A. Mackie

ALEXANDER MACKIE

PROSE AND VERSE

EDITED, WITH MEMOIR,

BY

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FOREWORD

THE present volume, which is produced under the auspices of the Former Pupils' Club of Albyn Place School, Aberdeen, is in the nature of a memorial of the late Principal of that School. It consists of a short memoir, followed by a selection from the fugitive pieces, in prose and verse, contributed by Mr. Mackie to various newspapers and periodicals.

In the editing of such a volume the sole difficulty has been selection, for it must be remembered that the pieces chosen form but one sheaf of a plenteous literary harvest. As far as possible the choice has been governed by the wish to make the book representative first, of Mr. Mackie's literary style; second, of his tastes and activities; third, of the North-East of Scotland.

The bulk of the articles and poems appeared originally in the columns of "The Aberdeen Free Press," and "The Scottish Field." To the proprietors of these publications, as also to the respective proprietors of "The Gentleman's Magazine," "Alma Mater," "Turriff School Magazine," and "Albyn Place School F.P. Magazine," grateful thanks are due for permission to reprint.

Knowing there were others far more competent, I nevertheless counted it a privilege to be asked to write the Memoir of Mr. Mackie. Friendship apart, I felt that some two-and-a-half years spent as a member of his staff entitled me to speak with a certain intimacy and confidence of his work in Education. And that, after all, was his life-work.

J. M. R.

TURRIFF, *October*, 1916.

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[*Verse in Italics*]

MEMOIR

THE schoolmaster of the North last century was a strongly-marked type. Bred on the fortifying classical curriculum, he made that the staple of his own teaching. Humanity, in fact, in the sense which still obtains at King's College, and without any thought of Comte, was his religion. The type reached its apotheosis in Melvin. Boys were the raw material of teaching, and they were brought up strictly to meditate the Latin muse on a little oatmeal, to abhor "maxies" as the snares of the Evil One, and to fear "Grim" and keep his commandments. It was a rigorous discipline, and many fell by the wayside; but he that endured to the end might enter the University, maybe with the martyr's halo of first bursar!

From that type of schoolmaster the subject of this memoir derived, but with certain variations. Reared in the classical tradition, under a worthy successor of the great Melvin, Alexander Mackie, whether at school or college, showed his forte to lie in English, and, as teacher, strengthened by the moral support of "barbarian" Bain, he refused to bow down and worship Greek and Latin as the sole deities of the educational Pantheon. Instead, he set himself to win for English Language and Literature a place and dignity in the school curriculum these had never before enjoyed.

His other break with established pedagogic tradition was even more noteworthy; for, while the typical dominie of that day was still paying his exclusive attention to that hope of the flock, the "lad o' pairts," Alexander Mackie had discovered, and was busy exploiting, even to the extent of University

degrees, that phenomenon of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the "lass o' pairts!" His work in this field, indeed, earns him rank in the North as one of the pioneers of the higher education of women.

But, while education was his life-work, he had many other interests and hobbies. Wielding the pen of a ready writer, he contributed alike to the edification of schools and the delight of the general reader. A lover of the open air and outdoor life, he found his favourite pastimes in fishing and gardening, and these in turn furnished him with many of his most charming themes as a writer. With a happy knack for occasional verses, he revealed notable gifts as a sonneteer, while as a popular lecturer on literary topics, especially the Scots dialect, he achieved a fame that became transatlantic. His voice was heard with respect in the councils of his University, and his position as a scholar and littérateur was fittingly acknowledged when he was asked to be the first editor of "The Aberdeen University Review." His was a richly-dowered personality, intellectual, imaginative, sun-lit, breeze-blown, exhaling kindliness, a personality we may well try to portray in fuller measure.

If Disraeli could say he was born in a library, Alexander Mackie could say he was born in a garden. It was in that lovely oasis in treeless Buchan, the demesne of Delgaty Castle, that the boy first opened his eyes, September 11, 1855, and there, from earliest infancy, he was reared in the very lap of nature. But, though Buchan-born, he was Banff-bred; for his father, Joseph Mackie, was promoted to be head gardener at Duff House to the Earl of Fyfe, soon after Alexander's birth. Thus the boy grew up amid the picturesque and romantic surroundings of the ancient county town.

The environment was such as to mould the impressionable mind of youth—river, tree, and hill, the bloom of cultivated gardens, the surge of the untameable sea. Here the lad looked

on Nature in her every mood of stern and fair, and here he spent a boyhood of tree-climbing, bird's-nesting, fishing, bathing, with spells of quiet reading in shady nooks—a true nursling of mother earth. Such a boy was fitting father to the man who was so passionately devoted to nature, whether as found in urban garden, by river bank, or in the pages of well-loved poets.

Of his liege lord, "the Earl," the boy naturally stood in wholesome awe, and to him, in those days of feudal vassalage, the radical outburst of Johnny Gibb, when he entered Macduff and found a street-name changed to "Duff Street," would, doubtless, have savoured of blasphemy—"The fowk o' this place wud ca' their vera tykes aifter the Yerl o' Fife"—though in his lecturing days he used to quote the incident with great gusto. Of the Earl's son, the late Duke, who was only a few years his own senior, Alexander had many recollections, whether as haling him off to try his hand with a gun—a ploy in which he was foiled by the youngster's obstreperous resistance—or as bounteously dispensing Christmas cheer to the estate retainers and their families, and plying with viands the chubby-faced boy, now more complaisant to *noblesse oblige*,—"We're sure Fatty can take another helping."

An adventure in boyhood's days was to seek out the secluded spot where stood the family mausoleum of the Earl. Peeping through the iron latticework, and dimly descrying within the sable coffins, he doubtless remembered the while the eerie experience of Tam o' Shanter. But the chief spot round which clustered romance was the Gallow Hill, where, tradition had it, Macpherson, the Rob Roy of the North, made his dramatic exit from life. The romantic story of the famous freebooter had a fascination for the imaginative boy. The outlaw's deeds of derring-do—his capture by treachery at a market fair—the picturesque circumstances of his execution on the Gallow Hill, when the hands of the town clock were put

forward, to anticipate the messenger who was seen approaching afar off with a reprieve—his playing on his own fiddle, beneath the gallows, the rant he had composed in prison, followed by his breaking of the instrument across his knee and flinging it into the grave that awaited him—in all this, fiction though much of it undoubtedly was, the boy saw the material out of which Sir Walter's magic wand might have created a Waverley novel; and the rollicking lilt of Burns's poem, "Macpherson's Farewell," was ever singing in his ears:—

> "Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
> Sae dauntingly gaed he;
> He played a spring, and danced it round,
> Below the gallows tree."

The boy had his first schooling at the Free Church Institution in Macduff, and there, within sight and sound of the bay, the cries of the fishermen on board their smacks borne to him on the salt sea-breezes, he received instruction from that notable schoolmaster, David Renton. The lure of the sea was strong upon the young lad, as one may note in the sonnet where he pays tribute to the sterling worth of his old dominie; and it was well for him, doubtless, that he met with no Salvation Yeo, to tempt him with tales of El Dorado beyond the seas.

The El Dorado set before the boy was a much more sober affair—the University; and, as a preparation for that and its great athletic, the Bursary Competition, Alexander betook himself in 1870 to the Aberdeen Grammar School. Of his feelings on approaching that imposing pile, especially imposing after the humble building in Macduff, he made in later years public confession. It was a crisp October morning, and, even with a University graduate to support him in his entrance to this new world, the stranger felt much abashed. The homely sight, however, of someone delving in his potato-garden on the slopes running

down to the Den Burn—a someone who proved to be no less than the writing-master, Mr. Pope—revived his drooping spirits. A teacher who could dig and hoe was a friendly omen, and the boy entered with cheerfulness on his career as a Grammarian.

The school then consisted simply of five classes, and the newcomer entered Class IV., a part of the school where Mr. Pope did not hold sway, so that, whatever the lad's demerits were in caligraphy, he could at least plead he had never been a "Papist"! He studied Livy and Virgil under the benign rule of the Rev. James Legge, while Beverly's rugged "versions" led little by little to the heaven of schoolboys, *Sine Errore*. Macarthur, the mathematical master, kept poor order in class, and was literally egged on to resign by his unruly pupils! Far other was the tone of the highest class, where the rector, Alexander Martin, held sway. Sternest of disciplinarians, he might have been the original Martinet. Under his teaching the pupils felt the full blast of the bracing Borealic Humanities, and, as true "grammarians," ground at accidence and syntax, "settled *Hoti's* business, properly based *Oun*, gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*," plodded Xenophon's weary parasangs, soaring their one flight in some of the odes of Anacreon, and so girt up their loins for the Olympic of the Bursary Competition.

Alexander won the sixth bursary, and in October, 1872, took his way, a modest Bajan, to King's College. The Arts curriculum of those days was marked by breadth of scope rather than by the specialization of to-day. For the ordinary M.A. degree the student took seven subjects, amongst which he had to include representatives of languages, philosophy, mathematics, and science. Two chiefs divided the allegiance of the Aulton in those days—Geddes and Bain, the one standing for the severe discipline of the classics, the other for a no less severe discipline in Logic and English. "Homer" was too striking a figure not to appeal to Alexander Mackie, and,

visiting King's College Chapel in after years, the latter wrote with enthusiasm how

> "the Knight,
> Whose hoary head and stately mien combine
> To make a picture regal, richly dight,
> The lessons reads, intoning hallowed words aright."

But it was "Logic" who claimed the student's unquestioning homage. At his feet he sat with reverence, proving himself one of his most distinguished disciples, and, when he graduated M.A. in 1876, it was with the proud honour of the Seafield Gold Medal in English.

With thoughts of the Church, Alexander Mackie entered the Free Church Divinity Hall, and spent three years there. Accompanied by his college friend, J. A. Selbie—now Professor—he also took a summer session at Tübingen, where, in a thoroughly German atmosphere, he studied theology mildly, the Teutonic tongue seriously, and formed first-hand impressions of academic and burgher life in the Fatherland. On his return to Aberdeen, he won the Lumsden Scholarship, for an essay on "The Augsburg Confession and Apology."

But theology was not for him. The end of the three years left him unconvinced of his call to the Church. It was not so much that he bewailed with George Meredith the time and talents thrown away in the making of theological works—with his strong philosophic bent there was a distinct attraction to Divinity—as that the Robertson Smith heresy case and judgment cooled the young student's ardour as that of many another, warning him off to other pastures, if he would enjoy full freedom of intellect. Also, as assistant to Professor Bain in English and Logic—a post he had obtained while still in the Divinity Hall—he had already discovered his true vocation as a teacher and expositor of the word of literature. Accordingly, having ceased his University connection on the Professor's retirement in 1880, he threw in his lot with Miss Warrack, then Principal of the Union Place School for Girls.

A woman of shrewd penetration, Miss Warrack soon realised the valuable asset she had got in the brilliant young graduate, and, six years later, when she withdrew from active teaching, she handed over to him the full management and control of the school, which from that date—first in Union Place, later in Albyn Place—was to be indissolubly linked with his name.

Courage to undertake the principalship of a private school for girls came doubtless from that other momentous step which the young teacher had taken a short time before. On July 3, 1884, in St. John's Church, Aberdeen, Alexander Mackie married Philippa Rattray, daughter of Dr. Robert Gordon Rattray, medical superintendent of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, and sister of his own classfellow, Dr. John M. Rattray. It was a marriage of true minds, and fair science frowned not on it, for Mr. P. J. Anderson was groomsman, while the speech of the occasion was made by Dr. Bain. A teacher herself, and an appreciative student of literature, Mrs. Mackie was admirably fitted to be the helpmeet of her husband in his scholastic enterprise. To the happy home she made for him at Ashpringtón, all can testify who had the privilege of entrance there. She was to her husband that mate of whom Stevenson sang:—

> "Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
> A fellow-farer true through life."

The work accomplished by Mr. Mackie as an educationist was twofold. Partly it consisted in organising his school on the lines of the forward movement in the North of Scotland for the higher education of women, partly it consisted in his own work as a teacher of English. Excellence in the one capacity does not imply excellence in the other, but when they do meet, as they met in the person of Alexander Mackie, they constitute, indubitably, a great teacher.

What his personality meant to the school was soon seen in the popular name by which the latter was referred to among

outsiders—"Mackie's School." Certain loyal pupils resented this as a misnomer, but really it was a compliment to the Head. Never was Head more entitled to claim, never was Head less likely to claim, "*L'école, c'est moi.*"

It was truly a remarkable work that Mr. Mackie performed as a pioneer of women's higher education—the more remarkable because done in a private school, with no grants or aid from Government or Education Departments, and all the expenditure and risks to be borne by the one private purse. It argued courage, enterprise, and a serene faith. If there were shoals and quicksands, you never knew from Mr. Mackie. His motto in life seemed to be that which the Roman Emperor gave to the Prætorian Guard on the eve of his death, *Aequanimitas.*

The theorists were busy arguing for or against higher education for women. How far was it practicable, how far desirable? Should they have entrance to the University? If so, should every Faculty be open to them? Were girls capable of the arduous struggle of the Bursary Competition? Was not the female brain lighter, avoirdupois, than the male? Thus the controversialists. Alexander Mackie showed the accomplished fact.

It was a wide curriculum his school offered. Unfettered by boards or inspectors, he had more freedom of movement than the ordinary state-aided school, and could give due heed to the wishes of parents. His aim primarily was to offer to the girls of our well-to-do middle class a liberal education, with outlet to the University for those who so desired. From the heat and fever of competitive examinations he tried to keep free; yet public confidence had to be won, and the surest way to attain that in the North, as elsewhere, was to be able to point to results. The University Local Examinations afforded him an excellent field of compromise, where his pupils might aim at a definite standard of attainment, prove their

mettle against other institutions, and yet breathe an air untainted by cramming.

The variety of curriculum prevailing in such a school—a private enterprise, be it ever remembered—might well astonish the governors of our public schools. First, there were all the ordinary subjects taught in our elementary schools, the range of the school extending from Kindergarten Department to preparation for the University Preliminary Examinations. Then there were the subjects and accomplishments which once were the sole or chief educational garniture of the daughters of the better class—music, dancing, drawing, and painting. Finally, in the upper school, there were the subjects essential for the University Local and Entrance Examinations—English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Languages ancient and modern. It was a many-branched curriculum, with hockey and tennis as recreations in the background. From morn till eve the school was ahum with activity, from the basement, where feet were "shod with the preparation of peace," to the top storey, where, appropriately enough, the elect held grave session of "Attic" Greek, reading Euripides to the melodious melancholy beneath of Chopin's waltzes.

