Canal, to see the palaces and the general effect of Venice. I have visited the churches of Degli Scalzi, the Frari, St. Rocco, St. Georgio Maggiore, the Redentore, St. Sebastiano, and St. Maria della Salute. I have paid a hurried visit to the interior of St. Mark's, which is incomparably the most gorgeous blaze of colour I ever saw. I have been to the top of the Campanile of St. Georgio Maggiore. I have been through the Palace of the Doges. I have seen so many Titians, Tintorets, and Veroneses that they have left in my memory little more than muddle of colour. And I am very tired !

VENICE, *September 16th*, 1878.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

I am overwhelmed by the riches of this wonderful place. I should have to write sheets if I were to describe merely what I have seen to-day. Twice have I been to the top of the Campanile of St. Mark's. You know the incomparable simplicity of that tower, which shoots more than three hundred feet into the air without the aid of buttresses, and which then cleaves the sky with its marble wedge of green and white, until its golden angel looks down on the silent city. To-night I saw from the top of the tower the sun setting in flame over the waters of the lagoon. At last I saw something like the glow of Turner's Venice. I say something like it, but not quite; and, to tell the truth, the sun has been so much tempered during the last few days that I have seen the Venice of Canaletto rather than of Turner. Still it was a wonderful sight—the flaming sky, the lagoon streaked

with bars of fire, and the city with its towers, and red roofs, and its green canals. All forenoon I was in the Cathedral of St. Mark's examining and taking notes. What can I say of it but that it is a bit of fairyland? Weave all the curves of fairyland into fantastic harmony of arch and dome; make the spaces blaze with mosaics of gold, and red, and blue, and white; light up the walls with dazzling white marble; darken the inside into sombre magnificence of gold—and you have the marvellous church of Venice. Do I, then, like it better than any of the northern Gothic churches? In spite of Ruskin, I say frankly that I do not. It is wonderful; it is a dream of beauty; it is so rich in interest that a month of study would only show part of it; but to a barbarian like me it lacks the indescribable solemnity of the Norman Gothic. Don't misunderstand me. I go into St. Mark's at all hours, and when I am there my notebook is always busy. I am never tired of sitting before the marvellous fantasy of its west front. But it is a thing of beauty to me rather than a thing of religion.

It is sometimes a relief to cast the eye from off the wondrous interlacing of its curved lines to the noble simplicity of the adjoining Doges' Palace, with its double row of Gothic pillars, which are a marvel of lightness and simplicity, and with the great wall of red-and-white marble. It is the most original and simple and majestic of public buildings. I cannot stop to describe the inside—the acres of Tintorets and Veroneses; the grand rooms in which the Doges, and the Council of Ten, and the Senate used to sit; the gallery to the prisons through the Bridge of

Sighs; and the awful dungeons in which the stern Republic confined its political prisoners. The dungeons of Chillon are drawing-rooms compared with them.

VENICE, *September* 18*th*, 1878.

MY DEAREST ANNIE,—

See Venice and die! After the glories of art that I have been seeing during the last few days, I feel that, in the way of beauty, life has little more to offer. Let me tell you what I have done to-day. After hunting in the morning for the place in which Ruskin allows his little guides to Venice to be sold, I went in a gondola to the School of San Rocco, which, although not pleasing to me, is among the glories of the Renaissance, and the great halls of which are covered with Tintorets. Then I went to the Church of San Rocco and studied a Titian. Next I paid a second visit to the great church of the Frari, and sat, pencil in hand, before Giovanni Bellini's picture of the Virgin and the infant Christ —surely the loveliest picture in all the world. Ruskin says that it is one of the two best pictures in the world, the other being also a Bellini. Then I went through the vast archives of the Venetian Republic. What a pathetic place! It is the tomb of a mighty people. Next I went to see one of the most beautiful, although least known, pieces of architecture in Venice—the old, neglected, defaced courtyard of St. John the Evangelist. The little urchins wondered to see a *forestiere* sitting in that desolate place reading a book, which was Ruskin's pamphlet, and taking notes. Presently I

went into the little church on the left hand, and found a highly decorated building, containing more than one dashing Tintoret. Then I went into the door on the opposite side, and passed into the splendid halls of a disused religious house; the floors of tesselated marble, the staircase fit in spaciousness for the palace of a king, and the walls covered with pictures. Thus is it in Venice; in the midst of ruin and neglect you open a door, and presently you see treasures worth a king's ransom. I next walked back through winding lanes and over canals to the neighbourhood of St. Mark's, where I lunched, and then I went for the second time to the Academy, which is the National Gallery of Venice. It contains, you know, many of the greatest pictures of the Venetian school. Some people would say that it contains the greatest of all, in Titian's Assumption. I am happy to think that I have the authority of Ruskin for the ease with which I curbed my enthusiasm when I sat before it. To my mind the greatest pictures in Venice by far are those of Giovanni Bellini. Those in the Church of the Redeemer are dreams of beauty. That in the Frari I would not give for acres of the Tintorets which Ruskin, with all his denunciation of their viciousness, proclaims to be the chief efforts of human genius. I feel that I do not appreciate Tintoret as yet. My eyes have still to be anointed with the clay of knowledge. One great artist Ruskin has revealed to me in Carpaccio, whose pictures I have been studying for two days. How I wish that you were with me; I am sure that you would enjoy precisely the pictures that I have enjoyed. You would not care for the stormy, muddled

Tintorets; but you would go into raptures over the exquisite beauty and thoughtfulness of Bellini, the depth and quaint repose of Cima da Conegliano, and the rich colour and character and peacefulness of Carpaccio. Carpaccio has painted the loveliest little Christ that ever came from human pencil. Those men were really religious artists: their great successors were as pagan as the old Greeks. I feel myself becoming as Pre-Raphaelite in this place as the followers of Burne-Jones.

But it is Venice itself after all that is the chief charm—Venice with its glorious St. Mark's, curved like the clouds, white like snow, golden as if with the setting sun; Venice with its incomparable Palace of the Doges; Venice with the Campanile, which cleaves the air for the golden angel that, with uplifted hands, blesses the silent, mighty, desolate city. It is Venice herself that is the chief charm, as she is seen from the top of the Campanile at sundown, a crowd of towers, and domes, and islands, and water flaming with the evening light. Alas for the great city! What glory, what ruin! It would need the language of the Hebrew Scriptures to speak of her desolation. My dearest love, if you were here I should like to stay in Venice for months. Some day we shall visit it together. I shall guide you everywhere. Much of my laborious note-taking is in view of our joint visit. What a delight it will be to take you to the Churches of the Frari and of St. John and St. Paul, to the Doges' Palace, to St. Mark's, and to the top of the Campanile.

HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE, VENICE.
September 19*th*, 1878.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

I have had another delightful day in this wonderful place. But before telling you of my doings, I ought perhaps to give you some idea of the view which I can see by simply getting up from the table and going two steps to the window. My room looks on the Riva degli Schiavoni, and therefore on the lagoon into which the Grand Canal opens. This hotel, in fact, is on a line—a curved line—with the Doges' Palace, and only a few stone's throws from it. I am thus close to all that is grandest in Venice. Below me is the broad quay, and I can hear the chatter of the gondoliers, whose boats are drawn up along the pier and mix with the yellow sails of the fishing craft. Right across the lagoon is a great and famous church, St. Giorgio Maggiore, built in that Palladian style of which, unhappily, Venice is full. Do not forget that, as a rule, the architecture of the Venetian churches is not to be compared in beauty or fineness of taste with the architecture of those in Verona. St. Giorgio Maggiore is, however, a very fine building in its way, and it has a place in the history of Christendom as the church in which, when Napoleon I. had laid his hand on Rome, the Papal conclave met in 1800, and elected Pius VII. I can also see, on the same side of the river, another Palladian church, the Redentore, which is beautified by one of the most exquisite Bellinis in the world. Putting my head out of the window I can see the gorgeous domes of St. Maria della Salute. If I look to the back of the house I find, within a stone's

throw, the St. Zaccaria, which has a Bellini that Ruskin calls one of the two best pictures in the world. I went to see it yesterday for the first time; in fact, I had not known of its existence till the previous day. Sitting down before it, and taking out my notebook, I prepared to enjoy myself. But I was intensely disappointed. I could not make out the cause of Ruskin's raptures. So I then wandered through the church till I came to the great well-lighted chapel of the nuns, when, on the wall before me, I saw a Virgin and Child, with four saints, and a little angel on the steps of the Virgin's throne playing on the lute. I burst into mute admiration. What a glorious picture! What transcendent beauty of face and attitude in the Virgin! What sweetness in the face of the little Christ! What majesty in the faces of the saints, and quaint adoration in the figure of the little lute-player! What glorious blaze of subdued colour! Surely, I said to myself, that must be the Bellini; and that it was a Bellini I felt certain. In another minute the sacristan explained to me that I was right, and an English lady kindly told me that it had been taken away from the place indicated by the guide-book to a position in which the light was much better. The picture, I may mention, was taken to Paris by Napoleon, along with the lion and the horses of St. Mark's; but it came back to its rightful place when Napoleon went to his! It would be worth your while, darling, to come to Venice, if for no other end than to see that glorious picture. And I say the same of the other Bellini in the sacristy of the Frari. I am not prepared to contradict Ruskin's dictum that these two pictures are

the best in the world. I think at least that they are the best I have ever seen. Surely there was religious art in the days of Bellini and Cima da Conegliano. Paganism has stamped its hoof on all the later works of the Venetian school. I felt that degradation painfully as I wandered in the afternoon, for the second time, through those magnificent rooms of the Doges' Palace, in which the pomp and the majesty of the Venetian Republic clothed itself with all that was grandest in the art of its glorious city. I wandered from one historic room to another—the halls of the Senate, of the great Council, of the Inquisitors; and I saw them blazing with Veroneses and Titians and Tintorets. One of Tintoret's pictures—the Paradise—covers the whole end of a vast hall, and it is indeed the largest oil-painting in the world. According to Ruskin, it is also the very summit of human genius in the art of painting. I confess that I cannot follow him in his raptures on that subject; and even he admits the haste and recklessness of Tintoret's work. To come from Bellini to Tintoret is to go from the placidity of the cell of a Saint Jerome to the bustle and the bargaining of a horse fair.

You would intensely enjoy a walk through the rooms of the Palace. One you could people with crimson-robed nobles who were the Grand Council of the Republic. In the empty spaces of another you would see the Doge sitting with the Council of Ten on each side of him, with the ambassadors further off, and the three hundred senators seated in the space below the dais. As I sat down in one of the senator's seats I felt inclined to rise and

address the "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors" who sat before me in ghostly array. They were all in the gorgeous hall, about to make laws for the management of the mighty Republic. On the great staircase of another room I could drop a missive into the lion's mouth, and see the Inquisitors take it out in the ante-chamber of their hall: it is the denunciation of an enemy, and straightway he waits in the little prison adjoining their grand painted chamber; and, after due hearing, he is dismissed with a sign, and he disappears along the passage which is the Bridge of Sighs; and the potentates go out to the balcony before the Piazzetta to declare, between those two red marble pillars which are the symbols of death, that he is fated to die; and his head falls in the dark cells below, and his blood drips into the canal, and there his body finds a grave. It is all intensely real. And presently I can go out from the hall of the Grand Council—surely the most sumptuous room on all the earth—to the balcony, which sculpture has made to glow with tower and living thing, and I can see the gaily-dressed galleys of the Republic, and the dark gondolas, and the pomp of the nobles, and the crowd of the citizens as they troop before the Palace amid the music of a hundred bells. But I should weary you if I were to enumerate one-hundredth part of the historical symbols amid which I am living. Venice is a place of the dead.

I have met acquaintances here. I met, of all persons in the world, Mrs. Lynn Linton walking with some friends. I spoke to her for a moment. I have met, also, Mr. and Mrs. Scott of Manchester. He is, you know, the editor of the *Manchester*

Guardian. I went with them to Murano in the afternoon to see the great church, which rivals St. Mark's in the splendour of its mosaic pavement. I dined with them in the evening at their hotel. Mrs. Scott is very pleasant. I shall, probably, leave Venice on Saturday night, and be in Milan on Sunday night or Monday.

I shall never forget the place, even if I should never see it again. It is difficult to analyse the charm. Elsewhere there is far more of the mediæval life; finer general architecture, although the Campanile, and St. Mark's, and the Doges' palace are peerless; less hideous fruits of the Renaissance; and perhaps as fine pictures. But Venice is Venice, nevertheless. Her waterways, her palaces, her unlikeness to everything else, her grand history, all give her a charm which you will feel the instant you come here.

The bells of the St. Giorgio Maggiore are ringing melodiously across the lagoon.

Farewell to Venice, the most beautiful and the saddest of cities! How are the mighty fallen!

He came home by Milan, from which he writes:—

MILAN, SUNDAY (22nd or 23rd, I don't know which),
September, 1878.

MY DEAREST WIFE,—

I have plunged once more into the newest part of the nineteenth century. I do not except the cathedral, for the vast and sumptuous edifice, although four hundred years old, is distressingly new in look and design. I call it vast and sumptuous; I

cannot call it great. They say that the idea of it was given by the cathedral at Cologne, the design of which, you are aware, was furnished by the devil. If the devil was also the architect of Milan, his style had not improved in the interval. Here the Gothic has run to seed in lacework and pinnacles. The man who finished the west front—some maniac of the Renaissance—has put Italian gateways and windows into the façade. The effect is absolutely comical. All the vastness of the building fails to make it great. The most impressive part of it is the inside. That is impressive—especially in the gloom of the first entrance. But the impressiveness does not grow, as it ought to do, and as it does in Westminster or York Minster.

