

GLASGOW TO-DAY.

By WILLIAM POWER.

ONE of the familiar "ploys" of educational psychology is to give out a word and get the scholars to write down what it immediately suggests. Employing the word "Glasgow" in this way in the smoke-room of an English hotel, one would get something like the following "reactions":—"A God-forsaken hole; a bigger and worse Leeds." "A great city: handsome buildings, kindly people, good business." "Drizzle and smoke; big black tenements; bare feet—drunk men and women." "Shipyards and steelworks; fine shops, splendid car service." "Sunday in Glasgow's the nearest thing to hell I can imagine." "City Chambers—picture gallery—old cathedral—all first-rate, but slums unspeakable." "Go-ahead place, lots of money and not afraid to spend it." "How any one can live there I can't conceive." "Suppose it's because it's so easy to get to places like the Trossachs and the Kyles of Bute." "Edinburgh." "Ah! that's a contrast." "Beauty and the beast—eh?"

One thing at least can be deduced with fair certainty from these curiously diverse impressions. The favourable ones were those of people who had stayed with friends and been taken about; the un-



The Municipal Buildings

favourable, of people who had been stranded in hotels. Glasgow does not cater well for strangers. To arrive in Glasgow on a wet Saturday by way of Cowairs or St. Rollox, and spend a lonely week-end in a hotel, is an experience which the native cannot contemplate without a shudder. It would have been more tolerable fifty years ago, when the city was about half its present size and there were charming rural nooks within half an hour's walk from George Square. To-day, with the country smudged or suburbanised for miles around, Glasgow is driven in upon itself for solace. Hence the prodigious outcropping of super-teashops, picture houses, and dancing palaces. These, however, are mere escapes, of decidedly limited appeal. Their existence may point the need for open spaces and gardens within the city, for an attractive lay-out of the banks of the Clyde above the harbour, for the dissipation of the smoke-cloud that robs the city's life of light and colour, for the conversion of the depressing and furtive "pub" into a cheerful café, for the removal of ugly posters, and for the building of an opera house and a repertory theatre. Glasgow's main defect, in short, is that she has not yet thoroughly realised her metropolitanism.

The greatness of Glasgow and her glaring defects are explained by her history. Under the shadow of the Cathedral she rose in Celtic times from an obscure village to a market town, which straggled downhill and linked up with a fishing hamlet on the Clyde; with the founding of the University in 1450 she became a social and cultural centre, and the traditions of this period were continued into the

mercantile era—commemorated by the Tron Steeples and St. Andrew's Church—when, under the ægis of the tobacco lords and the University professors, Glasgow became perhaps the most beautiful city in Britain. Then came the industrial era, the deepening of the Clyde, the working of the coal and iron measures, and the flooding-in of semi-barbarous "labour" from starving Ireland: Glasgow burst her mould, and added to her traditional functions those of a greater Birmingham and a smaller Liverpool. The result was disharmony, a weird mixture of handsomeness and ugliness, of wealth and squalor. Glasgow is still struggling to sort out the mess that culminated about the middle of last century. The struggle is not so much material as psychological. It is the effort of the constructive, intellectual, and civically minded elements to counter the sordid and illiberal influences that got the upper hand during the height of the manufacturing era.

In the Middle Ages the centre of Glasgow was at the south-west corner of what is now Cathedral Square. By the sixteenth century it had shifted to Glasgow Cross, where the Tolbooth Steeple now stands. A century ago it was somewhere towards the eastern end of Ingram Street, and fifty years ago the municipal government found a permanent seat in George Square. To-day the vital centre of the city is at the crossing of St. Vincent Street and Renfield Street. The comparative nearness of all these points to one another indicates that the expansion of the city has been in all directions. But the greatest spread has been westward. From the St. Vincent Street corner, open or at least "smudged"

country can be reached in less than an hour's walk north or south, and in slightly over an hour's walk due east; westward, the tenements, docks, factories, and shipyards extend for about nine miles. A hundred years ago offices, dwelling-houses, and factories fill the interspaces of all save the most vision of the future growth of the city was the laying out of the terraces at the west end of Sauchiehall Street about 1825, and since that time there has been a leap-frog process, which has resulted in a city as definitely sorted out as London. The "heavy" industries have retreated to the outskirts of the city, mostly to east or west. Springburn, in the north, has become the centre of a huge locomotive-building enterprise. The miscellaneous or small-scale manufacturers fill the interspaces of all save the most exclusive of the residential districts; their chief concentration is in Bridgeton and Mile End, contiguous regions vying in frowsiness with anything in London's East End.