With Mr. Mackie as teacher of English, that Cinderella of the school course came to something like its own. Following the lead of Bain, he held there was no real barrier to the making of the native tongue as thorough an instrument of intellectual discipline as the reverend, hoary classics. In his hands, accordingly, Bain's Grammar became as formidable a weapon as was ever "Ruddiman" or "Melvin" to the disciples of Latin. Pupils developed an uncanny perception of suspended nominatives, split infinitives, and mixed metaphors; they delighted to flesh their maiden swords on all and sundry, plaguing even their happy-go-lucky fathers, much in the way that Socrates' young followers of old had plagued their comfortable sires. That was the discipline of grammar, and in

the capable hands of Mr. Mackie it became something of what Bain claimed it to be, an exact science.

In the study of literature, the same searching thoroughness was manifest. Following again his own master's precepts, as instilled and elaborated in his "Rhetoric and Composition," Mr. Mackie taught his pupils to analyse and compare the various arts and figures which went to make up an author's style. He did more: he himself edited two of Macaulay's essays—"Milton" and "Warren Hastings"—to illustrate these same laws of rhetoric; and so kept ever before his pupils' eyes models of the critical analysis of style he wished them to cultivate.

In such a method, clearly, no slipshod work was to be tolerated. Nor did the method of analysis explain away the rainbow of style. Rather it gave a new meaning and beauty to that rainbow, and at the same time enabled the pupil to justify the faith that was in her. Loose, vague talk on the beauties of an author's style was not permitted. "Padding" was an abomination. You had to give chapter and verse for your eulogy. For rhapsodies, whether on Tennyson or Keats, you were held to strict account. With a stodgy teacher the method might have become something of a weariness. Mr. Mackie's voice and enthusiasm were themselves an inspiration. The girls learned to think, observe, and reason, and the lesson-hour flew on wings. Delightfully discursive, he mingled the pleasant with the useful. He made the authors the intimate friends of his pupils, so that when, in after years, these visited the Lake district in England, it seemed like coming to some very familiar spot; and, when a merry maiden married, she was sure to receive from her beloved Head Master an appropriate gift of books, with some such counsel:—

> "Forget not that with home and love it fares
> The better, when the soul can roam apart
> In fields of old Romance, where lofty thought
> And wisdom are in subtlest diction wrought."

But, indeed, with English only in recent years taken seriously as a class subject, Mr. Mackie's eminence as a teacher of it is challenged by few. As a Head Master he invites comparison with other Heads. Where does he stand in that comparison? What distinctive merits had he here?

From amongst the many qualities which went to make up the sum total of Mr. Mackie's personality as a Head Master, the one that strikes us most now, in retrospect, was his splendid urbanity. You never saw him ruffled, or taken aback. He had gauged his material—the most elusive, the most mercurial—and in dealing with it he cultivated a large tolerance and equanimity. In this spirit he met the ups and downs of the day's teaching. It was no use getting flustered or depressed. One must strike a mean, preferably a happy one. One must be philosophical, he would say to impetuous youth burning with a sense of injustice; one must compromise. For practical success in the affairs of life, especially in dealing with human nature, Horace's "golden moderation" is still the sure motto, and undoubtedly it was the keynote to Alexander Mackie's success as a schoolmaster.

Not but that he could use the "big bow-wow" on occasion, and with startling effect. The eye lightened, the voice thundered, the class melted. That was "Ercles' vein," however, and only for rare use. Usually sarcasm sufficed, or the well-known quizzical glance; while, in the way of "lines," the repetition of some purple patch of poetry made a pleasure of a penance, and many a youthful offender rejoiced to appear before the Head, and "bury the Great Duke with an empire's lamentation."

Teachers, on the whole, tend to become abnormal in manner. Bitter experience drives them to hedge themselves with tricks and mannerisms. In private life they may regain the normal, but in school they are clothed with eccentricity. It is inexpedient for them to express themselves with the

artlessness of the young giant, who, badgered the livelong day by a host of whipper-snappers, at last, like Othello, "perplex'd in the extreme," lifted up his voice in a woeful "Stop those d——d ejaculations!" A significant pause, a stony stare, a sarcastically inflected voice, a stilted meiosis, "We are not in a bear-garden, I presume"—these are the teacher's regular and more effectual stock-in-trade, the shield under which he wins immunity from "the slings and arrows of outrageous" youth; and so the rarest thing to find in a classroom is a gentleman of simple, conventional manners. Yet such was Mr. Mackie. Mannerisms and professional tricks he had none. His bluff, breezy manner swept the pupils along. Neither with them nor the members of his staff did he affect aloofness. In school, as out of it, he was the same debonair gentleman. His manner was entirely natural, simple, good-humoured, and both by pupils and teachers he was accordingly respected and loved. To the pupils, indeed, as the years went on, his manner became increasingly paternal, and one can appreciate it best by recalling the incident of a certain golden-haired cherub—now a staid matron—who once, when the Head was descending stairs from a class, sprang right on his astonished shoulders, and clasped him round the neck, with these ingenuous words, "Oh, Mr. Mackie!"

Efficiency was everywhere. You could not better it in a public school. The staff received their time-table the day before the session began, and thereafter, within their own bounds, they had a free hand. There was no anxious shepherding of the teachers. You knew your work, and were trusted to do it.

The worth of the education given by such a school was put to the proof in extramural examination with complete success. The results, indeed, achieved in the University Local Examinations were sometimes phenomenal, as when one pupil made 100 per cent. three years running! But, after all, the Locals were

light events compared with the University Preliminary and Bursary Competition Examinations, and it was the success of pupils in these, and in the University itself, that established the reputation of Albyn Place School as an intellectual seminary. Not that Mr. Mackie made any extravagant claims for the school, or allowed himself to be dazzled by the successes of brilliant pupils at college into turning his school into the approved University cram-shop. Over and over again, on Prize Day, when speaking with pleasure of the academic laurels won by former pupils, whether in classics or English, he soberly said these successes proved that, when they got the right type of student, able and diligent, they could furnish them forth for the University just as well as other more pretentious schools, but that still the main purpose of his school was to provide a liberal education for girls who had no ulterior goal in learning, and this, regardless of all the meretricious attractions of outside examinations. Less he could not have said, and, when one thinks of some of the students he sent straight to Aberdeen University, some of the most brilliant women graduates in classics or English that have ever passed through King's College, he might well have said more.

But if, after all, the University receives only an elect few from our schools, whether of boys or of girls, what of the others? Have we no means of judging the influence of school life on them in after years? It is a notorious fact that the English public schools, excellent as a training-ground for character, are singularly devoid of intellectual stimulus, so that still less in after-school days need one look to them for the fostering of their old pupils' interest in books. But even in our own secondary schools for boys in Scotland, despite, or, perhaps, as the result of the severe intellectual treadmill we endure there, we find our F.P. clubs containing every variety of section—football, cricket, hockey, tennis, billiards, bridge --except the one which would be the legitimate offspring of the

school education proper, the literary. The dramatic and the orchestral are the nearest approaches our F.P. clubs venture to the muses. Literature itself is *verboten.*

Nor is it only the schools that are at fault. A course of the orthodox halls of learning seems to make wonderfully for jejuneness of mind in our academic dons. The questing spirit seems to evaporate, whether as the result of endless examinations, or an Ecclesiastes' sense of the vanity of it all, and we have that strangely ironical situation, the graduate, newly capped, leading classic of his year, gathering all his notebooks in his landlady's backyard, and making of them one huge bonfire! The perennial lovers of literature and learning who come from the University are few. We must seek them rather among the unacademic, those who have never known satiety of learning, infinite weariness of lectures and examinations, and strange as it may seem, we find these in the literary sections of the F.P. Clubs of Girls' Schools.

Certainly, in Aberdeen these many years, one of the few flourishing literary societies attached to à professed seat of education—we make no mention of freelance literary clubs, where kindred spirits naturally assemble—has been the Albyn Place School F.P. Club; and the existence of this Club we consider the best testimony to the system of education established and maintained in his school by Mr. Mackie. The Club was the outcome of a spontaneous desire on the part of former pupils, most of whom had never had any connection with the University, and many of whom were married, to keep up the study of English literature, which they had begun under such happy auspices in school days; and, as such, it testified to the genuine interest in literature aroused in them by their master, as well as to the immunity they had enjoyed from surfeit of examinations. Year after year this Club has gone through a systematic syllabus of study. Sometimes a single author was studied, from the standpoints of life, letters, and one

or two characteristic works, sometimes a couple of plays of Shakespeare were treated, when parts were allocated, the plays read through at the sessional meetings, and papers given by members of the Club, dealing with the characters and themes of the plays. Thus, at the end of the winter, this Philomath could feel it had accomplished a definite piece of work. Conducting the affairs of their society themselves, the F.P.'s could, of course, always rely on Mr. Mackie as mentor. It was he who kept them in conservative paths. With so many great books, certified masterpieces, ever-green, ever-refreshing, what need to stray away towards works that enjoyed, it might be, but a passing fame? The Albyn Place School F.P. Club is, to our mind, the finest tribute to the sanity and intellectual vitality of the school's system of education.

The pupils rejoiced in any honour conferred on their Head. They knew him to be a force to be reckoned with outside his own classrooms, and thought his place on the committee of the city Public Library his rightful due; but they were especially proud when he was appointed examiner in English for the University. The strength of the sentiment which gradually gathered round the school was seen on the occasion of Mr. Mackie's attaining his majority as Principal, when he received from pupils past and present a handsome American roll-top desk and a silver service. At the same time Miss Marshall, so long his faithful coadjutor, was presented with a lamp and a number of books. The presentation was made by the Rev. Dr. Danson, who, in humorous fashion, declared the education given in the school to be such as might alarm any parent who had to speak in public. On Sunday, when he was doing his very best to be impressive, he knew his daughters were on the outlook for the "mis-related participle," and his lunch was frequently spoiled by his being told, when he thought he had been particularly brilliant, that there was a want of connection, or that there was some mixture of figures of speech,

or that the metaphor did not last quite long enough to be effective—and then he said, "Bless the name of Mr. Mackie." But far more than intellectual guidance was the guidance of character, and there, he thought, the pupils of Albyn Place School would take rank with the very best in the land. Mr. Mackie had led the whole of the North of Scotland in intellectual results, but the other results, the speaker dared say, would not be known till the revelation of the Great Day. Dr. Danson paid a fitting tribute also to Mrs. Mackie, to whom her husband owed the charming influence of domestic happiness. In a reminiscent reply, Mr. Mackie remarked on the changeful panorama of human life which unfolded in school, year after year, as the young pupil of five or six years wrought her way gradually up the ladder of the school, till she reached the happy day when she put up her hair. Already history was repeating itself, and he was teaching children's children. He found an element of pathos in it, and could not help appropriating to himself that stanza of Tennyson:—

> "Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
> That brings our friends up from the underworld,
> Sad as the last which reddens over one
> That sinks with all we love below the verge;
> So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more."

Altogether, it was a red-letter day in the history of the school, as well as in the career of the Principal.

Not that there was any standing still, or lying back on the oars. At Prize Day, that annual stocktaking of schools, the Head made it clear he regarded his curriculum, excellent as it was, not as a sofa, but a ladder. For long he pondered the question of opening his school to Departmental Inspection. It meant probably a curtailment of personal liberty, a certain initial expenditure, while it opened up larger fields for his pupils. The need of providing entrance for his students to the Domestic Science School determined him finally, and in 1911

the Albyn Place School was declared under Government Inspection. It meant the setting up and equipping of a Science Laboratory, and various architectural alterations. But all this was faced ungrudgingly, in the full hope and belief that it would make for the increased usefulness of the school. Pity only was that he who sanctioned the changes should not have lived long enough to see his hopes fully materialize.

The motto of the Albyn Place School, which was chosen for it by Mr. Mackie's lifelong friend, Mr. W. Keith Leask, was *Vigor et Juventas*, and the Principal of the school was its living embodiment. To teach, as well as lead, in such a school, might have been enough, one would have thought, to occupy the man's whole energy. But it was far from doing so, and his activity had many other phases.

An ardent lover of nature, and a keen angler, he was always ready, when occasion offered, to doff his professional garb, and don the tweeds of the fisher. Never was there a more enthusiastic votary of the rod. He knew every stream and rill of the North, was expert alike with worm or fly, and, in the quest of his sport, enjoyed equally the silence of the river pool, or the "blown seas and stormy showers" of Cape Wrath.

Like most seasoned anglers, he met with some strange adventures in the practice of his art, as when he passed a night on an islet in mid-stream, perched upon the branch of a tree, with the flood, which had descended suddenly, all round him. Aught pertaining to the gentle art was of interest to him, and it is questionable if, in certain moods, Herbert Spencer did not appeal to him more as an angler than as a philosopher!

Of his art he wrote copiously, whether in "The Aberdeen Free Press" or "The Scottish Field," and with a happy freedom from technicality, and a frank joy in open-air life, which made whatever he wrote a pleasure to read, even when it was a practical treatise such as that standard work on its subject, "The Art of Worm Fishing." He had collected many of these

fugitive pieces for a volume, "By Flood and Field," which would have vindicated for him the claim to be considered the Scottish Walton. But even the few pieces which we have culled, almost at random, from the riches of that volume, and the chapter in "Worm Fishing" entitled "A Hill Burn," would suffice to show that angling meant for Alexander Mackie far more than the capture of fish. It was for him a never-failing "open sesame" to the beauties and joys of nature. None could understand better than he the truth of Burns's words:—

> "The Muse, nae Poet ever fand her,
> Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
> Adown some trottin burn's meander,
> An' no think lang."

Such poetic mood in Alexander Mackie's case, it is true, was expressed as often in prose as in verse, but the poetic quality was there. The *joie de vivre*, the pleasure in the simple sights and sounds of nature—the springing flowers by the river bank, the carolling birds, the brawling brook—all this was present to him, though the basket might be empty. This was where he differed from the phlegmatic flogger of rivers. In his sojourning by the green pastures and still waters he felt that healing-power of nature whereof the poets have written, and it inspired him, too, albeit in lowlier wise, with an emotion afterwards remembered in tranquillity.