So ended those bright and restful days. Little did anyone think that the enjoyment of all that was bright and beautiful in this world was for him almost at an end.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST DAYS, DEATH, AND FUNERAL.

THE course of Mr. Macdonell's later years has been sufficiently indicated in preceding chapters. In a sense, the life of a journalist is inevitably monotonous. It need not on that account be uninteresting; and Mr. Macdonell was too deeply immersed in his work, too much impressed with its importance, ever to find it devoid of stimulus or freshness. His work on the *Times* suited him. He liked the style of the paper, and as the editor gave the chief foreign subjects into his hands, occasionally he resumed his old ecclesiastical arguments. "I am exposing the folly of Dr. Liddon and the other High Churchmen who went to the Bonn Conference in the hope that they could begin a union between the English Church, the Old Catholics, and the Eastern Church, one of the wildest projects that ever entered the brain even of theological dreamers." He was amused to find the blame of these articles laid on Dean Stanley, who was an occasional contributor to the *Times*. One pleasant thing about his work was the certainty of having a European audience. Summaries of his articles were telegraphed to the Continental press, and then translations of them were reprinted in full. Others stirred up a good deal of controversy, and notably one on the influence of

England, in which he said that, in spite of her professions of peace, she was still the greatest power in the world. He was not vain enough to suppose that the intrinsic importance of his articles drew attention to them; but he rejoiced "to have the use of the most powerful speaking trumpet in the world."

In connection with this, Mr. Gilzean Reid once mentioned to me a significant circumstance. Mr. Macdonell was on a visit to his friend at a very critical period in European politics, and was contributing to the *Times* the daily leader on the subject. The morning after his arrival it was announced in the provincial daily journal that the *Times* was without an article on the engrossing theme. Mr. Macdonell said it was strange, and waited anxiously for the London papers. The leader had not commended itself to the editor and had been left out. Subsequent journals brought the comments of the European press on the significant silence of the *Times*. The incident, thought Mr. Reid, was a vivid representation of the conditions of press work in England. Here was all Europe waiting for and missing the voice of his young guest, who was unknown even by name to all but the merest fraction of his own countrymen.

The increased payment was also very agreeable to him. He ceased entirely from contributing to other journals. He had some thoughts of collecting his contributions to the *Spectator*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and the *North British Review* into a volume, but never did so. Although it was a great relief to have fewer articles to write, he found the composition of leaders for the *Times* more difficult than the leisurely writing of essays for weekly and monthly prints. The

amount of reading he went through for every article was great, and of necessity much of it was not available at the time.

Further details I refrain from giving. He scrupulously respected the confidence placed in him by his employers, and I have carefully endeavoured to obey what I know would have been his wishes. In his general political opinions he was far in advance of the *Times*, but he never wrote, and was never asked to write, on subjects where he was not in harmony with the general policy of the paper. The great divergence was on the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Mr. Macdonell was heart and soul with Mr. Gladstone. He believed that a war would be an immeasurable calamity and an unpardonable crime. In the excitement of the time he denounced Lord Beaconsfield as a reckless adventurer, "with an amazing hold of all that is silliest and vilest in England." He saw Carlyle, whose feeling on the subject was as keen as his own, and who pleasantly described the Premier as "a cursed old Jew, not worth his weight in cold bacon"—a description Macdonell repeated with infinite gusto. He did all he could to combat what he thought the madness of the hour. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that London clubs, London society, and London slums are for the most part as mad as the French Imperialists were on the eve of the war with Germany." On July 21st, 1878, he wrote to Mary Howitt:—"The compact with respect to Turkey is, as you say, extraordinary. So far as the Treaty of Berlin is concerned, it has to a great extent been dictated by Mr. Gladstone, of whom Beaconsfield has been forced to become the private secretary. To that

extent, I think, the nation approves of it; certainly I do. But the convention for the protection of Turkey in Asia is one of the wildest projects to which any English Minister ever set his hand; and the reaction against it will be in time—I say in time—fatal to the present Ministry."

During the winter of 1878-9 Mr. Macdonell had read the six volumes of Vaulabelle's "Histoire des deux Restaurations," and many memoirs and essays of the same period. His mind was full of the subject, and when he was asked, believe through his friend, Dr. Crichton-Browne, to lecture before the Literary and Philosophical Society at Leeds, he chose it as his subject. He was not unused to speaking in public, having given during the early years of his married life a course of lectures on English literature at his sister-in-law's school for girls in Gower Street. He took great pains in preparing this work, and enjoyed it greatly. He was anxious to create an enthusiasm in his girl hearers for our grand literature, and to encourage them to talk to and write for him. In addition to this, he had lectured at a meeting of the Bon Accord Club, and at Middlesborough, on the request of his friend Mr. Gilzean Reid. He had also delivered a lecture on Thiers, afterwards incorporated in the chapter on Thiers in "France Since the First Empire."

His lecture for Leeds was written with great ease and enjoyment during his leisure hours, and was polished with much care. He easily obtained a week's holiday from the *Times*. He had not been feeling well, and hoped a few days' change of air and scene would revive him. The lecture was fixed for

Tuesday, February 18th. He left London with his wife the day before for Bradford, where they were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Byles. The day was wet and raw, and Mr. Macdonell was suffering from sore-throat and loss of voice. In the evening a pleasant party was gathered at dinner. He exerted himself, and enjoyed the bright talk. It was hoped that the change of air and the pleasant excitement would carry away his cold. Next day he went to Leeds to dine with Dr. Clifford Allbutt, and was joined in the evening by Mrs. Byles and his wife in time for the lecture. There was a large and very attentive audience. Every epigram and every political allusion was followed by a round of applause. This lecture is printed, just as it was delivered, in the posthumous book.

The delivery of this lecture was almost the last intellectual effort of his life. Next day he lunched with Mr. and Mrs. Wemyss Reid, where there was such talk as journalists indulge in when they meet: on the position of various papers, contemporary politics, chit-chat about the House of Commons, the clubs, etc. In the afternoon they left Leeds for the house of one of his wife's cousins in Derbyshire, and returned to town on the following Monday. It was very cold, snow falling all the day.

The following letter is addressed to his brother, Mr. G. P. Macdonel

SUNNYSIDE, MAYFIELD, ASHBOURNE.
February 22nd, 1879.

MY DEAR GEORGE,—

We stayed at Bradford with Mrs. Byles, who is the wife of the proprietor of the *Bradford Observer*,

and one of the most prominent ladies in the town She is a clever, charming woman, full of political interests. She had invited some of the ablest men and women to meet us at dinner, and we were delighted by the vigour of the Bradford intellect.