Within the city proper the most notable feature during the last fifty years has been the conversion of "genteel" tenements or terrace houses into working-class dwellings, workrooms, or offices. Monteith Row, owing to its fine frontage on Glasgow Green, has been spared this degradation. But the old villas on Garngad Hill have been submerged in squalor; Gorbals, once an eminently "select" quarter, has become Glasgow's ghetto, paraded after nightfall by patriarchs in bowler hats and long surtouts, buxom Miriams and Rebeccas, and keen-eyed swains who have spent the day auctioning jewellery and drapery in Trongate booths. Garnethill, on the



The Art Galleries and Museum

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“factories were jumbled together; the first real pre-

north of Sauchiehall Street, has a synagogue at one end and a fine new Roman Catholic church at the other, with every conceivable kind of "institution" between; it is also the hill of the fairies, who may be seen at mid-day, tripping down to rehearsals. Sauchiehall Street is the western part of Glasgow's shopping region, which extends down the chief thoroughfares to Trongate, with its fashionable centre at Buchanan Street, where the motors of the "County" occasionally grace the scene. "Sauchie," as some of its pseudo-Oriental features may indicate, is also Glasgow's pleasure street, and in this capacity has probably a big future before it, for Glasgow has made a vigorous awakening from the Puritanical slumber of the senses.

The City Chambers, the Royal and Stock Exchanges, and the braw banks are all noted in the guide book. But the guide book omits to note that between Queen Street and Hutcheson Street lies the "werrus" region—possibly the "essential" Glasgow—which is so admirably described in Frederick Niven's novel, "Justice of the Peace." To the rather wersh odour of piece goods succeed the very definite aromas of cheese, ham, and vegetables. East again of the provision quarter you enter the fragrant precincts of the slaughter-house and the cattle and meat markets; not a delectable district, but one abounding in quaint human character and thumping big cheques. Here you may round off your education by making acquaintance with a "benefit shop," a "fent merchant," and the thing actually connoted by the term "noxious trade."

If the suggestion experiment I spoke of at the

beginning were tried on a Glasgow man, the name of his city would probably conjure up Gordon Street at five on a weekday afternoon. Short, straight, and closed in by buildings at either end, it is like a huge tank or trench. At one minute to five the stream, though full, is normal. At five there is a deep murmur from all the streets around, and in an instant the vehicular traffic is blotted out by a silent, hurrying throng overflowing the roadway: with a fixed unseeing stare each shuffles or trots away, obtaining his paper from the newsboy by a two-handed process like that of an engine-driver exchanging discs with a signalman. At Hope Street you find yourself struggling against the main inflow. It is pouring down from Blythswood Hill, in Madeleine Smith's day a genteel residential quarter, now the legal, accounting, shipowning, and general "business" quarter of Glasgow—its City, in fact—with St. Vincent Street as its main artery. The chief outflow of this flood is the Central Station: the "Cathcart Circle"—an interesting survival—collaborates with the "cars" in transporting the majority of Glasgow's white-collared or shirt-waisted brigade to the pleasaunces of Govanhill, Mount Florida, Shawlands, Strathbungo—in short, to that vast borderland of tenements and terraces and cottages known as the "South Side," which at its western end burgeons into the gorgeous villadom of Pollokshields, with lakes, parks, feudal battlements, and an outlook over ancient policies to the wooded slopes of Renfrewshire.