So was it with his other pastime of gardening—it gave him health, joy, the outdoor life he loved, contact with the good brown earth, while ever he found some fresh point of communion with the poets. Both nature and nurture made Alexander Mackie a gardener. Little wonder, then, that in school session or vacation he spent his spare hours so zealously, sowing and planting, delving and pruning. He knew every flower and tree on his way to school, and nothing delighted pupils so much of a morning as to walk with the Head down Fountainhall Road and Albyn Place, and hear him

expatiate on tree and shrub and flower. One sees him yet, with his "glorious morning face," compact of body, stepping along with short, brisk steps, the silver-headed stick swinging in his hand, a maid or two at his side lending rapt ear to his sermonette on the tares in the Queen's Cross Church precinct —the dandelions, to wit—or to his remarks on some floral or arboreous vagary in the Queen's Terrace gardens. For Nature he had the seeing eye and understanding heart, out of the fullness of which he could write his rhapsody on Spring, "From Bud to Leaf," or moralize, in something of the melancholy Jacques' vein, on "The Tree Artistic and the Tree Commercial"; or, bringing to bear his own penetrating and sincere observation of nature, write such a work of intimate and nice interpretation as "Nature Knowledge in Modern Poetry," a work to which it was pleasant to see complimentary reference made, the other month, in a leading review in "The Spectator."

But, with the fall of the leaf, and the shortening day, the rod and the spade were laid aside for a season, and the book-lover ensconced himself in his study. In the Aberdeen Philosophical Society the disciple of Bain found congenial companionship. At one time president, he was latterly secretary, and it was probably through him that the scope of the Society's papers widened, so as to take in lectures on many subjects, not primarily philosophical. Here, too, perhaps, as in education, he read the signs of the times, and saw a generation growing up which knew not "Logic," and which, like Brutus of old, was to confess philosophy a cold mistress. That he did wisely no one can gainsay. Two notable contributions of his own, "The Homeric Simile in Modern Poetry" and "The Ludicrous in Burns," had the honour of being included in the Society's "Transactions."

As a frequent writer of special articles in the daily press, he had a distinct outlet for his literary gifts. Of fishing, and

gardening, and the moods of nature associated with these, he wrote, as already noted, abundantly; but he was equally happy in catching the mood of a great occasion, whether it was the opening of a new church, the visit of a famous preacher, or the epic Quatercentenary celebrations of our Northern University. His interest in education found scope in his many notable reviews of educational works, while the genuine bibliophile came out in his frank delight at the discovery of some "new" Beattie letters, which he afterwards published in the form of a brochure. Alike in the number and the nature of his interests, he reminded one often of Andrew Lang.

Like most practical teachers, Mr. Mackie wrote little on the theory of his calling. It was sufficient to attain a working creed. That he was profoundly interested in the theoretical aspect of his vocation was to be seen in his bold bid for the Chair of Education in St. Andrews, when it became vacant in 1902; but his was too rich and human a personality to be punished by a chair, and a sigh of relief went up from pupils, past and present, when they realized their school was still to be "Mackie's School." Among his manuscripts we have come across only one paper bearing distinctly on education, "Parental influence in education—is it on the decline?"—this amid a multitude of papers on literary topics—and the inference is, that, as a schoolmaster, he had worked out a practical faith, and held by it without fear or doubt. Of what that faith consisted is seen admirably in the many reviews of educational works he wrote to the daily press. It is from his *obiter dicta* in these reviews we gather explicitly what otherwise we could see to be the implicit faith of the practical teacher. Very interesting is it to find him deploring in those ante-bellum days the tendency of our nation to become a slavish imitator of German educational methods and systems. He even deprecated too much deferring to English modes, as opposed to our own national idiosyncrasies. As was to be expected, he was staunch

in upholding the worth and discipline of a course in English Language and Literature, and, while frankly acknowledging the incontestable merits of a classical education, he was wishful to reserve it for those really capable of benefiting by it. It is all very sane, very sober, very patriotic, what he says, and entirely of a piece with his own living practice.

But his direct contribution to the literature of education was not in theory so much as in actual manuals for use in school. Such were his editions, already mentioned, of Macaulay's "Milton" and "Warren Hastings," such, too, his "Marmion," and such again, in most notable wise, was his "Aberdeenshire," in the "Cambridge County Geographies." In that volume his unique knowledge of his native shire, as well as his charming literary style, found full and fitting expression. It was a masterpiece of its kind, and "Banffshire," in the same series, on which he was busy at the time of his death, would have been its worthy peer.

As the freelance journalist, Mr. Mackie chose his theme and wrote of it without effort. He struck a rich vein in the series of articles he wrote for "The Scottish Field" on the Secondary Schools of Scotland, but, indeed, he touched nothing that he did not adorn. He was a master of the *mot juste*, and had a rich rotundity of diction, while his literary allusiveness gave charm to the most ordinary theme. It was not merely that he was ready with apt quotation—yet what could be neater, for instance, than the quotation, at the beginning of "The Art of Worm Fishing," taken from "Richard II.," "Let's talk of worms"?—but, far more subtle and elusive, he could make his writing convey, by some deft word or phrase, the aroma of the masters of literature.

Making no claim to be a poet, he yet wrote much occasional verse that was excellent, and as a sonneteer he paid many a generous tribute to the men of mark he had numbered among his friends. He had a Horatian sense of the fitness of things,

and evidently felt the sonnet to be the correct measure of his poetic strength. Certainly, in serious vein, it was his favourite milieu of expression. Alfred Austin's blundering verse during the Boer War:—

> "From English hamlet, Irish hill,
> Welsh hearths, and Scottish byres,
> They throng to show that they are still
> Sons worthy of their sires"—

drew some caustic verses from Alexander Mackie:—

> "The English bacon holds the field,
> 'Tis fed in sties; who e'er appealed
> To such as fitting homes to shield
> Their cultured squires?
> That honour now a bard has sealed
> On Scottish byres."

But, as a rule, his verses, when not blithely piscatorial, are touched with tender regret, and a sense of the tears of things. His essays in the vernacular, both prose and verse, are racy of the soil, and approve him, what his lecturing affirmed him to be, a master of the Doric.

His distinguished ability as a writer, as well as his sound literary judgment, met with suitable recognition when the idea of a University Review was mooted in the General Council of his *Alma Mater*. All eyes turned to Alexander Mackie as the right man for Convener of the Editorial Sub-Committee, and nobly he filled the post till his death.

Nor did readiness as a writer retard in his case readiness as a public speaker. His fertility in literary quotation, linked to a rich vein of humour and a delightful bonhomie of manner, won him acknowledgment as one of the post-prandial orators of Bon-Accord. His speech at the "Hamewith" dinner to Charles Murray was a memorable triumph in a field particularly congenial to him; while at the St. Andrew's Dinners, where, on more than one occasion, he had the toast of "Provost

Davidson and the Heroes of Harlaw," his speeches were admirable alike for the résumé he gave of the historical issues, and the grace of imagination with which he indicated the fine materials lying ready to kindle at the touch of the novelist—materials which the Great Wizard himself had only relinquished in favour of "The Fair Maid of Perth." An excellent example of his blending of humour with sentiment was afforded on the occasion of the dinner given by the Grammar School F.P. Club in honour of the veteran drawing master, Mr. Samuel Pope. In giving that toast Mr. Mackie was able to sing the praises of his own pastimes, fishing and gardening, which he did *con amore;* but very adroit was the skill with which he made the Pope of literature yield homage to the Pope of art, as when he quoted the lines from "Solitude":—

"Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.
Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years, slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,
Sound sleep by night."

And again, while humorously claiming Samuel as a much bigger man than Alexander, both in body and spirit, he credited the latter with good common sense on the former's great craft of penmanship:—

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As they move easiest who have learned to dance."

But it was as a popular lecturer that Alexander Mackie attained his chief fame as a public speaker. To literary societies and clubs he had long been familiar for his fine gifts of exposition, ranging with fine catholicity of taste from "The Vicar of Wakefield" and Jane Austen to "The Ring and the

Book" and Thomas Hardy. But when he stepped forth as a lecturer on the "braid Scots," especially as found in Dr. William Alexander's "Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk," he quickly won a fame far more than local. In him there was a most happy blend of the cultured scholar and the gifted elocutionist, so that his lecture was a literary treat as well as an elocutionary *tour de force*. In his prefatory remarks he would discuss the literary merits of Dr. Alexander's masterpiece, drawing comparisons with other notable works or characters of the same genre, and then he would proceed to illustrate his remarks with readings from the book itself. To the fifteenth edition of the book he wrote an admirable preface, comprising most of what he gave as introduction to his lecture, while a volume of "Readings in Modern Scots" was a sort of supplement to his Doric activities. Indeed, it is not without a sense of irony one reads the gibe of that perfervid Scot, Mr. J. M. Bulloch, when jeering at an Anglified Aberdeen—"Albyn Place English"—remembering all that an Albyn Place schoolmaster did for the revival of our ancient "Lallan' tongue."

Up and down the countryside, then, Mr. Mackie gave his lecture, to literary clubs, guilds, and mutual improvement societies innumerable; and his school pupils grew familiar with the great fur coat hanging on the hall-stand—the disciple of Bain had inherited the master's mantle literally as well as spiritually—which told them the Head would be off again that evening to some rural hall to deliver his lecture. But still the cry came from further afield, till in 1913 the appeal came from across the ocean, "Come over into Canada and delight us." After some hesitation Mr. Mackie made arrangements for the conduct of the school in his absence, and set off across the Atlantic, to discourse to brother Scots in exile on Meg Raffan the henwife, the loves of Tam Meerison and Jinse Deans, and Mrs. Birse of Clinkstyle and her "kitchie kyaaks." New York, Niagara, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal he visited; right into the heart

of the Rockies he toured, spending his last Christmas but one in the other Banff, and sending thence his Christmas greetings to the family party gathered at home. His pen was busy all the time, describing his voyage, St. Andrew's Day in New York, a visit to the Falls, an endeavour to hear "the Sky Pilot" in his own church, the life, and the motley civilization which peoples the wide spaces of Canada.

The pace may have been too severe, the sharpness of the cold, especially after coming out of heated halls, may have told on him; at anyrate, he had not long been welcomed back to his native country, when unpleasant symptoms of throat trouble manifested themselves, and, to the amazement of all who knew him, Alexander Mackie was reported ill!

To one who all his life had enjoyed the most robust health, who had been active and accustomed to be out of doors, illness, when it came, must have come with a terrible shock. That this man, seemingly in the plenitude of his vigour, should be struck down with illness, seemed incredible. But it was so, and, strive as he might, the malady overpowered him. The spirit, however, was still the same—alert, buoyant, greeting the unseen with a cheer, and he fought gamely to the last. For long he continued to come to school, though he never attempted to teach. He moved to and fro in the familiar haunts, with that pathetic wistfulness of human nature when out of joint, seeking, as it were, by make-believe and pursuit of the old accustomed rounds of duty, to regain its wonted poise. But the time came when he had to forgo even that.

Once we met him on the hill, with its outlook over our fair city, the city of silver-gleaming spires. While the ruddy hue and sturdy gait were the same, we grieved to note the failure in the voice, that voice with its rich harmonics, which, in days gone by, we had so oft admired, as it vibrated through the lecture-hall, descanting on the Aberdeenshire Doric and the immortal "Johnny." But, as we walked down the hill

together, his words had the true optimistic ring. Personally he must just go easy for a bit. The War had begun, and none of us knew yet how things were to be affected. Education he reckoned on being hit badly. This 1915 would be a poor vintage educationally, but we should pull through.

An English mistress had been engaged at the beginning of the session, to do Mr. Mackie's teaching; and staff and pupils, with the shadow of their Head's illness upon them, strove loyally to uphold the name and prestige of the school. The last day of the session came, the 25th of June, 1915. There was to be no formal prize-giving as in former years, such was the Head's express wish. Let it have quiet close. And so she, who all those months had borne so faithfully the burden of her father's work, came home, to show the kindly gift she had received from affectionate pupils, and tell the glad news that the session was finished, and the school closed for the vacation. The tired fighter heard with a smile and slept. It was indeed finished.

A former pupil has remarked, with true insight, on Mr. Mackie's dislike of the pageantry of Enoch Arden's funeral; and well it was that his own obsequies were carried out so simply and quietly, just as he would have wished. The mortal part of him was followed by a concourse of mourners in the bright sunshine of a June afternoon, down the broad open way, past smiling gardens and the wayside bloom of yellow broom, the way of flowers he ever loved, to the fairest-seeming, certainly the fairest-named of all our city's cemeteries—Springbank. There we left him, "our master, famous, calm, and dead."

Grief was widespread in the North at the death of Mr. Mackie, and many a kindly tribute was paid by friends and admirers far from Aberdeen. Especially was regret expressed that he who had been such a distinguished son of our Northern University, so versatile and withal so devoted to his *Alma*

Mater, should have failed to be laureated by her. It was just to such men as he and Gavin Greig, the much-toiling schoolmasters who gave of their dear-won leisure to literary and learned pursuits, that an honorary doctorate would have been a fair guerdon, and it did not come. Doubtless the University meant to honour him; they would do it soon, they would think on't. Meanwhile he died.

But Alexander Mackie did not gloom. His was that fine equipoise of spirit which does not chafe at lack of worldly glory, and the piece of work to which he clung to the last was the "Review" in whose welfare he was so bound up. Mr. Keith Leask has shown him, in vivid phrase, even when the fell clutches of his malady were on him, struggling to decipher illegible contributors. The man, in sickness as in health, was clear-purposed, single-aimed:—

> "What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;
> Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
> For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
> And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.
> God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,
> To wrestle, not to reign."

But sure of the abiding affection of troops of friends, what need had such a man of external honour? There are those who knew him in school and college days who may speak of him familiarly as "Sandy Mackie"; there is one to whom he will ever be "Gushets"; but, for the multitude of those who knew him in connection with his own school, to recall a great teacher and a man of most lovable ways, it will ever suffice simply to speak of "Mr. Mackie."