I feared, for a time, that I should not be able to deliver my lecture, for I caught cold before I left London, and, on Monday morning, my voice was almost totally gone. At the Byles', on Monday night, I made it no better by talking at their dinner-table. However, a doctor, who was one of their guests, took great pains to mend me up for the occasion. At Leeds, to which I went on Tuesday, I was the guest of Dr. Clifford Allbutt, the most eminent physician in that part of the country, and he likewise helped me with advice. So, in spite of a dinner-party at his house, my voice came back sufficiently to permit of my lecturing. I had a very good audience, and, I am told, the result was successful. I had written the lecture with extreme care; it was more fit for a printed page than for oral delivery; but the audience caught nearly all the irony, and all the allusions. The report of all the lectures delivered at the Literary and Philosophical Society is made very brief, at the request of the Society itself, because the lecturers wish to publish them afterwards.

On the following Wednesday afternoon he was seized with a sudden feeling of faintness and sickness. The doctor was sent for, and said he was upset with the cold from which he was suffering, and from the exertions of the last few days, and advised rest. A telegram was sent to the *Times* office that he was

unwell and could not write. On Thursday he seemed better, and wrote a leader at home, Mr. Chenery having kindly said that he need not go to the office. Friday was his holiday. He looked pale and wretched all day; but went, as usual, to the club and London Library. On Saturday he seemed more comfortable and cheerful. In the morning he and his wife went, as they usually did on free days, for a walk. His brother Alec came from Oxford for a few days in the afternoon. He brought a college friend, and all had a lively time together; and then the two Oxonians went off to dine in town and go to the theatre. Mr. Macdonell walked to the club to read the papers and hear the news, and then joined his wife at dinner. After dinner they sat by the fire and read. About eleven o'clock he looked tired, and his wife urged him to go to bed. He said, No, he must wait for his brother, and see he had a comfortable supper. In the afternoon the two brothers had had an argument about something, and Mr. Macdonell thought he had been too warm and perhaps wanting in courtesy to his guest, and therefore, though he said he did feel very weary, he would rather wait to welcome his brother, and have a few moments' chat before he slept. About midnight he lay down. At half-past six he wakened suddenly. Starting up, he said he felt faint. His wife sprang up to get some brandy, but before she could give it him he fell back on his pillow, and with a word of endearment on his lips his life was ended, and his pure and noble spirit had passed to God who gave it.

"The last time I saw him," writes his sister-in-

law, Mrs. John Macdonell, "was two days before his death. He was bending over his desk correcting some of my proof-sheets. He looked very tired, but would not be persuaded to leave the work. How many times, on looking at the book, has the bitter, unavailing cry risen, "Ah! had I wist, that last labour, so characteristic of his generous spirit, should have been spared him." Sick unto death he was at that time, but there was no sign of actual malady. It was all unsuspected. His eager mind worked on; his warm heart was busy, hurrying swiftly, as he was, towards the bosom of the great silence. His last sign and word were his own, full of energy and kindness. The news came to us in the stillness of the early Sunday morning. We knew that the happiness of our united lives, in which brotherhood and sisterhood bound still closer the ties of wedded happiness, was irrevocably broken. Of the sorrow which fell on the heart which had known most of his love and given most to his happiness there can be no word here."

> "Omai sarà piu corta mia favella
> Pure a quel ch' io recordo."

His last letter, which I print exactly as it was written, will show how he was busy till the end with his thoughts and loves:—

March 1st, 1879.

MY DEAR WILLIE,—

Rachel has brought us word that you have been ill, but that you are better. She heard the news, she says, from George. We had not heard a word of it; and I write a line—a mere line—to say how grieved we are that you have been out of health.

I blame myself for not having written to you lately. I must get into the way of regularly writing you once a month.

I trust that your illness has not been serious. Are you sure that the climate of Chicago agrees with you? Would it not be well to change to a more suitable place, if you think that the extremes of your city are too trying? We have a habit of fancying that changes are very easy in America. But I am quite alive to the fact that it would not be well to go lightly from one town to another.

We have not yet seen your friend. I think you said he had gone to Italy. Perhaps we shall have the pleasure of seeing him when he returns.

Annie and I were out of town lately. I had to lecture before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Leeds, on the Court and the Society of Paris in 1830. We also visited Bradford, and we stayed some time there with Joe and Agnes Simpson; so we saw good specimens of the society of Yorkshire and the midland counties.

I shall write to you in a few days, giving you an account of all our doings.

Ever yours affectionately,

James Macdonell.

His sister-in-law, Mrs. John Macdonell, thus describes the funeral:—

"The death of the just is as the opening of the sealed orders of God. It reveals the meaning of the past life. Though he may be called away in haste, with scarce time to say farewell to those who remain, even in the midst of irremediable sorrow

there is the knowledge that God's will has been done, even to the last act, by His servant.

"His sudden death broke his life in its centre; but he had lived as if it were to be so. He had worked to the last day. He had done all that lay within his life's strength and time. He had cared for those he loved as if in preparation for his departure.

"He was buried on Thursday, March 6th. There was absolute simplicity in his burial, such as he himself would have desired.

"His brother Alec and I drove down with the hearse to Beckenham, and there were joined by the friends who had come by a special train from London. I do not know how many were there, but there were very many. I remember the look of the dark crowd that fell into line two and two and followed the coffin carried by bearers up the winding road from the station to the church. Several of those there had met the Thursday before —that day week—at Gower Street, and listened to his earnest talk. There were those who had worked with him, those who esteemed him and admired him, those who loved him—and they were many. Six of his oldest or nearest friends walked beside his coffin,—the Rev. Dr. Gibb, Mr. Chenery, and Mr. Macdonald of the *Times*, Mr. Herbert Stack, Mr. Meredith Townsend, Mr. Smith Harrison.

"It was no formal pageant, no mere funeral ceremony. There were no carriages, either empty or full, no noise of wheels or shutting doors, only the sound of many feet. But every heart sorrowed, every face bore testimony to the inward cry, 'Alas,

my brother!' The keen March sunshine, unshadowed by leaves, fell on the coffin and its gleaming flowers as it moved slowly along under the elm trees that lined the road to the old parish church, which stood then in its ancient simplicity in one of the sweetest churchyards in England. As it paused beneath the shelter of the lych-gate, the voice declaring 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' fell on perfect stillness, and the inward answer of the soul of those who heard was, 'Amen.' Under the same avenue of yews which joined the church porch, seven years before, he had walked a happy bridegroom, and the coffin rested beneath the rood where he and Annie had stood among the flowers to be married.

"He was laid near the trees at the east end of the churchyard, close to our father's and mother's grave. The morning sun shines on both together.

"The recent great changes which have been made in enlarging the church to its present stately proportions have not disturbed the spot. Our old gardener and friend Norton keeps both the graves bright with flowers."

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTERS OF SYMPATHY, ETC.