A smaller outflow finds its way to Dennistoun, a smoke-scourged suburb hemmed in by cemeteries,



The Glasgow Cathedral

breweries, chemical works, and slums. Then there is a large but more leisurely percolation to the West End, the region encircling Kelvingrove Park (Glasgow's finest achievement in town planning) and the Botanic Gardens. On the South Side one enjoys fresh air, modern conveniences, and adjacency to open country, but one is cut off from the life of the city—south of Jamaica Bridge there is not even a decent restaurant—and the majority of the people are "incomers" who have never seen Glasgow Cathedral or read "Senex" or MacGeorge. In the West End one is in close touch with the main life of the city, and, through the University and Art Gallery and the orchestral concerts, with the wider world of art and letters; Woodsidehill was the creation of Glasgow's consuls and barons, and Hillhead and Dowanhill have a mellowness that makes up for smokiness. In Great Western Terrace Kelvinside possesses the finest domestic work of Glasgow's greatest architect, Alexander Thomson, whose works—including St. Vincent Street U.F. Church and Queen's Park East U.F. Church—the visitor should not miss.

I have accounted only for the bourgeoisie, *grande et petite*. What of the working-classes, who form the vast majority of the population, and on whose skill and physical endurance the prosperity of Glasgow is based? Drink, bad housewifery, and recklessly large families have depressed their conditions, and they are probably the worst housed people west of Moscow. The dingy frowsiness of the huge barracks in which they are crowded makes the magnificent stone of which Glasgow is built as

depressing a medium as English brick. The canyons of Hutchesontown, Camlachie, and Govan are unresponsive even to the crepuscular glamour that poetises the massive buildings of the City and the West End. That grace of body or mind should be rare in such conditions is little wonder, or that such intellect as manifests itself should run to an arid and resentful doctrinairism. Yet in the fundamental human virtues the Glasgow working classes are rich, and in character and humour second to none among the world's peoples. Their recent intellectual awakening, though it took a crude and even dangerous form, was an earnest of strength and purpose, and of a determination to make the world a little better than they had found it. In this determination, strengthened and guided by school teachers and by the more humble-minded of the "intellectuals," lies the chief hope of our race. It is probably in those streets which the visitor cannot pass without a sinking of the spirits that the germ of the greater Glasgow of the future could be found.

Glasgow is pre-eminently a "business" city, a fact which is unduly insisted upon by those of its inhabitants who make it an excuse for neglecting its civic and social interests, or for not devoting their leisure to anything more strenuous than golf or musical comedy. But in the view of those who love their city, industry and business are only means to the great end of making the very most of the rich human material contained in a city where the racial elements of Scotland, mainly Celtic, are uniquely blended. In a historical perspective the University, even more than the Town House, is the real centre of

Glasgow. Glasgow has a great tradition to maintain in philosophy, theology, economics, and, above all, in applied science and in medicine. Her record in art goes back to the days of the Foulis Academy in the middle of the eighteenth century, and the Celtic element manifested itself in the taste and enterprise of buyers like M'Lellan, in her early appreciation of genuine impressionists like Monticelli, Boudin, and the Marises, and in the rise of her own Glasgow School, which diverted the whole current of British art. In literature she has been less notable, owing to the failure of her publishers and her reading public to realise her new position as the vital centre of Scottish life. A like failure has accounted for her poor record in drama as compared with Dublin, but the defunct Repertory Theatre left an impulse which has been directed into national channels by the Scottish National Theatre Society, recently founded in Glasgow. With huge stone quarries and much money at her disposal, Glasgow was bound to take a high place architecturally among British cities, and at certain periods her building was directed by a Roman taste for symmetry and magnificence. The wealth of splendid architecture that she has hidden away in her blanket of smoke, to be blackened by soot and eaten by nitric acid, will only be fully revealed when the citizens of this proud and ancient city have at last made up their minds to follow the example of Pittsburg and consume their smoke in furnaces instead of breathing and swallowing it. Our abiding vision is of a Glasgow familiar with sunshine, a Glasgow in which trees can flourish and white collars last for two days, and in which the

standard of public tidiness shall be equal to that of a respectable middle-class home ; a Glasgow fit for commercial travellers to live in, and evoking from strangers such praises as were showered by Defoe upon the Glasgow of two centuries ago.