SUNSET AND SUNRISE

MATTHEW ARNOLD made it a fatal objection to miracles that they do not happen. No doubt his argument was sound; and yet, if we are not to be very precise in the use of words, they are happening every day. The daily-repeated glories of sunset and sunrise have, from their familiarity, lost all trace of the miraculous, and have passed into the light of common things. All the same, when viewed with the poetic and not the philosophic eye, they have a mystery, an awe-inspiring grandeur and sublimity about them sufficient to justify some such epithet. Our modern facilities in the use of artificial light and our consequent late hours cut us off, especially in the summer months, from appreciating the beauties of the dawn. The roysterer who does not go home till morning has his compensations. The invalid who suffers from insomnia may see, but is hardly in a mood to sympathise, and the night watchman, going his rounds, is as a rule too prosaic in mental texture to rise to the height of this sublime mystery. We have trudged through the semi-darkness of a midsummer night to hail the sun's uprising on Lochnagar; we have seen the miracle evolve as we were whirled through France in a Continental train; and we have in Norwegian waters lounged on the deck of the steamer till the new day broke. It is impressive always and everywhere; but, after all, it carries most effect when it and you are alone together.

When the rivers are so low and clear that no angler, how-

ever skilful, can hope to make a basket at ordinary hours, one has to avoid the brighter part of the day, and under cover of the dusk, when the fish are less acute in vision and somewhat off their guard, a successful catch may be made. Moreover, the angler may at the same time feast his soul with phenomena of nature not ordinarily seen. On the rare days—one in ten —when all the circumstances are favourable, he will be more than rewarded for the temporary disturbance of his usual routine of slumber.

You make a start in the evening when the sun is low in the red north-west, and, being privileged by a generous friend, get your boat out into the river, then row silently to the head of your favourite pool. The water is smooth as glass; the trout are not yet on the rise, and, while you whistle for a breeze, you have time to look round and make note of what is passing in the upper air. Forces that gave no sign during broad day are now coming into activity. The rush of the river over the waterfall, some five hundred yards below, that was quite unheard and apparently noiseless in the stir of the active life of day, is now distinctly resonant in the placid evening air. A peacock at the manor-house puts up his nightly screaming prayer for rain; a belated bumble-bee hums drowsily on his homeward way. Two water-pipers, their bright plumage lit up by the sunset glow, fly high overhead, sounding their shrill whistle. A wild duck leads forth warily from the sedges her little brood, sadly thinned since last week when you saw them first; for, with the advent of August, duck shooting becomes legal, and the guns have been busy. They are even now at work, and the echoes are wakened by a sudden report farther up the river. The water-rails bob in and out amongst the reeds and long grasses of the bank, uttering their harsh and angry croaks of alarm as they detect your unwelcome presence. A water-vole plumps off the bank and takes an oblique course across the stream, head in air, and sniffing suspiciously as he

becomes aware of interlopers in his haunts. Secure from attack all day, lying perdu under the protecting thick herbage of the water edge, they issue forth on their nightly prowl.

Meantime little breezes begin to shiver on the surface, and the plump-plump and oily bubble of trout, rising in a way that means business, withdraw your attention to your rod, which you ply with care, keeping your flies on the move. At first it is rather still and not dark enough, and you have the usual proportion of misses; these, however, only add zest to the sport, and you bide your time. Some accidents, too; a heavy fish just takes your fly as you are in the act of making a fresh cast, and snips off your point hook; then one head-strong fellow gets under the boat, where he has no business to be, and makes complications; another rushes for the islet of weeds—*ranunculus aquatilis*, white in flower—with a shrewd guess that that way safety lies. Worst of all is when a lively fish takes a dropper fly, and, trailing the tail of the cast line behind him, makes a ravelled skein of it, which no art can disentangle in the dark—an argument for using but one fly at such a time. The only thing to be done in this case is to put the problem aside for solution in daylight and substitute a fresh cast. It is now past ten—you heard it strike on the village clock—and, there being much cloud, it is well-nigh dark. The fringe of trees on the left bank shows black between you and the lighter north. On the right is pasture grass, amongst which a presumably tuberculous ox keeps up at intervals his consumptive and very human cough. The swallows have ceased to compete with the denizens of the river for the swarms of ephemeræ, but their place is taken by numerous bats, which show a determination to inspect the point of your rod, and thereby cause you no end of annoyance.

As the night deepens, what little breeze you had dies away, the clouds dissipate as if at the stroke of a magician's wand, and a full moon, low in the sky and of an ampler round

than usual, pours her beams upon the shimmering water—a perfect illustration of Wordsworth's word-picture:—

> "The moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare."

The trout continue to rise, and you have an occasional addition to your basket, but they show a disinclination to be deceived. It is evident that, from their coign of vantage and with your flies between them and the moon, they are able to distinguish the artificial and the real. You are wise, therefore, to rest on your oars for a time, and give yourself up to contemplation of the beauties of the night and woo the soft influence of the hour. Without some resource of this sort you would be dismal, and would be sure to beat a retreat homewards; but the genuine angler has thoughts beyond mere fish.

What are the charms of the pastime? There are those whose only notion of the sport is Dr. Johnson's definition—"A fool at one end of a rod and a worm at the other." Votaries of cricket and golf laugh it to scorn as slow and making too many demands on patience. No doubt the angler is happiest when his basket is full, as the golfer is presumably in his best humour when he scores well; but that is not the whole case. The charm of it is indescribable and incommunicable; to be understood, it must be felt. Apart from the opportunities it affords for observation and the healthful exercise in the open air which it has in common with other sports, its greatest fascination lies in the glorious uncertainty of every moment. You never know what the next minute will produce; when things are at their very worst, you may be on the point of hooking a record fish. Until he is safe in your landing-net, however, the uncertainty remains, and adds to that exhilaration of feeling which is unintelligible to the non-angler. To lose your night's rest and forgo your comfortable

bed, to stand in an open boat for hours in the dark, seems idiotic to those who do not sympathise. Cricket must seem equally futile to the uninitiated. Happily, we are not all constituted alike; but, as De Quincey put it, "Not to sympathise is not to understand."

Slowly the moving moon climbs up the sky, until the landscape stands out with a clearness and distinctness little short of broad daylight. In the absence of a breeze, the brightness is fatal to your success, and after midnight you secure little or nothing, and might as well be in bed, only you await the turn of events. A chill dew begins to fall, and you are fain to keep the oars going, and thus combat the period of minimum temperature. At two comes a faint lightening in the north-east, a greyish tint that heralds the approaching dawn and gradually pales the ineffectual fires of the satellite. The birds begin to twitter in the trees—at first a mere tweet-tweet, by and by a more extended note; but the time of the singing of birds is gone, and the concert of April and May is played out. The sweet coo-coo-coo of the ringdove is in perfect harmony with the placid morning. Less so the more defiant crowing of the cocks. They cheerily rouse the slumbering morn to good purpose, and the challenges are volleyed from farm-yard to farm-yard, until you hear them answered by "faintly echoing farms remote." The wild fowl make for their coverts; every minute the circle of light broadens and expands, red and gold begin to fleck the slowly-sailing clouds, and at four the King of Day, the source and fount of light, himself appears in person, mounting over the horizon with a jubilant rush—and once more the miracle is complete. As you moor your boat and make ready for home, Tennyson's "Tithonus" rings in your ears:—

> "And the wild team
> Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
> And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
> And beat the twilight into flakes of fire."

THE SILVER DEE

THE Spey is swift, the Don is slow,
The Deveron strikes a happy mean;
But north or south, where'er I go,
There's none can match my river-queen,
The silver Dee.

From linn to sea she glides along
O'er granite bed and pebbles grey,
Singing a sweet and endless song,
And changing oft from grave to gay,
The silver Dee.

Among the giant, frowning hills
That link our noble Grampian chain,
She takes her birth and gathers rills
From crystal springs and filtered rain,
The silver Dee.

The golden eagle's wings outspread
Are pictured in her mirror blue;
The red-deer sees his antlered head,
Tine above tine, reflected true
In silver Dee.

She gambols with Braeriach's feet,
She kisses Ben Macdhui's knee;
And playmates more, of name unmeet,
She frolics with, in childish glee,
The silver Dee.

Through wild Braemar her waters glide,
Past Invercauld they make their way;
Grim Lochnagar looks down with pride,
Balmoral smiles a greeting gay
To silver Dee.

The progeny of mountain-kings,
She hath a lofty, queenly grace;
And now to kings and queens she sings,
Who love to look upon the face
Of royal Dee.

Mile after mile she broader grows,
For Gairn and Muick their tribute bring;
And rushing Feugh her melted snows
Secretes beneath the warmer wing
Of silver Dee.

To Ballater she comes amain,
And soon Aboyne she passes by;
Though townships give her many a stain,
She keeps a clear and sparkling eye,
The silver Dee.

At last she tastes, by Allenvale,
The brackish waters of the tide;
Her eyes grow dim, her spirits fail,
And soon the ocean's breakers hide
The silver Dee.

THE SULLEN DON

THEY call me sullen, call me slow,
And slow and sullen moods are mine,
As through the level haughs and low,
I creep, before I plunge in brine.

Kintore and Thainstone check my pace,
Parkhill, Kinaldie curb my speed,
And when I reach Balgownie's base,
I'm black and grim and dour indeed.

For there I know my race is run,
My earthly course is near its close,
There looms a fate I cannot shun—
The doom that greedy seas impose.

I'm sad, reluctant, loth to go,
For Ocean's jaws are open wide,
And Ocean's teeth are white as snow,
And in her maw I needs must hide.

But see me where the brown hills rise
Far away from the salt sea's breath,
I'm swift and bright with sparkling eyes
That know not fear of gloomy death.

Along my heather banks I course
Or dance with glee from pool to pool;
I'm full of life and youthful force,
Like playful boys let loose from school.

Corgarff, Allargue and Candacraig
I leave behind in buoyant mood,
I brush Poldullie, Bellabeg,
And many a bridge and many a wood.

I skirt Ben Newe, Culquoich the fair,
Glenkindie, Brux and Alford's meads,
And then with blandest smile repair
To Monymusk and Kemnay's reeds.

The Ernan, Nochty join their threads,
The Deskry, Bucket tribute bring,
The Mossat, Leochel hide their heads
Like birds beneath their mother's wing.

But Urie clouds my spirits gay,
I feel myself more sober grow,
Life's cares their hold upon me lay,
And thus it is, I sullen flow.

THE DEVERON

FROM Cabrach's Buck she sallies forth
And, gathering rills within her bed,
Meanders east, meanders north,
Till in the restless Moray Firth she hides her head.

A sweeter stream, from hill to sea,
You will not find in all this isle;
She's merry with a modest glee,
And masks her graver moods with coy and sunny smile.

Blackwater, Bogie, Isla deep
Bring each a hearty tribute in,
To feed the growing stream and keep
Her brimming waves above the rocks that lie within.

Then sweeps she wider, full and gay,
Past shining wood and cosy farm,
Where stands thy Milltown, Rothiemay,
A sleeping hamlet, bound in leafy hedgerows warm.

By Corniehaugh and Mayen's braes
To Marnoch bridge she saunters on,
Shoots the proud arch in haste, but stays
Where springs to view Kinnairdy's keep, its glory gone.

At Forglen's woods she slacks her rein
As loth to leave such beauteous bowers,
Through Eden's meads she sweeps amain,
Flashing a friendly eye on brave Montcoffer's towers.

Then Alvah's narrow gorge she threads,
And slips along the Duke's domain,
Where stately trees bend down their heads,
And, swinging to and fro, beat time to her refrain.

She leaves these coverts, tastes the tide,
And, piercing through the shingly bar,
She comes to where the breakers ride,
And, mixing with the brine, is borne to realms afar.

A SEA-BIRDS' NURSERY

"The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean fowl."—*Tennyson.*

OFTEN had we heard of Fowlsheugh—that unique segment of the Kincardineshire coast, unique on the eastern sea-board for its vast, conglomerate precipices, its grand majestic caves and underground galleries, as well as for its multitudinous populace of sea-birds; much had we heard, but not until the other day were we privileged to pay a long-deferred visit to this most interesting region. It has, of course, been many times described, but one may be pardoned for trying once again to put one's first impressions into words whilst the impression is new and fresh. No adequate inspection of the ground is possible except from the sea in a boat, and a small boat, so that perfectly calm weather is an essential condition of a completely successful expedition. On the day we chose this condition seemed happily met, for the sea was smooth and still, and a gentle southerly wind just ruffled the sea-mirror without waking "the mighty being" to anything beyond a moderate and soothing heave.

We were three passengers, under the skilful guidance of a fourth, whose long residence in Stonehaven has familiarised him with every inch of the way, and who could not be matched as a cicerone either for accurate knowledge or for enthusiasm in the oft-repeated quest. Passing from the quiet shelter of Stonehaven harbour, our trim little craft, propelled by two brawny oarsmen, crept round the Downie out on the heaving bosom of the North Sea. Four miles of jagged cliff extend southward, cut into fantastic shapes by the pounding of the

easterly gales, grim and solitary islets, bold and sphinx-like masses, beetling crags, and sheer, sharply-chiselled precipices. Dunnottar Castle stands midway, and at the extreme end is the culminating rock of Fowlsheugh, with its myriads of birds. The whole sea-fringe is an intricate series of gullies and narrow channels, through which our tiny skiff was deftly piloted, but in which a stranger would inevitably lose his way. It is in reality a kind of fairy world that the threading of these intricate passages discloses, and recalls the tales of adventure that are associated with coral islands in the southern tropics.

The caves are many; some large, some small, some wide and spacious and extending deep under the super-incumbent land, others narrow and tortuous, and tapering away to crevices where no boat can penetrate. Originally due to a geological "fault" in the sandstone conglomerate, the hollow which makes the caves has been gradually enlarged, scooped out, and rounded off by the ceaseless action of the waves. We were able to visit all the series, the Devil's Kettle, the Devil's Footsteps, the Long Gallery, and others. The boat steers straight for a yawning mouth, and glides silently into the open portal. The effect of running into an underground tunnel, out of the bright sunshine and the wide expanse of sparkling sea, into the sombre gloom of one of Nature's own grim dungeons, is decidedly weird. The light from the entrance is deflected from the glistening side-walls on to the water, and shows up its beautiful colours, "green as emerald" and varying shades of exquisite blue. Through the translucent deeps you can dimly see the brown tangles clinging to the rocky bottom, and swaying gently in the moving water. Above is the finely-arched roof, shaped by no earthly architect, sometimes green and brown and slimy with adhering algæ, sometimes smooth and polished, hard and glossy, the big rounded pebbles, in all tones of red, densely packed in the

hard matrix of sandstone. These occasionally protrude and look as if they could easily be gouged out like plums from a cake, but they are solid and immovable.