THE news of his death was received with widespread and earnest sympathy. Many hopes centred in him, and he was regarded by all who knew him with affection as well as admiration. His brother journalists were all proud of him. I select a few from the many letters received.

5, ONSLOW GARDENS, S.W.
March 6th.

MY DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

Knowing as I do by my own experience how distressing are letters, even from those nearest to us, in the presence of the heaviest calamity which can befall any human creature, I did not write to you as I wished to do when I saw the paragraph in the *Times*. If I write now it is only to say how sorry I am that I cannot be present at Beckenham this afternoon, and pay the last tribute of respect to my honoured and admired friend.

It is idle to talk of consolation, when *we*, comparative strangers, feel what it is to have lost so early so gifted a member of the literary profession; to you it must be simply terrible. All that can be said is that in time it is arranged for us that these wounds shall cease to be acutely painful. But the scar remains for ever.

Do not, I beseech you, think of answering this. Believe only that I feel for you with all my heart, and remain,

In warmest sympathy,

J. A. FROUDE.

3, NORFOLK SQUARE.

March 31st, 1879.

DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

Allow me to offer my most sincere and heartfelt condolences on the great loss you have sustained. No one beyond the limits of Mr. Macdonell's family had a better opportunity than myself of appreciating his inestimable qualities, and I can truly say I have mourned his sudden death as if he had been one of my earliest friends. I may say the same of all connected with the paper who were brought into relations with him. His kind and sympathetic nature had attracted us all to him, and the loss of his brilliant genius is simply irreparable. It is a melancholy satisfaction to us that words of regret have been heard on every side, showing how deeply he has been lamented. Believe me to remain

Yours very faithfully,

T. CHENERY.

Mr. Walter wrote to his brother :—

40, UPPER GROSVENOR STREET.

March 6th, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR,—

On the few—alas ! the too few—occasions of my personal intercourse with your late brother, I was always charmed by the rare combination which his character presented, of great intellectual endowments

and remarkable modesty and sweetness of disposition; and I looked forward with pleasure to the fuller enjoyment and cultivation of his society for many years to come. It has pleased God that his race should be as short as it has been brilliant, and that he should be spared the sorrows and burdens which would inevitably have befallen him as life rolled on, and which would have been unusually trying to so highly-strung and sensitive a mind as his.

Yours very truly,
J. WALTER.

8, CHESTER PLACE, HYDE PARK SQUARE, W.
March 6th, 1879.

DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

I heard the sad news in Paris, whence I have just returned, and I must beg you to allow me to express my deep regret and my sympathy with you in your irreparable loss. During the last two or three years I had seen your husband often enough, and talked with him intimately enough, to come to regard him as a friend. We met of late almost daily at the club. I shared the opinion of all those who knew him, that his knowledge, his capacity, his judgment, and his sincerity of character were alike remarkable. To these qualities he added a sweetness of nature which made him loved even by those who knew him but slightly; and which, I am sure, must have brought great happiness to those who were really near to him. In his profession he ranked among the very first; and there are not so many of his equals that we can part from him without a sense of the misfortune that befalls us.

My wife desires her kindest remembrances to you. We both wish you would think of us as among those who valued your husband, and who have some part in your grief.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Macdonell,

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE W. SMALLEY.

SWINFORD HOUSE, ASHFORD, KENT.
March 8th, 1879.

DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

I heard, with deep regret, of the death of your husband. He was, comparatively, but slightly known to me; but though I failed to see as much of him as I desired, I was sufficiently well acquainted with him not only to be aware what a loss literature and journalism have suffered, but also to surmise, in some degree, of what you have been deprived. "Alas! that fatal 37!" Is it any consolation to you to reflect that, in dying at that early age, he recalls noble company? Strangely enough, I was thinking of him on Sunday afternoon, when he was brought to my mind by my finding myself on a toll of chestnut trees we visited together.

Believe in my sincerest condolence, and that I am,

Yours very truly,

ALFRED AUSTIN.

7, CUMBERLAND TERRACE, REGENT'S PARK, N.W.
March 3rd, 1879.

DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

I hesitate to intrude upon your new-made grief, and yet I cannot refrain from telling you how earnestly I sympathise with you in your sorrow. No one, who is not of your own household, can

condole with you more sincerely than I do, for I had a deep feeling of esteem and friendship for your husband. I was captivated by his genius the first time I met him, and during our subsequent intercourse I recognised in him more and more a rare purity and brightness of intellect and of moral nature. The world has seemed a dimmer and a duller place to me since I read that terrible announcement in the *Times* this morning. The spring sunshine—so longed for—has come to-day charged with pain and perplexity. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence and past finding out, else might we ask why this noble and benignant life has been taken while so many vile and useless beings still cumber the earth.

In all your sorrow you must be proud of your dead! I am sure there was much that was heroic in him, and if your glad and glowing future is shattered you have precious and inspiring memories to which to turn.

I fear my friend has fallen a victim to his generous ardour. Long ago I told him that he was overtaxing his strength, but who could foresee a calamity like this?

I hope you will always bear in mind that I was your husband's friend; a friend, not of long standing, but a sincere one; and that I shall ever regard it as a privilege to be helpful in any way that is in my power, to those whom he loved.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Macdonell,

Yours most faithfully,

J. Crichton-Browne.

Mrs. James Macdonell.

1, WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.

MY DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

The announcement in yesterday's paper struck me like a severe physical blow. Your husband has had a rare power of inspiring not merely esteem but affection amongst his friends, and for you I feel the loss like a stab in the heart. There is no use saying more. God bless and help you to bear this worst of all the griefs of life.

Believe me, dear Mrs. Macdonell,
Ever yours very truly,
RICHARD H. HUTTON.

94, HARLEY STREET, W.
Sunday.

MY DEAR MRS. MACDONELL,—

I must send you a line to express our heartfelt sympathy with you in your irreparable loss. I loved your husband much, and his fate has shattered many plans. God be with you. There is no consolation possible on earth. My wife is quite shaken with the unhappy news.

Yours most sincerely,
M. TOWNSEND.

UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK,
March 19th, 1879.

DEAR MADAM,—

I was this morning startled by the card announcing your husband's decease. Permit me to extend to you my sincerest sympathy in your bitter bereavement. Mr. Macdonell won my profound esteem in our short acquaintance at Stornaway, not only for his richly-stored mind, but for his natural

courtesy and kindness of heart. This impression was confirmed by the letter from London which I afterward received from him,—a letter which I shall count among my chief treasures. I know that nothing I can say can comfort you, bereft of such a husband; but you will allow this expression of my condolence, and my prayer that He who knows the needs of the heart may supply you according to His grace.

I remain, my dear Madam,
With great respect,
Yours very sincerely,
HOWARD CROSBY.

28, RUE BARBET DE JOUY.
5 *Mars*, 1879.