Ordinary sounds take a new tone under such surroundings. The echoes of the human voice reverberate up the dark, unprobed recesses of the caverns; at intervals comes the far-off wash of the waves as they splash up some unseen, gravelly beach; then you hear the dull, solemn, eerie "boom" of the swell, as it beats against the perpendicular barrier of solid rock outside. We glide deeper and deeper into the intricate mazes of these watery labyrinths. The half-lights glimmer and gleam, then grow dimmer; the gloom deepens till we are in perfect darkness. A back number of the "Free Press" is crumpled up into an improvised torch, set light to, and flung blazing on the water surface. Its fierce glare is reflected from the glistening walls, and gives the water channel an inky hue. We are now far under the projecting land, and the thought occurs that perhaps two hundred feet above our heads the farm-servants are busy singling turnips in the cultivated fields, unaware of underground visitors. Having gone as far into the bowels of the earth as the boat can venture, we ship our oars and pause for a brief space to drink in the solemnity of this wonderful scene, to feel the unexpressed poetry of a new experience, and to ponder the marvellous architecture that formed these great masses of conglomerate in the process of suns. It is an awe-inspiring sight, and fills one with the same solemnising thoughts as come from traversing the dim aisles of some vast cathedral. Then we turn back. Through the archway of entrance we catch a circumscribed view of the far sea, with a sun-lit white sail in the middle distance, and a passing steamer on the horizon edge. Then out from the gloom, through the gateway again into the grateful sunshine and the swinging waves, past some outlying island to which venturous rock-fishers have clambered over wire-rope bridges

to hang perched like sparrows on housetops, plying their angling craft. One of these daring adventurers, as our boat approached his perilous station, was blessed with a vigorous bite, and striking his long bamboo rod too suddenly and jerkily, snapped it at the top joint, but in spite of this untoward accident he held manfully on to the plunging fish, and no doubt succeeded in landing it safely after we had passed.

The diorama of cliffs is constantly changing. They are all manner of shapes, perpendicular walls, sheer and straight, wedge-shaped masses with clean-cut edges, rude bosses bulging out like vast excrescences, but always with the embedded pudding-stones firmly cemented in Nature's concrete. Sometimes the big pebbles are split right through the centre like an almond, sometimes a hollow mould or empty socket is all that is left to mark their place of pressure. Here and there short areas of pure sandstone occur, quite devoid of intrusive pebbles. In the crevices grow scurvy-grass, pink sea-thrift, and the white catch-fly fluttering in the breeze. Now and again the baser "dock," a vagrant from the cultivated land above, gains a precarious footing in a convenient crack, and flourishes nobly. The caves are, for the most part, wet, with a deep watery floor that ends at low tide in a scanty beach made of the re-shaped pebbles that did duty ages before in making the beaches of the prime; but one cavern on a higher level is entirely dry. Here the rock is an intrusive dyke of porphyry. You clamber over a confused heap of huge porphyritic boulders, hard as adamant, to find yourself in a spacious chamber, like some banqueting hall of a manor house of Norman times. It has a high-embowed roof, but the walls are damp and dripping, and the floor is irregular. In the dim light of its innermost recess is a stray dancing midge, frolicking gaily in obscurity, and not two yards away hangs a spider's web, arrayed in all its geometric exactitude, ready to make a prey of the winged

mite. Even in these dark dungeons the struggle for life is strenuous and implacable.

Gradually, as we cruise out and in amongst the waterways, we round the last headlands and come to the chief haunt of the sea-birds. At first they were entirely absent, or few, but as we approach the climax of Fowlsheugh they become more and more numerous. The cliffs swarm with feathered life. Guillemots and razorbills, puffins and kittiwakes are here by thousands; an occasional cormorant emerges from the crowd; a stray jackdaw, probably on the outlook for provender, flits about the rock-face; a few rock-pipits and rock-pigeons may be seen, but the great majority are guillemots, puffins, and kittiwakes. Every cranny, every ledge, every convenient hollow is occupied by nests, in which the young birds, now well fledged and clamorous, find a procreant cradle. The air is darkened with flying wings going and returning, like bees on a summer day round a populous hive, apparently in aimless journeys, but, if we knew all, with distinct purpose and foresight. The guillemots, with white breast and dark neck and wings, stand erect like miniature penguins, then hurl themselves from their foothold and flutter heavily out to sea, or plunge into the swelling tide. Their wings give the impression of being, in proportion, short for their weight of body, and they fly with some sense of effort. Their out-stretched black-webbed feet give a curious outline to these birds as they appear from the boat below; they resemble a flying squirrel more than a bird, and use their expanded feet for steering their course. The tail is the usual steering apparatus, but the guillemot has a meagre endowment of tail, and finds its webbed feet a very good substitute. The puffin is a much better flier; he is quicker and easier on the wing, but this quaint, sage-looking, old-world, ludicrous sea-parrot also uses his legs in flight. Only, his feet and legs are bright red, not black, and, when the webbed feet are expanded in mid-air flight, they give a bright

note of colour in contrast to the black and white of the guillemot. The black cormorant is very conspicuous when he shoots overhead. The walls of the cliff are white with droppings. The noise of so many clamorous tongues is deafening; it rises and falls as the breeze carries it towards us or away from us. A pistol shot from a passing boat fills the air with fluttering wings and crescendo of screaming. The "peep-peep" of the young birds on their narrow ledges mingles with the shriller cries of the parents. A chorus from 100,000 raucous throats, not moving in unison but each exerted to its limit, makes a babel indescribable. The guillemots settle down, bowing gracefully to us or to each other as they stand erect on their perches; a puffin takes a sudden leap, forges out to sea for a breather, and then returns to his ledge as if from mere spontaneity of energy and overflowing vital force. Dead birds float past the rocking boat—an index of the inevitable wastage that nature so readily sanctions. A mother-bird soars in with a glistening sand-eel in her beak. Some detached companies are swimming daintily on the heaving sea, now up on the crest, now down in the trough of the wave.

The great height of the cliff has the effect of diminishing the size of the birds. They seem strangely tiny as they stand on the abutting edges of the rock. No nests are ever placed on an accessible ledge. They are always well out of human reach. The result is that the nestlings are invisible from the boat level; they squat on the lowest dip of the hollow, and only now and again do they raise their heads to look over the precipice edge and scan the world below. The toll that the sea-life pays to feed such a multitudinous army of old and young must figure out to tons of provender daily. Any approximation to the number of nestlings reared every season in this lofty and exposed rock-face is difficult to reach, but even exact figures would give a poor notion of the vast and ceaseless activities that operate here from April to the end

of July. By the beginning of August the young birds are strong on the wing and a general exodus takes place. A hush of peace falls upon Fowlsheugh, and the wild waves sing unaccompanied by the clamour of sea-birds' tongues till the spring-time rouses the nesting instinct and again peoples the beetling crags with noisy life.

Having reached the outermost headland after three full hours of hard rowing against the wind, our boatmen sprung their mast and rigged up a broad sail. The breeze had grown since we started, and white-crested waves were prominent on the reefs. We slid along to Stonehaven at a good pace, past Tremuda Bay and Thornyhive, past Dunnottar ruins, which look greatly different in appearance as seen from the sea, past salmon nets and crab-creels, and overhead scattered parties of sea-birds, racing from the sandy northern coast with morsels of food to feed the hungry nestlings we had left behind in their princely nursery at Fowlsheugh.

THE DEEP SEA

I SANK, methought, in ocean's deeps
  Far, far down till I trod the ooze,
Miles below where the sunlight sleeps,
  Cradled in heaving greens and blues.

Calm and peaceful and passing cold,
  Dark and grim was the lonesome floor;
Only phosphoric gleamings told
  What hideous forms the fauna wore.

Great bristling jaws, wide, wide agape,
  And rounded, huge and goggle eyes,
And waving stalks of feather shape,
  And red crustacean mysteries;

Long, swaying tails and lanky limbs
  And tentacles whose probing feel
Searches the slimy mud and skims
  The lowly things that there conceal;

For, ever fall, like snowflakes white,
  One after one, the lifeless forms
That darted in the upper light,
  Till dash'd to death by ruthless storms.

Here comes not storm or current's flow;
A perfect peace rules year by year;
Winter and summer ne'er bestow
A darker day or brighter cheer.

This water-world is dismal, weird;
Eternal night for ever reigns;
No sound is heard, no flower is reared,
No putrefaction e'er profanes.

Yet death is here as everywhere,
Fierce tragic death from tooth and spine;
The strong the less protected tear,
For such is nature's discipline.

I left, it seemed, these realms of gloom
And slowly clomb to air and light;
Then waking, heard the breakers boom,
And saw the moon was shining bright.

FROM BUD TO LEAF

" . . . Such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect."

—*Tennyson*

THE transition from bare branch to leafy bough is always a moment of lively interest, and this year in particular the bursting of the buds has been so sudden, so markedly beautiful and dramatic, that it deserves a special word of comment. The long-continued winter kept back all traces of green till May was well begun; when the sun at last regained his power, the response was immediate, and the awakening has had something of a Canadian character. The tassels of the flowering currant were hung out at an early period, albeit they suffered for their temerity by being nipped where exposed to the keen April frosts; the silky catkins of the hardy willow were not retarded beyond their usual date, but they, too, lost their lustre under the constant teasing of bitter north-easters. The hawthorns, here and there in sheltered situations, thrust out a few tentative leaves, which are now brown and shrivelled; but all the other trees held their tender leafage safe under the cover of the protecting scales. Suddenly the temperature rose, the trigger was pulled, and within a week the trees in and around the city are in that condition which the late laureate so appositely describes as a mist of green, with nothing perfect. Nowhere is this charming state of matters more conspicuous than in Albyn Place, where the daily deepening of the texture of green and gold has superseded all the ordinary topics of conversation

amongst those whose fate it is to traverse that sylvan highway every morning. A week ago, right and left showed nothing but bare, gaunt branches; to-day the press of fresh leafage, in all the clearness of bright colour and untarnished glory, is a sight for old and young.

Perhaps the sycamores have the greatest breadth of greenery to display; their varied tints of gold and green are every day extending their range of covert. Not far behind them are the horse-chestnuts with their wide branches and the drooping fan-like bunch of leaves at the tip of every shoot. Most catching to the eye, however, are the copper beeches, of which there are some supremely graceful specimens opposite Albyn Terrace. These are at this moment a dream of exquisite colouring, a soft and delicate lace-work in pink, a vision of beauty that cannot be rivalled. Nothing in the way of pure leafage, apart from flower colouring, can compare with the first fortnight's kindling of the copper beech. As the leaves expand, the colour deepens to purple, and though still beautiful, they lose the delicate half-tones of their fledgling hours. At present they look as if a colony of delicately-tinted butterflies had lit on their arrowy sprays, butterflies of fairyland "on tiptoe for a flight." By contrast with the more prevalent green, the comparative rarity of this species no doubt enhances the brightness of their exquisite rich colouring. The ruby-budded limes, of which there are many overhanging the pavements, have protruded their million emeralds, crumpled, callow, unfledged, without a stain, immaculate in their purity and tenderness, and every twenty-four hours the fabric grows thicker. The lilacs already are poising their miniature flower-heads, with just the faintest tinge of characteristic colour. The scarlet-flowering hawthorns have also thrust out their beaded flower-buds, infants of the spring with June's display in front of them. The feathers of the rowan, the spangles of the birch, the satin tassels of the

laburnum, are hourly taking more definite shape and reaching their objective. The elm, the wide-branching elm, which a month ago was rosy with multitudinous blossoms, is already forming fruit, and the leaves, new from their silky sheaths, are multiplying their cells at break-neck speed. The ashes that guard the angle between Carden Place and Queen's Cross are still gaunt and bare; they give no sign that the sap is stirring within their hard rinds. The tender-ash delays to clothe herself when all the woods are green, but further down the street where there is shelter from the northern blasts, the ashes show dark, swollen knobs at the apex of every branch, evidence that the inconspicuous flowers are getting ready to emerge, and will in due time whisper in the wind.

All trees of the same species do not show a uniformity of forwardness. There are curious differences. The younger trees are first; the larger and more deeply-rooted trunks are several days behind. Is this because their roots are sunk deep in the cold boulder clay and glacial drift which is the sub-soil of Aberdeen, and thus take more time to feel the effects of the genial warmth? The black (Italian) poplars which line part of Beechgrove Terrace are still untouched by any vestige of green. They are as slow in their response as the ash itself. Still they, too, are feeling those blind motions of the spring that show the year is turned, and by and by their leaves will be quivering in every ruffling breeze, like the aspens which in some respects they resemble. But the Ontario or Canadian poplar, which belongs to the same order, is showing its rich gold-green. Unhappily, all these poplars in this region are moribund. Every year sees a few die out, and the survivors are losing ground. Whether this is due to disease, or to the pruning which their rapid growth sometimes makes necessary, we cannot say. We hazard the conjecture that the latter is the cause, and that the practice of lopping off an unsightly branch is fatal. Once a branch is lopped, the wet seems to find an

entrance into the soft wood and decay begins. The bark cracks vertically along the trunk, the younger branches diminish their stock of leaves, and the tree begins to grow more and more unsightly, until in a few years it is an ugly, half-dead bole, calling for removal. Yet we are told that trees which have never been pruned at all are going the same way. Whatever the cause, this poplar's day is over, and no more will be planted in this quarter. This is a misfortune, because when it does thrive, the tree brings an element of brightness into regions where few green leaves are seen, and it has often cheered the gloom of slums, where no other tree will live. The white poplar, of which there are one or two specimens in Albyn Place, does not seem to suffer in this way, and these are responding to the call of spring like the rest of their co-mates. The service trees which are a speciality of Hamilton Place and Fountainhall Road, are at their best in May. Later on, when tarnished by the weather, they appear shabby and lack any note of distinction, but, on their first emerging, the soft, woolly, corrugated leaves are remarkably beautiful, and when seen in a prolonged vista from one end of a street to the other, have a fine effect.

Flowers and trees are hardly compatible. The wall-flowers and hyacinths of Carden Place and Fountainhall Road scent the air, and the daffodils and the tulips feast the eye, but Albyn Place is poor in that respect, except it be the blaze of dandelions that glorify the grass of Queen's Cross Church, and which ought to point the moral of many of its Sunday sermons. There is no cure for this bold intruder except a potato crop, and although a belt of potato drills would be a sordid setting for such a handsome edifice, yet one year of this infirmity might be borne for the sake of an ultimate remedy. As it is, year after year this nursery of dandelions is an eye-sore to all enemies of this vilest and most tenacious of weeds.

A SPRING FLOOD

BUT yesterday the stream was moving slow,
Gliding pellucid, meek, within her narrow bed,
Kissing her pebbles grey and humming low
A sleepy tune to which no words were said.

The frost still bound her many mountain springs,
And shrunk her tumbling burns to summer rills;
The chill north wind had flapped his blustering wings,
And snow lay white upon the distant hills.

With early morn a westering breeze upsprang,
From far Atlantic borne, and freshly blew
His shrilling trumpet loud, and at the clang
Their spotless hoods the silent hills withdrew.

Slowly they cast their garments down the glens,
And every tinkling rill became a flood,
Seething and raging past the shaggy bens,
No longer crystal clear but red like blood.

A hundred teeming runnels jostle gay,
Plunging like steeds on the lone prairie bred;
Breathless they foam and dash their showers of spray
With hisses at each jagged boulder's head.

And here in this low valley near the sea
Outstretched on grassy bank I watch the tide
Shoot past in headlong race, and loathe the glee
That shakes my stream's dark hour of reeling pride.

Her charm is gone, her sweet and winning grace,
That lured the angler with its sunny smile,
Has vanished from her brow and in its place
Are frowns and temper petulant and vile.

Her whisper'd tune is now become a roar,
Fierce, drunken, mad and truculent and hoarse;
Her dimpled cheek is swollen and muddied o'er,
With bloated looks, ignoble, wanton, coarse.

Anon, when this wild rage hath passed away,
Her own true, beauteous self she will retrieve;
Again will smile, decked out in sweet array,
And coyly woo the kiss of summer eve.

AN AMATEUR'S GARDEN

Part I

"Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love."

—*Tennyson*

IT is perhaps too late in the day to reiterate the pleasures of gardening as a healthy, engrossing, and soul-satisfying pastime. They are too well known and too universally recognised to be redescribed here. The last word on the subject was finely said by Francis Bacon when he wrote in his essay "Of Gardens"—"God Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures." Yet one who spends much time amongst his flower-beds and vegetable plots may give some slight modicum of pleasure or of insight to others similarly employed, if he describe, however perfunctorily, the various activities that he engages in, and the triumphs that gild or the failures that cloud his summer hours.

If you wish to take all the joy and genuine delight that can be gained from such an employment, you must elect to be your own gardener. The millionaire who has many skilful and expert professionals to embellish his lawns may have pleasure in contemplating the works of art which other brains have planned and other hands have executed for his delectation—it is the joy of possessing a costly picture; but he can never taste the unalloyed pleasure that comes to the man whose handiwork it is. It follows that, if you are to do your own gardening, your area of ground must be strictly moderate, otherwise it will be beyond your powers to deal with unaided.

If it be larger than you can handle successfully, you are compelled to hire auxiliaries to supplement your efforts; and this takes away much of the charm. Half an acre, or a third, or even a fourth of an acre, in some cases, will be as much as you can manage single-handed.

The writer's own modest demesne is probably less than the third part of an acre, a long rectangular parallelogram sixty feet broad and probably some 300 feet long, extending from one street, which the dwelling-house fronts, facing north, right to another parallel street on the south, to which access is gained by a postern door. The greater part of the garden, therefore, faces south, and is protected from the biting north winds by the house, which is relatively high and broad. The small part of garden facing the north, and lying between the house and the street, is of little account. It has a few thriving evergreen shrubs as an undergrowth, above which wave the branches of a leafy lime tree, a copper beech, and a few others. Beyond keeping it fairly tidy I pay little attention to this patch; my activity concentrates itself on the long reach behind.

This is divided into two portions, the upper half containing a square of grass and a vegetable plot of similar size, while round these run borders well-stocked with herbaceous and bedding plants. The lower portion, which slopes gently to the south, is almost entirely devoted to vegetable products, with the exception of one considerable area given over to a properly-levelled grass court suitable for tennis, Badminton, or clock golf. A fringe of sycamores at the extreme end screens us from the observation of the houses across the street. The walls are covered with gooseberry and currant bushes, with apple trees and morello cherries.

The first consideration is the grass—two fairly large areas to keep in good order. Nothing sets off a garden more effectively than well-kept, smooth turf, free from coarse weeds.

This means hard work, for dandelions and daisies, not bred by yourself, but wafted by every gale from your less careful neighbours, find a foothold on your turf, and must be ruthlessly removed. Once let these intruders get the upper hand and you become paralysed and helpless. But dandelions, though an eyesore to every gardener worthy of the name, are easily dealt with, provided you act promptly, and adopt a policy of constant watchfulness. If you cut off the green top of each as it appears, and never give it time to vegetate and absorb a store of carbon as a reserve of energy, you will find that the plants gradually lose staying power, dwindle, and finally disappear. Every fresh attempt at growth is feebler than the last, and ultimately they are without force to send up green leaves at all. If you wait till the green leafage has stored up strength in the root, your task is greatly increased. The moral is to decapitate each as soon as it shows face. "Off with its head," and that promptly, is your cure. Daisies are much more easily negotiated, and even creeping buttercups, if they are assailed as soon as they appear. Above all, keep the mower constantly busy; that is the secret of the short, smooth, crisp turf, so pleasant to the tread and so agreeable to the eye. How much more charming a neat lawn is when kept entirely by the labours of your own unaided hands, and how much more pride you take in eyeing the trimly clipped edges when you have used the big garden shears to good purpose yourself.

The same applies to the vegetables you grow. Utilitarians without sentiment ask, What is the use of growing cabbages or peas or beetroot, or carrots and turnips, when you can buy them so cheaply? Such cold, stony people do not understand. They have never felt the glow of satisfaction with which you hand to your cook (reluctantly, it may be, for now their day is done and all your anxious effort has reached its culminating point) a brace of juicy cabbages, free from the

pollution of caterpillars, or a basket of succulent lettuces, or your first dish of green peas, with plump, long, well-filled pods. You aver with certitude that they taste better than those bought in the shops, and, even though your prosaic friends jeer at this conviction, affirming that it is only your narrow personal bias, there is something sound in your contention, for your products go straight to the kitchen pot, and are not limp and flabby and lifeless from exposure for hours in the sunny window of a greengrocer's store. You like to gather the peas with your own hand; another would uproot the growing stems, and work irremediable ravage. You make a point of digging your early potatoes in person; no one else will see that not a single tuber is missed. You resent the cook's helping herself to vegetables; she invariably chooses the wrong ones. The ignorance displayed by these culinary deities is appalling. They mistake cress for parsley, cut down your young radishes in the belief that they are mustard, know no difference between a spring cabbage and a winter one, nor between a Swedish turnip and an early Milan. They will step regardless on the newly-sown beds, and scatter waste leaves on your neatly-raked paths, and, when they gather flowers, think nothing of plucking up whole plants by the root. These misdemeanours justify you in excluding their hands from participation in your proceedings.

No doubt you have your worries, for gardening in city suburbs is at best often a heartless and ungrateful labour. Your spring onions dwindle away in the first week of July till not a single plant is left surviving. They have been "eaten of worms," the larvæ of the common fly showing a great relish for such toothsome dainties. Leeks as a rule are exempt from these attacks, as also are shallots; but even these in certain seasons are victimised. Carrots are the most uncertain of crops. Some years, by a liberal application of diluted sheep-dip, which is strongly carbolic, you may save

them. Another season, in spite of hard tramping of the soil when wet, they give way. Right on to the middle of July they look well and thriving, when suddenly one morning you find some plants drooping and yellow—the carrot fly has obtained access, and the larvæ have severed the tap-root and cut off the chief source of food-supply. Your beet has been thinned out on a uniform and well-considered plan, when all at once the symmetry of the ranks is broken by the appearance of dead plants all along the line. When you examine them you find that each has been sawn through at the neck. Scrape the earth from round the root and you will discover the depredators, the larvæ of the daddy-long-legs, which, under cover of darkness, come from their hiding-place in the earth to work you woe and devour the stems which you had destined to give relish to your salt beef in the winter. Sometimes a plague of slugs, especially after a frostless winter, threatens to decimate your first sowing of turnips and your spring cabbages. A pair of ducks which I have introduced, and which are allowed the free run of the garden during the evening hours, when the slugs begin their browsing, soon convert these succulent morsels into ducks' eggs, fresh every morning for breakfast.

Part II

ONE great trouble to the gardener, and the source of half his labour, is the getting rid of weeds. The enthusiasm of the keenest of amateurs is apt to succumb to this obstacle. He allows the weeds to run rampant for a while, and finds, when he begins to tackle the problem, that it is beyond coping with. Especially formidable is this trial when the garden is either absolutely new or very old and neglected.

A few years' strenuous perseverance is necessary to overcome the evil. The point is never to allow your weeds, whether they be merely grass or chickweed or shepherd's purse, to run to seed. One year of slackness or neglect and the soil will be so stocked with seeds that they will come up every time the earth is turned over, for many years afterwards. My garden has been carefully tended for twenty years, and the weeds are few. Such as exist come with the farmyard manure, or are blown over the walls from waste places or the gardens of less scrupulous husbandmen than myself. Thistles, groundsel, and dandelions all arrive in this way; but they are easily destroyed in the young stage. Couch grass and bishop's weed, which have underground creeping stems, are insidious enemies, and are frequently found in very old gardens where they have been allowed to run riot for years. You often see them in old manse gardens. Here drastic methods must be employed, even at the risk of losing a season's crop; otherwise you will have no after satisfaction. My garden walks have not been hoed for years, and now they are so hard that no seed can find a lodgment in them. Such as do appear are scooped out with an old knife. It is when you have reduced the labour which arises from this cause to a minimum that you really enjoy the work of your hands. Your time and trouble can then be monopolised by the plants you want to grow, and not wasted on these unwelcome intruders. In one way weeds are not bad, for they necessitate a constant stirring of the soil to keep them down, and this moving of the surface conduces to good growth of vegetables by letting air into the roots; but this can be done with much more expedition and ease if there are no weeds to kill.

There is, of course, the further question of insect pests —caterpillars devouring your cabbages and cauliflowers, and making them unsightly; red spider destroying the leafage and therefore the life of your apple trees; the winter moth

playing havoc amongst the leaves of your roses and amongst the apple leaves that the red spider has left; the caterpillars of magpie moths denuding your gooseberry bushes; earwigs drilling holes in your dahlias and devouring your French beans. All these things are very vexatious, and have to be combated in their season.

Once a week you must walk up your cabbage rows, turning over the larger and the lower leaves; you will find nests of eggs of the cabbage-white butterfly, dainty little yellow-beaded protuberances, set up on end like tiny skittles in regular array. They will hatch out in a day or two, and become greedy, voracious little caterpillars, so that you are just in time to closure their potentialities. A pinch between finger and thumb reduces the whole brood to helplessness. If you should miss, as you certainly will miss, however keen your eyesight, a clutch of these, your omission will be apparent on your next inspection, in devastation going merrily on within a certain area. With good eyes and some patience you may partially retrieve your mistake, but the great thing is to anticipate the hatch-out.

Red spider is most destructive in dry seasons to trees on walls; the remedy is to syringe the affected trees with cold water once a day. This takes valuable time which you would prefer to devote to more important duties, but if you do not act opportunely the little parasites will suck the life from every leaf, and make your trees in early June a sorry sight, and in no condition to mature the apples which may have set. By and by fresh leafage will come, and moister weather will keep the tiny mites at bay, but the half of your fruit will drop to the ground from lack of leaf nourishment.

The winter moth is a dreadful enemy to rose bushes and to apple trees. Hand-picking is the only cure, and that is a tedious, toilsome, and uninteresting business. Best of all, encourage the nesting of tits and chaffinches in your garden,

and these will prove most potent and efficient helpers. The worst of it is that, with so many cats about—for almost every household in your vicinity is sure to have a cat—these useful birds are scared away. For six years running a pair of tits have nested in the hollow of a dead tree in my garden, and during June are most assiduous in supplying caterpillars to their young brood. Unfortunately for me, they are just as kind to my neighbours as they are to me, and show a catholicity of spirit that I sometimes wish were more sectarian.

One drawback which militates against the complete success of your endeavours is the necessity of shutting up your house, and making a prolonged summer sojourn in the country. This is always felt to be a grievance by the amateur gardener. He leaves the work of his hands just at the moment when he is beginning to take satisfaction in it, when the worst of his labour is over, and when fruition is in sight. By the time of returning there will be many things to rectify which a very little attention at the proper moment would have prevented. Though weeds may be riotous, they will not, if you took care to leave none visible when you departed, have had time to shed their seeds. It is a comical sight to behold a householder, on the eve of his departure for the country, going round his garden, basket in hand, for the last time, to annex any stray weed, however tiny, that may have escaped his previous notice. Thus only can he minimise the detriment that is sure to arise from his enforced absence. A few days of fierce activity on his return will bring order once more out of chaos, and thereafter things are normal for the rest of the season.

Much more might be said. The pleasure of perambulating your plots when welcome rain has come after a period of prolonged drought, when the plants respond so instantaneously to the refreshing showers; of watching the scarlet runners as they clip their supports and twine round the long bamboo canes,

invariably in one direction, contrary to the course of the sun, and making, as it were, a competitive race for the top, when you are ready to back some favourite for the premier place; of timing the growth of peas from their first emergence above ground to the flowering stage, and from the first appearance of blossom to the moment of gathering the first dish of the season—these are simple but genuine pleasures. To some they seem trivial, worthless, and small; but to those who have tasted such delights they are sedative, medicinal, and altogether wholesome and innocent.

DAVID RENTON

[Schoolmaster, Free Church Institution, Macduff. Died 14th May, 1907.]

WHERE the grey church o'erlooks the pebbled shore,
The sheltered haven and the dark blue sea,
Close by the walls that hear his voice no more,
We lay to rest that bright activity.
A valiant heart was his, and staunch and true;
He march'd breast-forward, strenuous for the right,
And stamp'd his impress deep, and ever drew
From each whate'er was worthiest of light.
Unwearied, zealous, forceful, firm, he cast
The seeds of knowledge wide, and saw them rise
To many a branching tree that long will last;
Thus, thus he spent himself, and now he lies
Lulled by the voices of his boys at play,
Soothed by the murmur of the restless bay.