CHÈRE MADAME,—

J'apprends avec un vif chagrin le grand malheur qui vient de vous frapper. J'avais pour M. Macdonell autant de sympathie que d'estime, et je ne savais pas que sa santé fut si fort ébranlée. Il y a deux ans j'étais en Angleterre auprès de ma sœur, qui venait d'être éprouvée de la même manière; elle vit près de nous maintenant, et le soin de ses enfants, l'obligation de remplacer leur père, occupe sa vie. C'est la seule espérance que vos amis et ceux de votre mari puissent concevoir pour vous; il n'y a que le travail assidu, la responsabilité journalière, le soin des autres, qui puissent, je ne dis pas consoler, mais soutenir en pareil cas. Permettez-nous de nous associer de cœur à votre deuil, et agréez nos sentiments de respectueuse sympathie.

H. TAINE.

Je ne veux pas laisser partir le billet de Monsieur Taine sans vous dire, moi aussi, chère Madame, combien je m'associe à votre douleur. Il n'en est pas de plus cuisante, et nous avons assez connu et apprécié votre mari pour sentir tout ce que vous devez souffrir. Croyez à ma bien affectueuse sympathie et à tous mes regrets de ne pouvoir vous l'exprimer que de si loin ; je voudrais vous dire de vive voix quel cher et bon souvenir nous garderons toujours de nos trop courtes relations avec celui que vous pleurez, et quelle sincère admiration nous avions conçue de son esprit et de son caractère. Puisse cette sympathie vous être douce, et croyez bien qu'elle vous est acquise à jamais.

Bien tristement à vous,

THÉRÈSE H. TAINE.

Mr. Gladstone wrote expressing his great concern: "We cannot well afford to lose writers of his stamp and of the power which he appears to have possessed." To Mr. Gladstone the course pursued by the *Times* on the Eastern Question appeared to be one of alternate "Aye" and "No," "but that was no reproach to the individual writers who said 'Aye.'"

The *Times* spoke of him as a man of the largest culture, and remarkable for the extent and variety of his knowledge, especially in the departments of history and philosophy, adding that he possessed also a most graceful literary style, which adorned every subject he touched, and that his generous disposition and genial manners endeared him to a large circle of friends.

The *Spectator* said : — "London journalism has sustained a severe loss in the sudden death of Mr. James Macdonell, who died on Sunday, at the early age of thirty-seven. A man of unusual breadth of culture, with a special knowledge of all things French, and all modern ecclesiastical systems, Mr. Macdonell possessed in addition almost in their perfection the faculties of the modern journalist—his power of clear exposition, his light touch, and his insight into the meaning of events—while he had on some subjects a most unusual brilliancy of expression. For durable work he had had no time, his life being occupied as a writer of 'leaders,' but the book he had planned out and partly prepared, on France, would have been a distinct addition to English knowledge of the country which it is most important to Englishmen to know; and many of his articles, always recognisable by the initiated, made a deep impression on the political world. What he was to his intimate friends, with his depth of tenderness and fund of intellectual sympathy, only they can know; but society had begun to recognise his brilliance in conversation, his house had begun to be a centre for the cultivated, and his position in his profession was well displayed at his funeral. It is scarcely too much to say, that if the train which carried his friends to Beckenham had been wrecked, Liberal journalism in London would momentarily have stopped. Short as his career was, his departure will be to many besides his family a life-long regret."

The *Athenæum* said :—" He was one of the

most remarkable of contemporary journalists. To friends and acquaintances his death causes a blank which is keenly felt, and his premature decease is a real misfortune to journalism. A man of keen sensibility and wide knowledge, the master of an effective and delicate literary style, the late Mr. Macdonell was one whom the commonwealth of letters could not well afford to lose, and whose untimely decease its members have good reason to lament."

Mr. Stuart, of the *Dundee Advertiser*, paid him this well-deserved tribute: — "Though himself so young, he was to his young countrymen in London like an elder brother."

A well-known journalist, then of Leeds, writing in the *Leeds Mercury*, said that "he was probably the most brilliant and accomplished of all brilliant and accomplished men of genius who, by their modest but not unfruitful labours, have given the *Times* the great place it now holds among the newspapers of the world. Mr. Macdonell was as brilliant in conversation as in writing. He seemed to possess a boundless store of knowledge on all historical, philosophical, and literary topics. His talk brimmed over with the happiest anecdotes and epigrams, which, though thrown off in the most careless moment, would yet have sufficed to make the reputation of any half-dozen ordinary dinner-table talkers; and to the charms of a splendid intellect were added the dearer charms of a generous heart and a pure and noble spirit."

In the end of 1879 Mrs. Macdonell edited a volume entitled "France Since the First Empire," which was published by Messrs. Macmillan. In a touching preface she explained that the book was only a fragment of what it was meant to be. "My husband's intention was to describe fully the four great parties which govern France: the Legitimist, the Orleanist, the Bonapartist, and the Republican. Only the first three of these find their place in this volume. The chapters devoted to the Republican party were to have been the most important in the book. In this party my husband felt the keenest interest, and the description of its sufferings and its victims, its hopes and its fears, its past and its future, would have filled more than half the book, and would have been written only after many months of careful reading. The writing of this portion was never even begun. I have a volume of notes—all that is left of countless hours of patient study and of conscientious research." Fragmentary though it is, the book was at once recognised by competent critics as the best sketch of contemporary French politics—the work of one fit to take his place by De Tocqueville and Taine as a master of the subject. It wants a definite historical thread, but it is so finely critical, so delicately accurate in its estimates, so brilliant and sparkling in its style, that it may fairly be called a masterpiece. The best chapter, beyond all doubt, is that on "The Revival of the Legitimist Monarchy," but many of the biographical sketches are picked out with the clearness and sharpness of outline of a cameo.

M. Taine sent the following acknowledgment:—

28, RUE BERBET DE JOUY.
23 *Novembre*, 1879.

MADAME,

Je vous remercie de la sympathie que vous nous montrez dans notre chagrin, et ma femme, qui a pris part à votre douleur, a été très touchée de la part que vous prenez à la sienne.

J'ai trouvé, en arrivant à Paris, le livre de M. Macdonell; il m'est très précieux par lui-même, et aussi à titre de souvenir. M. Macdonell était un des ces hommes qu'on ne peut fréquenter sans un sentiment d'amitié véritable; il aimait la France, et son livre est plus que bienveillant pour elle. Ce livre, que je viens de lire avec beaucoup d'attention et de plaisir, est d'autant plus instructif qu'il est le jugement réfléchi d'un étranger observateur et compétent. Je vais le faire lire à mes amis, surtout à ceux du *Temps* et du *Débats*, et j'espère qu'ils en rendront compte. Les opinions de M. Macdonell, les vues générales sur notre histoire contemporaine, sont assez conformes à l'esprit de ces deux journaux.