WILLIAM CARNIE

[Editor of "The Northern Psalter." Died 2nd January, 1908, aged 83.]

IT is not meet that he who paid the debt
Which Sorrow's tears to stricken friendship pay,
Himself should pass without some plaintive lay,
Some note of admiration and regret.
We loved the sparkling wit, in wisdom set,
The twinkling eye with all its merry play,
The kindly, tender soul that knew the way
To crown the humble with a coronet.
He took the young aspirant by the hand,
He whispered to the struggler words of hope;
Transformed, refined, and raised our vocal art,
Sowing his precepts broadcast o'er the land;
He gave King David's Psalms a freer scope
And tuned these holy songs to touch the heart.

JAMES MYERS DANSON

[Dean of the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. Died 29th December, 1909, aged 63.]

THE Grand Climacteric, like bird of prey,
Swoops down with silent wing, now there, now here,
Piercing our best, and those we hold most dear;
And thus we lose him, see him borne away,
From Council-board and festive gathering gay.
He fell on peaceful sleep at ebb of year,
When singing birds are mute, days short and drear,
And skies all sombre in their veil of grey.
He passes, but his virtue echoes loud:
The polished, silver speech that held the crowd,
The cultured mind, playing with lucid glow
On whatsoe'er is thought or done below;
The cordial hand-grip and the courtly grace—
Who can forget that saw him face to face?

GEORGE WEBSTER THOMSON

[Minister of the West United Free Church, Aberdeen. Died 5th May, 1907, aged 71.]

ACROSS the woods veiled in their mist of green,
Across the springing fields and gardens gay
With hyacinths and tulips, flowers of May,
The trumpet-call shrilled through the night serene,
And found him ready, as he e'er had been,
With lamp aflame, and as he prayed that they
Who were his flock should be, to thread the way,
The dark and sunless road towards the unseen.
His was a mind that gathered for delight
Whate'er was steeped in beauty, grace, and art;
He loved his native hills and felt their might;
He owned the painter's eye, the poet's heart,
As tender as a woman's when she brings
Her wiles to soothe an infant's sufferings.

TO THE DANDELION

"VILE weed!" the gardener calls thee, lusty flower!
And tears thy sturdy root in bitter hate;
But thou hast solved life's problem, and thy dower
Of selfish wisdom he will ne'er checkmate.

Thou dost not wait for April's warmer skies,
Nor linger till the leaf is on the elm,
We see thee ope thy saffron-coloured eyes
And early seize waste places for thy realm.

Thy yellow discs keen-sighted bees allure,
And merry children tales of woe recall,
Linking thy stems as fetters insecure
To hold their mimic prisoners in thrall.

And when full summer comes and shoots her darts,
So nicely aimed, into thy fairy shield,
Thy downy spheres to anxious lovers' hearts
A mystic sense and fateful visions yield.

Thy lush rosette of leafage makes a ring,
Barring the entrance of all rivals weak;
The modest daisy owns thee as her king,
Grasses and humbler herbs to thee are meek.

Thy milky root like fabled hydra grows,
And severed oft, restores its bushy head; -
Thy feathered fruit the north or south wind blows,
Till sunk in earth it rises from the dead.

Type of the hard and forceful, callous man,
Engrossed in sordid pelf, who crushes down
The meeker, purer souls with noisy ban,
And eagerly usurps their promised crown!

THE COMMON MOLE

AN OBJECT LESSON

"Old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?
A worthy pioneer!"

—"*Hamlet*"

ALTHOUGH the mole has become a proverbial symbol for blindness, he is by no means the dense, stupid quadruped that some in their ignorance of his ways have judged him. He more than makes up for his defects of vision by increased acuteness in other senses. The abnormal strength, in proportion to his size, of the forepart of his body, his powerful digging paws, and the whole structure of his compact little organism, so admirably adapted to his environment, make him, notwithstanding his somewhat unlovely exterior, an interesting study. If it should be your lot to find one of these intruders riddling your garden with subterranean galleries, you will exercise your talents to good purpose in trying to catch him, and it will be no reflection on your skill if, after all, he eludes your most cunning devices. Sport is not rife in a city garden; an occasional rat may find his way into your modest demesne, and being vermin—as all animals in the wrong place are—and a purely destructive agency, he invites his doom; but he is an easy prey as compared with the common mole, until you have acquired the necessary experience. Fortunately, it is a rare occurrence for *Talpa europæa* to invade such inaccessible territory, fortified as it is by deeply-founded stonework on every side.

What tempted the specimen the last chapter of whose history is here narrated to transfer his activity from the open

fields to a vegetable garden in the suburbs, or how he managed to effect an entrance, it were impossible to guess; but the fact remains that after a seven weeks' absence in the country, when the garden was first inspected, there were palpable evidences of an energetic intruder, who had been raising mole-heaps in all directions amongst the early potatoes, between the cabbages, and under the turnip drills. Minuter investigation disclosed a systematic network of miniature tunnels running down one boundary wall, crossing the ground at the foot, and returning by irregular lines to the original focus, ruthlessly undermining in their course your choicest cauliflowers, striking athwart your beetroot lines, and endangering the young roots of the most cherished and succulent products of your industry. Being a tyro at mole-catching, you at first think a few minutes of well-directed spade-work will unearth your unwelcome and destructive visitant, but repeated endeavours in this direction convince you that no remedy lies that way. You next invest in a spring mole-trap, which at a moderate cost promises to rid you of your busy tormentor. You make an incision in his subterranean gallery at a point where his operations seem recent, and inserting your trap right in his line of march, you count on having him by the heels without fail next morning. When daylight comes, although he has been active during the darkness, as evidenced by freshly-upheaved mould, he has not approached the vicinity of your trap, and you change your venue only to find next day that he has been very much alive in the region you unwisely vacated. Indeed, he is always much in evidence where the trap is not. So the game of hide-and-seek goes on, and you begin to get exasperated at human intelligence being checkmated by a mere mole, when a happy inspiration suggests—Why not multiply your traps and plant your engines at various places? You increase your armament accordingly, until your garden bristles with well-distributed weapons of offence, and

every evening before dusk you lay your trains as subtly as possible—without result. Once indeed a spring is jumped, and the depredator must have been within an ace of capture, but the loose nature of the garden soil no doubt clogged the spring at the crucial moment, and he succeeded in wriggling out. After a fortnight's pursuit he is still at large, and every morning leaves some mocking trace of his nocturnal energies. Sometimes you trace him right up to the cannon's mouth, but he either turns aside and by a semi-circular detour rejoins the original burrow at a point beyond the zone of danger, or, if you have rendered this course difficult by a breastwork of stones, he coolly dives lower, hollowing a new tunnel right under his former path and emerging in the old rut—scathless. It dawns upon you that mole-catching is not the easy pastime you imagined, and it flashes on your mind that the reason why the mole-catcher of the country districts confines his attention to this art must be that it demands special skill and knowledge besides concentrated effort and undivided singleness of aim—that it is in truth a profession in which success is forbidden to all but the specialist and expert.

This thought damps your ardour as an amateur, and in a pessimistic mood you are despairing of success, when chance throws in your way a tried hand of many wiles who has slain his hundreds. His counsels are a revelation. Avoid handling the trap, for the mole's sense of smell is so acute that he will not venture within an inch of your gin if its vital centre has been contaminated by the contact of human fingers. Second, cover your trap thoroughly up so as absolutely to exclude both light and air, for he is morbidly sensitive to both. These counsels sound promising; they seem to explain your repeated failures, and you hasten to apply them with circumspection, setting your trap, not as before with the unaided hand, but with a pair of iron pincers, and by the help of a tough piece of compact turf you secure a well-constructed roof, which

prevents the settling down of loose mould on the jaws of the trap and ensures the free and instantaneous play of the spring at the moment of release. The application of these cardinal precepts is a triumphant vindication of their wisdom, and one fine morning the potent and resistless steel grips the resourceful immigrant in the loins and puts a sudden end to his multifarious burrowings. There he lies with his mobile snout, his almost invisible eyes, his sleek, silky skin, unsoiled by a speck of earth, his broad, muscular paws turned outwards as in life—a model of natural adaptation, and doubtless serving a useful purpose in the economy of nature by creating in his search for worms an artificial tilth where such is necessary. But your Brussels sprouts, undermined and torn from their feeding roots, are hanging limp and flagging in the sun, and your momentary fit of sympathy for your victim is replaced by a feeling of satisfaction that at last your languishing vegetables will mature in peace; and it is without compunction that you consign his dumpy little carcase to mother earth.

THE COMMON SPARROW

THERE is a bird of homely kind,
Whose range of note is narrow,
Whose ways are rude and unrefined—
He's called the common sparrow.

He cannot sing, he never soars,
He flaunts no flashing colour,
He merely chirps; and yet our doors,
Without his chirp, were duller.

When grain I scatter in my yard,
To fatten up my poultry,
Although unseen, the thief's on guard,
And pops down from an old tree.

He maims my garden every spring,
He pecks my peas and crocus;
Papers or feathers on a string
He knows for hocus-pocus.

The blackbird or the thrush may steal
A ripe or ripening cherry:
Such petty thefts I do not feel;
Their songs are worth a berry.

But sparrow is a parasite
Who thrives on other's labours,
A masterful, pugnacious mite
Who quarrels with his neighbours.

Low tastes inform this dumpy wight,
He is a true plebeian;
He never drinks the lark's delight,
Or wings the empyrean.

Quite unconcerned he makes his home
In slum or gloomy alley,
By well-stocked farm or church's dome,
By manor or by *châlet*.

Where man resorts, he plants his tent,
With man he loves to wander;
He conquers every continent,
And rivals Alexander.

THE WELCOME

[To His Majesty King Edward VII. on the occasion of the inauguration of the New Buildings, Marischal College, Aberdeen, 27th September, 1906.]

"COLD is the North and cold the Northern Sea
With its keen winds, and cold the granite grey."
Thus have they said; What say they? Let them say!
Warm are the hearts that beat by Silver Dee
And glowing welcome do they pulse to thee,
To thee our gracious Sire, this festal day,
And to thy beauteous Queen; and humbly pay
Their meed of grateful homage loyally.
Nor these alone; for with us, hand in hand,
Are gather'd now from many a distant land
The wisest and the best of those who reign
In Letters, come to bless our ancient fane,
Our renovated pile, which knows it true
That frigid hearts in frigid climes are few.

JOHN MARSHALL LANG

[Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen.
Died 2nd May, 1909, aged 74.]

WHEN May, sweet May, had filled her lap with flowers
And loiter'd trembling on the bud-starred way
That leads to roses and the summer day,
The moonlit crown of King's and yon twin towers,
Rising above the old Cathedral bowers,
Heard the soft-whisper'd call to one who lay
Ready to break his staff and yield the sway
Of Academic life to other powers.
Great master of the happy phrase, he knew
To shape the common thought in winged speech
That pierced the air as with a trumpet sound;
A force resplendent, strong, yet of the few
Who win by tactful arts and ever reach
The goal they purpose without fret or wound.

ALEXANDER BAIN

[Died 18th September, 1903, aged 85.]

'TWERE vain to fret when Autumn flutters down
Her sere and wrinkled leaves, outworn and grey;
'Tis vain to grieve when sages pass away,
Their duty nobly done, with bright renown
Circling their mem'ry like a golden crown.
So thee beneath the reverent sod we lay,
Keen-eyed philosopher! whose name held sway
Where Learning wears her Academic gown.
The subtle brain that pierced the mists of thought
Gives now no quick response; the kindly heart
Touch'd to sweet, helpful issues, beats no more:
A lasting monument thy labour wrought,
Of honest work, of search for truth, of art
To cleave each stubborn problem to the core.

PROFESSOR MASSON

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

—"*Samson Agonistes*"

THE death of David Mather Masson at 85 removes from the four thousand names in the University Council, a name of great literary distinction, perhaps the name of greatest eminence in the present list. He has not, like many others whose loss we deplore, been cut off in his prime; he had completed his course, and a life of arduous labour has closed with honour, reverence, love, and troops of friends. Great precocity is too often the presage of a shortened life, but Masson's career is an exception. To be first bursar at 12, to graduate with honourable distinction at 16, to be editor of a newspaper at 19, and that in a time of acute and acrimonious controversy, are no ordinary exploits. From the uncertain lottery of Nature, he had the good luck to draw the double gift of a vigorous frame of body and an alert and enquiring mind. These great gifts he husbanded with skill and brought them to a happy fruition. From a humble home in the Gilcomston Steps near the Royal Infirmary, he rose to be Professor of English Literature in the metropolitan university of Scotland, and for thirty years exercised a most beneficent, abiding, and inspiring influence on the undergraduates of Edinburgh. He was, besides, a pioneer in the work of providing Higher Education for women, and, long before the university doors were thrown open to them, he

voluntarily gave them the benefit of his prelections. His researches on Milton and Milton's Century, his masterly exposition of the cosmogony of *Paradise Lost*, and his thorough handling of every difficulty connected with that difficult poem have earned the lasting gratitude of scholarship.

We have heard several contemporaries speak of Masson's undergraduate days. Dr. Bain, who followed him to Marischal College, but was four years his senior, often referred to the declaration of bursars in Masson's year. In those days a Latin version was the sole test; and the successful names were announced the morning after the competition, the examiners sitting up all night to complete their task. The candidates hung about the Town House door the livelong night, braving the cold and wet of late October, and too impatient of the result to think of going to bed. At six o'clock, Dr. Murray, minister of the North Church, came to the door and in the grey dawn gratified the expectant crowd of sleepy schoolboys by announcing "David Masson (which he pronounced Mason), First Bursar." Another contemporary recalled the fact that Masson was so diminutive in stature that his College gown came to his very heels, and that the boy himself was the "bonniest" boy he had ever seen. His fresh and ruddy complexion and finely-marked features drew all eyes towards him wherever he went.