J'aurais quelque difficulté à en parler moi-même dans un journal; car, pour le juger, il faudrait prendre parti, énoncer un avis sur toute l'histoire récente et sur toute sa situation actuelle. Je ne suis pas encore en état de la faire; j'étudie à cet effet, j'apprends de mon mieux; c'est dans quelques années seulement que je pourrai tirer mes conclusions. Je regrette bien que M. Macdonell n'ait pu écrire son dernier chapitre sur les républicains; il m'aurait été surement d'un grand profit. Jusqu'à ma principale réserve concerne la Révolution de 1848, et l'intervalle

qui s'étend du 24 février 1848 au coup d'état de novembre, j'avais juste vingt ans à la chute du roi Louis Philippe, je ne m'étais jamais occupé de politique ; j'ai pu alors pendant trois ans regarder les choses en simple curieux. Mon impression est restée plus défavorable que celle de M. Macdonell, et les suites de cette impression s'atteignent toute la période suivante ou actuelle.

Ma sœur et les enfants vont assez bien, et me parlèrent encore hier de vous.

Agréez, je vous prie, Madame, les assurances de ma gratitude et de mon respect.

H. Taine.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARACTERISTICS.

GOETHE'S adage—

> "Was man in der Jugend wünschte
> Hat man im Alter die Fülle"—

fulfilled itself for Macdonell more truly than for most men, short though his life was. The work in which his strength was spent was the work of his choice. He did not turn to it after he had wasted years in other uncongenial pursuits. He found in it help from all his days—not least from those he spent among the Scottish moors and hills. The current of his existence ever ran swift and clear. There was no stagnation in it, and but too little repose. His personality was strong and rich, and he had a vivid sympathy with the great elemental constituents of common humanity, and not merely with its finer varieties. His loving joy in love made all his days warm. Of old friends he kept tenacious hold: he prized especially the affection of his relatives, without which, he said, life would be poor and weary. And he felt himself incomparably richer for the love that blessed his later years—richer, as he said himself, not only for the very little strip of mortal life, but also for the great future.

Any analysis of his characteristics naturally falls

into a review of his aptitudes for his chosen labour. He was a born journalist. First among his qualifications, we must reckon his natural communicativeness with the pen. In this he recalls Victor Jacquemont, of whom it was said that he had only to give his pen its liberty. This inborn gift is something more than the mere talent for writing, which often belongs to men who abhor the exercise. Most of those who earn their bread by journalism shrink from private correspondence: their letters are few and meagre. Mr. Macdonell delighted to share his deep convictions and vivid impressions with others. When he went abroad he found strength and time, after a day's eager sightseeing, to write letter after letter to his friends. The letters, although similar, were by no means the same. Each came fresh from the writer's mind; each is admirable in literary quality—light, keen, and easy; and the handwriting is clear and beautiful. Certainly the work of journalism had for him the least possible degree of irksomeness.

He was a man of intense convictions, which he longed to see prevailing. There was in him much of the prophet. His self-confidence might almost be called Napoleonic, but there was nothing in it of personal vanity; much, rather, of a true unselfishness. He was not plagued with that self-distrust which means in most cases the loss of the battle of human life. The enthusiasm of his early days was unchilled to the last. Perhaps it was this more than anything else that gave his writing distinction. United as it was with thorough knowledge and a penetrating Scotch shrewdness,

it gave his articles a notable individuality, so that his work, though neither violent nor eccentric, was never without its own peculiarity and charm.

Mr. Macdonell never lost his belief in the press as a great influence which might be made great for good. A certain cynicism is apt to overtake the experienced journalist—a cynicism which can justify itself by very cogent arguments. But he valued his position for this above all things, that it gave him power to strike a blow for what he thought a righteous cause. I have sometimes thought that one reason why his generous faiths persisted through the discouragements and chills which came to him as they come to others, was his high disdain of petty grievances. He never wearied and wasted himself in personal disputes. The most magnanimous of men, he had no room for small grudges, envies, and resentments. If he thought himself unjustly treated, he tried to put the thing out of his mind—and he succeeded. He would not discuss the conduct of any one who had wronged him; he thrust it aside and, if he was compelled to talk of it, he made the best excuse he could for the offender.

But, undoubtedly, the characteristic which most helped to secure for him his rapid success in journalism was his special knowledge. He perceived very early that nothing could be done in that profession by a man who possessed merely the average knowledge of a subscriber to a daily paper. As we have seen, he made a study of special subjects —notably foreign politics and ecclesiastical history— from the first, and his acquaintance with both ever

grew more intimate. French he could read as easily as English, and he knew the nation and its leaders so thoroughly that no development could take him unawares. As a result, he spent his ripest years writing on these themes. The despair of the editor is the young man who has a fair average knowledge of everything and writes passably well, but has no speciality. Almost every pressman can write without betraying gross ignorance about the politics of France and Germany, but how few there are whose touch is that of the master. Macdonell was one of these few. To his store of knowledge he was continually adding. He did not need conscientiously to stuff himself with information. He was one of those described, I think by Bagehot, as gaining great stores of knowledge by eager and incessant pursuit without drudgery or weariness. This consciousness of power gave his articles a ringing clearness, a genial freedom, a confident mastery of tone which carried his readers away. I do not believe he ever wrote on any subject without trying to get at the back of it, and to be interested in it; and so there was always something indefinable present about his work that caught the eye and the heart.

In Mr. Macdonell's case the style was the man. From the very first he wrote brightly and powerfully. There was a certain natural grace about him; his motions were those of a bloodhound, as Wyndham said about Erskine. But he was so far from presuming upon this that very few men in our generation have studied style more ardently. For long he constantly practised himself in writing. He would acknowledge his obligations to Thornton Hunt, who in his early

London days pulled his articles about with unmerciful kindness. Of the great masters of English style he was a close and reverent student. In his judgment Landor and De Quincey were the most perfect prose writers of modern England. "Landor's prose, it is true, lacked some of the qualities which lend to that of De Quincey its potency and charm. It has neither his variety and richness of hue, nor his power of falling into a conversational ease or of rising into a Miltonic rapture. But it has terseness, point, and polish beyond any other prose in the language. If not exempt from the artificial air which clings to all academic styles, it is at least an academic style of the highest rank." De Quincey "has left passages which in structural perfection of sentence, in command over all the resources of the English tongue, in a marriage of rhythmical and impassioned music with a logical accuracy of thought and a Greeklike propriety of phrase, can scarcely be excelled in the literature of England. At his best De Quincey has no superior as a stylist. His rhetoric is separated from that of Macaulay by all the distance which cuts off the mechanically regular patterns of the old silk fabrics from those which now glow with the form of flower and living thing." French masters taught him even more than English. The French mind he thought had a keener perception than the English of the Greeklike simplicity and directness which belong to the highest artistic beauty; and the French language fell more easily than the English into symmetrical moulds. No Englishman, in his judgment, wrote with Renan's incomparable academic beauty, and his ideal journalist was Paul Louis

Courier, with whom as a stylist Landor was the only Englishman who could be named.

Wordsworth was his favourite poet. He always took his poems on his holiday trips, and delighted to read aloud in the open air, by river-side or on the purple moor, *Peel Castle*, *The Leech Gatherer*, *Laodamia*, the *Ode to Duty*, or the *Ode to Immortality*. He read poetry charmingly, with no attempt at effect, but with a magical cadence in his voice, and with an emotional appreciation of the verses that gave great pleasure to his hearers. Matthew Arnold he read constantly. Browning was not a great favourite; as poetry was enjoyed mostly in holiday time he said he could not read Browning, as he required too close thinking! He was fond of Tennyson's early poems, notably *The Palace of Art*, *The Dream of Fair Women*, and *Ulysses*. He delighted in Scott. One of the first purchases after his marriage was a complete edition of Scott's works, and he always took several volumes of the novels in his wanderings in Scotland, saying they were the best of guide books. Of George Eliot's books he liked best *Silas Marner* and *Scenes of Clerical Life*. Dickens he admired more than Thackeray, but he was not a great novel reader. Among American writers Lowell was his favourite. He had always a French author in hand; Fénèlon, Pascal, De Tocqueville, Saint-Beuve, Cousin, Victor Hugo, Taine, and About were among his chief favourites. German writers he only knew through translations. Italian he began a few years before he died. He did not speak it, but could read easy authors with a dictionary.

He was remarkable for his journalistic foresight.

He had an instinct for perceiving what subjects were about to attract public interest. He read on these subjects in advance, and when they emerged into public view he was qualified to write on them. For example, before the Central Asia question became of prominent interest he had made the subject his own. He had brought from the London Library the writings of the best authorities upon Russian advances eastward, Russian trade, the condition of Teheran, Merv, Bokhara, etc., and the civilization, traditions, prospects of that far-away region. Or perhaps the affairs of Spain would seem to be looming in the distance; then he would collect all manner of books, poems, reviews; the geography and history of the land were mastered, with the intricacies of its rival dynasties, the position of its clergy, etc. Or social matters—say the liquor traffic or the co-operative movement—would suggest themselves as likely to be much discussed. Then when the public interest was attracted he was ready with a mind full of digested facts. It would be an instructive piece of labour to make out a list of the books (with the dates of their loan) which he took out of the London Library or from Mudie's. The list would be prophetic of the great topics of English journalism. His wife says: "He would pour out to me, a ready listener, long histories of the places, nations, men he had been studying, with his own deductions from the facts learned. He would also write a volume of notes on the matter. One of his peculiarities was that he always made notes of all he read, not only a digest of the book, but criticisms of it as he read. After reading an hour or two and jotting down notes,

he would push the book away and write down a sketch of it—its aim, its argument, its beauties, its failings. Even of a novel he liked to put down his ideas in pen and ink. He said he could think better with a pen in his hand."

Looking over his whole life, nothing shines out more clearly than his gay and gallant spirit. To the end he was blithe and bright, with much of the buoyancy of early youth. He had difficulties to meet; he was never free from heavy responsibilities; but his sound and strong spirit bore up against these unimpaired and uncomplaining.

It is the testimony of her who knew him best, that the question of his own salvation never troubled him. The history of religion, theology, and the Church were his chief interests; but the subject of his own soul did not disturb him. He had a great faith in God and man and the future—a faith which shed a constant sunshine upon his mind. Although easily irritated, he was sweet-tempered, and disliked quarrelling. Most men liked him. He was sociable, and made the best of his life, usually taking a cheerful view of his circumstances. To him every fresh day was a day of hope. He suffered, like all highly-strung and over-worked people, from an easily irritated temper. Small troubles ruffled him, but the irritation was on the surface. It never made him morose or selfish or sulky; and, when he recovered his self-control, he was always anxious to apologise for any pain he might have given. His little spurts of temper were what nurses call "tantrums," and were almost amusing. If a bell did not ring, or if the papers were late in coming, or if he

were in a hurry to begin work and a meal late, a little tempest of words would arise. In a few moments, sometimes with a shake of his whole person, or with a light laugh, he would free himself from his irritation, and all would be right again. Some who did not know him well might be misled by these little outbursts, and think him ill-tempered, which he never was. It is not likely, however, that many would be misled, for unselfish generosity was never long hidden away. He loved to help people. He never forgot the necessities of his friends. He would often sit up late at night, after a hard day's work, to correct a friend's manuscript, or to write to his mother and sister, or to some old friend; or perhaps to some stranger, to whom he wished to do some service. It was wonderful to notice how, in spite of the pressure of a hard-worked journalist's life, he never lost sight of the wishes and wants of those dear to him. He was always the first to suggest that a sister or a brother might like to see some new book, or that his mother ought to have a change of air.

It is one compensation for his early death that he was not called upon to show the more difficult heroism of submission. Charlotte Brontë, writing of Dr. Arnold, remarks on the happiness of his life—on his "singular exemption from those deep and bitter griefs which most human beings are called upon to endure. His wife was what he wished; his children were healthy and promising; his own health was excellent; his undertakings were crowned with success; even death was kind, for, however sharp the pains of his last hours, they were but brief.

God's blessing seems to have accompanied him from the cradle to the grave. One feels thankful to know that it has been permitted to any man to live such a life." And one is thankful in the same fashion that James Macdonell was spared the sharper agonies of bereavement; that he was swiftly snatched away; that he was saved from that worst of all torments to an ardent soul, enforced inaction and apparent atrophy.

If he had lived—but we cannot tell what his future would have been. He was often urged to enter Parliament, and seriously thought of doing so. Like most literary men, he was apt to imagine that his power was declining. He would often declare to his wife that he was sure he did not write as well as he had written a year or two before, and, to prove this, would take up a column of old articles she had put together, pick out a paragraph or two, and read them aloud, adding, "Ah, I can't write like that now." Mrs. Macdonell says: "When we talked of the future, his scheme of happiness always was that we should retire to some quiet country place, perhaps the Lake District, where we would live very quietly, keep a few animals, and have a good garden. There he was to write a book on France."

If it is objected that this biography is a mere catalogue of virtues, I can only reply that I have shown all the faults I could discover. This was indeed a beautiful life—full of love freely given and freely returned, crowned with success won by brilliant talents and honourable labour, without a moment's forgetfulness of dignity; a life without meanness,

envy, or bitterness; a life of fair possessions and still fairer anticipations. The words of the biographer of Colonel Hutchinson may well be applied to James Macdonell: "To mention his virtues is to give the epitome of his life, which was nothing else but a progress from one degree of virtue to another, till in a short time he arrived to that height which many longer lives could never reach."

THE END.

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