Bain and Masson in early life were inseparable friends, took long walks together, unbosomed their thoughts with perfect confidence to each other, and when ultimately separated kept up the intercourse by correspondence. Their walk in life gradually drew apart, Bain giving himself up more and more to philosophical studies, and Masson becoming more and more engrossed in literature, but they were firm friends to the last. These two were grand types of the best products of the Northern University without any supplement from Oxford or Cambridge. They were in some respects moulded

after a common pattern, but in Masson the humanising effect of literary studies was increasingly apparent in a beneficent and large-minded tolerance and in great lovableness of disposition, whereas in Bain this influence, never very strong, ceased to operate. Bain, though always a kindly man, became, as he grew older, less and less emotional and imaginative, but with Masson the reverse was true. He was the most sociable of men. A great smoker (at one time he smoked an ounce of tobacco daily), he loved to sit and have his talk out with a congenial friend, pouring out reminiscences of De Quincey, of Thomas Carlyle, of the great Dr. Chalmers and the Non-Intrusion Controversy. Professor Davidson recalls the circumstance that once at the Manse at Bourtie, Masson and Minto spent a whole summer day in the Manse garden, each with his canister of tobacco under his arm, and each blowing clouds of smoke from his pipe, and the talk flowed freely all the time.

Aberdeen was much in his thoughts. He never lost his love for his native city. Once in the presence of Dr. Walter C. Smith we heard him ask the poet whether he remembered catching "flukes" at the mouth of the Don, and the question opened up a flood of reminiscences of Aberdeen in the 'Thirties. The University made him an LL.D. in 1864; his face was reproduced in the Mitchell Window; and he was honoured by being asked to unveil the Burns statue in 1892. These were the only acknowledgments ever made by his native city of her appreciation of his rise. At the banquet subsequent to the unveiling ceremony, he referred to the visits he used to pay in the company of Professor Cruickshank to the observatory of Marischal College tower and exclaimed, amidst the plaudits of his hearers, "Oh, there never were such stars in the world as those I saw from the top of Marischal College." He dearly loved to discuss the derivation and meaning of local words. We recall how, at his own dinner-table, he elucidated the

word "antrin," throwing out the sentence, "I hae seen her at an *antrin* time," for the benefit of those who had never heard the word. His laugh was of the hearty, genuine sort that Carlyle made a test of heroism. With what a guffaw he greeted the word "bass" (a door mat); he had not heard it, he said, for forty years. He was an out-and-out Scot, and had no patience with those who attempted to belittle or traduce Scottish sentiment. "There are very few Scotchmen, who, whatever they may pretend, are devoid of pride in being Scotchmen. Penetrate to the heart of any Scotchman, even the most Anglified, and there will certainly be seen a remnant in it of loving regard for this little land that lies north of the Tweed."

His books are for the most part of lasting value. His monumental work on Milton, in six ponderous volumes, might be called the last word on that subject, if a last word could be said on any subject. Professor Raleigh may come in with his delightful criticisms, but no further research is possible. Every topic is probed to the bottom with the most complete thoroughness. Whatever Masson undertook he did thoroughly. He elaborated his ideas with a slow and deliberate pertinacity that sometimes irritates those who want a short cut, and who wish to reach a conclusion more rapidly. Perfect lucidity was his ideal, and he could not let the subject go till he attained absolute clearness. His notes on Milton's poetry are models. They explain whatever needs explanation, and they indicate striking features in Milton's art, but they are not made pegs on which to hang a display of erudition. His own writing was never slipshod or hurried. In one of his books he fulminates in no measured terms against the misrelated or floating participle, an insidious error which he denounced as the commonest but most objectionable error of our own time. Some critics complained that the influence of Carlyle was too apparent in the style of certain of his books. Occasionally one will come

across expressions and turns of sentence that suggest Carlyle's ways, but they are not so common as such criticisms would suggest. He had not the lightness of touch that characterises present-day criticism. Solidity rather than grace was his prominent quality, but he has left his mark on the history of English Literature, and his professorial teaching has had far-reaching influences which will not easily be effaced.

THE PRAYER OF GREYFRIARS

[The extension of Marischal College, Aberdeen, necessitated the demolition of the pre-Reformation Church of Greyfriars, which was replaced by a new structure in conformity with the University Buildings.]

DISTURB me not, ye Vandals! I am grey
With eld, deformed, unsightly, too, they say;
But centuries have pass'd since first I rose,
A Gothic structure fair, and when the foes
Of Rome reformed the Church and swept the land
Of Papal power, I 'scaped their ruthless hand.

Leave me in peace! Much have I heard and seen!
I heard the wail o'er Flodden; Mary, Queen
Of Scots and Beauty, lived when I was young;
I, passive, saw Spain's proud Armada flung
By raging billows of the wild North Sea
To fate—our sister's glorious victory.

Destroy me not! The Royal Martyr's fate
To me seems but a thing of recent date,
Though five-and-twenty decades have roll'd past
Since "right divine of kings" to earth was cast.
I can recall the Revolution great
Which shook my hoary walls in 'Eighty-eight.

Lay not unholy hands upon my dust!
Nor yield to Philistines' destroying lust.
I felt the "Fifteen" and the "Forty-five,"
Bootless to keep the Stuart cause alive.
I heard the bear, Sam Johnson, growl along
The Broadgate, snubbing faithful Bozzy's tongue.

Oh! spare this fane; for once a pale, lame boy
Who lived hard by, played "hide-and-seek" with joy
Among my dusky buttresses and cast
An eye poetic on my windows vast.
He woke one morn and found satiric fame,
But died heroic death and left a name.

Oh, wreck me not! but let me shine renewed
By builder's skill, and let this endless feud
Which once condemned me, then reprieved, expire.
Be grateful to the son of worthy sire,
And let his thousands ten transform my face;
Root out those squalid booths that crowd my base,
Then I shall flash to view, a happy contrast rare
To those gay, dizzy towers, that pierce the upper air.

THE CENTURIES

XIXth

A GEM in Time's tiara shineth bright
That yester morn we saw not sparkling there;
A hundred years 'twas forming, round and fair,
And now 'tis fix'd eterne, like star of night.
Meantime, man learn'd to harness Nature's might,
And skim the seas, and o'er the land to fare
Swifter than darting swallows fly; laid bare
The secrets of the stars; created light
Whose brilliance shames the sun; withdrew the veil
That hides the subtle germs of life—his bane
And oft-times death; disclosed the strange advance
From lowly forms to ever higher scale,
And taught our thoughts to flash across the main,
Destroying space—a boon beyond romance.

XXTH

A mother loves with fondly-forward eyes
Upon her infant's after-days to pore,
And we forecast the years, grasping the ore
That in their hidden mines uncertain lies;
But who can guess what marvellous surprise
The waves of coming time will roll ashore?
Shall mankind vie with albatross and soar
With easy flight across the fickle skies?
Or shall the mists that cloud Disease's darts
Be blown aside? The restless ebb and flow
Of tides be turned to happy use, and wipe
The sweat from many brows? Or warlike arts
Be changed to bloodless peace? Or shall men grow
To heights of knowledge and to wisdom ripe?

THE TREE ARTISTIC AND THE TREE COMMERCIAL

ART and science, beauty and utility, are opposed couples. They look at the world and at Nature's products through different spectacles. Nowhere is the antagonism between the utilitarian spirit and the æsthetic more pronounced than in the matter of trees. The tree of art and the tree of commerce are miles asunder. A painter or a poet contemplates with an artist's love of beauty the individual oak, or elm, or beech, wide-branched, well-balanced, umbrageous, swaying in every breeze. He loves to hear its branches whisper in the summer wind or groan under the fury of a hurricane. He shelters under its leafage during a sudden shower, he sees the Dryad lurking within the screen of its close-pent boughs. The commercial forester or wood merchant, on the other hand, derides such vegetable growths as mere cumberers of the ground, since they have no commercial value and are good only for firewood. What he loves is the long, straight stem, free from branches and knots, the finely tapering trunk that rises straight from the ground, and will saw up into clean and serviceable planks. Each is entitled to his own point of view. One sees only the beauty of the branching stem, where individuality has enjoyed ample room and free play to work out its ideal; the other looks farther ahead, and estimates value entirely by the standard of the woodyard. The points of view are incompatible, irreconcilable, opposed, and yet there is room, there is a necessity for both in this imperfect world. The market gardener who grows narcissus and jonquils,

roses and carnations for Covent Garden, is limited by utility and economy. He rears his plants in rigid, stiff, mechanical rows, utilising every inch of the ground, and calculating on so many blooms to the square foot. The landscape gardener, on the other hand, who caters only for beauty to the eye, dots his plants at intervals over his demesne, and tempts them to flash their charms forth at unexpected moments on the chance passer-by.

Undoubtedly the artist's standpoint is the one accepted by the generality of mankind. Who that has traversed the grounds of some ancient manor-house, and has stopped to survey the mighty growths that give variety and grandeur to the grassy lawns but finds himself on the side of the poets?—

> "Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
> Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
> Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
> New from its silken sheath."

The wood merchant looks askance, and shrugs his shoulders at this kind of wood; but the towering, rounded sycamores, the leafy, wide-armed chestnuts, the branching oaks, and elms of gnarled bark, the smooth-skinned beeches radiating off into a thousand branching stems are full of beauty to the artist's as well as to the ordinary man's eye. It is useless for the forester to plead that if all the solid wood of such trees, instead of being dissipated in multitudinous and useless branches, which are mere lumber, were concentrated in one straight stem, the commercial value would be multiplied a hundredfold. It is true, but irrelevant. The money value would be increased, but the beauty would be lost. Man cannot live by commerce alone. The world would be the poorer, and life rendered more barren, but for the glory of the branching, solitary tree.

The trees of commerce must be planted close together—

no more than a yard apart. The struggle for air and light forces all active growth to the head; the side branches get no encouragement; they cease to prosper; by and by they die and drop off decayed. The result is a dense mass of straight clean stems, devoid of branches, lacking in those hard knots that give trouble to the saw and the plane, and destroy the uniform quality of the wood. It is such crowding that makes the ideal wood of the joiner and the house carpenter. In a pleasure park, where trees are grown for beauty, and beauty alone, each is granted ample space and elbow-room. The side branches obtain plenty of light and air. They develop just as vigorously as the main stem. The result is a leafy, much-divided series of boughs, tapering off in all directions, "laying their dark arms about the field." This is the secret of their varied beauty. Hence Keats could appreciate large, branching oaks:—

> "As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
> Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
> Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
> Dream, and so dream all night without a stir."

And Tennyson could on similar lines describe elms and sycamores:—

> "Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
> Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
> And thou, with all thy breadth and height
> Of foliage, towering sycamore."

Afforestation is in the air, and our waste places will soon be crowded with rising firs and larches. This is well, but we should be careful to see that in the new departure the artistic side of tree life shall not be obliterated, and that in certain areas the beauty that comes from leaving trees to grow green and broad under natural conditions and without artificial restrictions, shall be preserved.

One wonders why our preachers have not utilised this distinction for moral purposes. The solitary tree, growing by itself and with ample scope for development in every direction, blown upon by every breeze, thrusting its roots deep, and its branches wide apart, is typical of that individuality, sturdy, independent, stalwart, and beautiful, which is rarer to-day than it was in previous centuries. The trees of the close-packed forest, slim, tapering, all of a uniform pattern, without individuality or marked idiosyncrasy, are an analogy to modern life in large cities. Our close-packed civilisation tends to make all citizens after one pattern. Individuality is sunk; we develop no knotty features; our roots are shallow; we have not buffeted with the winds and the storms; we are units in a crowd, as like as peas. We have rubbed off our knots and our gnarls, but we have lost something of the moral beauty that comes from independent development. Our value as commercial, wage-earning instruments is, perhaps, thereby increased, but our individuality of character as men is as certainly diminished.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

(Died 15th April, 1888.)

THE sunshine of mid-April comes again
And crowns with gold sweet Oxford's dreaming towers,
And clothes in green thy scholar-gipsy's bowers—
Cumner and Bagleywood and Hinkseys twain.

This day thy sudden summons came, strong soul,
To join that stronger soul, thy valiant sire,
In God's vast labour-house we know not where,
And bring thy force to its clear-purposed goal.

Self-poised thou wert; a stoic mind austere,
That would have man on his own strength rely,
And look within, nor cureless ills deplore;

Untutored still, thy voice he will not hear,
Nor heed thy prayer for peace—that plaintive cry
Against the restless world's loud brawling roar.

ROBERT BROUGH

[Artist. Died, of injuries received in a disaster on the Midland Railway near Cudworth Junction, 21st January, 1905, aged 32.]

MY garden is a treasure-house of flowers,
Tulips yellow and blush and fiery red;
And hyacinths, that mount in azure towers
When May's bright magic stirs their hidden powers,
Ring round the centre bed.

And one strong, pregnant stem of promise fair
Drew every morn my gaze to watch its rise,
As shook its beaded petals out to air,
Waxing from green to purple, rich and rare,
Ever a new surprise.

Till an unskilful gardener, sent to mow
The grassy plots and free from disarray
The gravel walks that wander to and fro,
Struck down my fragrant spike with luckless blow,
And bore it crush'd away.

JAMES MOIR

[Rector, Aberdeen Grammar School. Died 16th May, 1902, aged 56.]

THE flag droops midway in the drizzling rain
Above the halls which hear his voice no more,
Who pierced the net of circumstance and bore
With eager foot across the open plain,
Eyeing the crags afar, striving amain
To scale the dazzling peaks of classic lore;
Up these he clomb and saw the farther shore
How fair; then turning, victor, he was fain
With beck'ning hand and kindly voice to cheer
The tender stripling through the rocky way,
And many won the upward road; but he
Was thrust by dire mischance's random spear,
And crept on broken wing and falteringly
To where the friendly Shadow waiting lay.

AN OCTOBER RUN

"One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name."

—*Scott*

THE beech leaves are flying, and the pine-tops dance wildly as they are caught and cuffed by the south-west gale. Black, ominous clouds gloom over the sky and fleet before the wind from horizon to horizon; the weather-wise shake their dissuasive heads when, rod in hand, you step on the railway platform and announce your intention of trying for a salmon. "The river is too low and clear; the stream is thick with floating leaves," they object, while the strength of the wind and the absence of sunshine are gravely urged as fatal circumstances. But it is your last chance for the season, and the "last taste of sweet is sweetest," so that hope easily brushes aside the quid-nuncs' wisdom and promises herself a pleasant outing, even if the central factor of "a kill" be eliminated. Are not the autumn tints glowing at their ruddiest? Is not that prize enough, even though this basket be empty? So you trudge off serenely, resolved to be content with the beauties of nature, and, indeed, at this season these are sufficient to fill the least imaginative soul with ecstasy. The harmonious blending of yellows and reds and greens that the wooded reaches of the Dee valley present when October is waning, appeals to most minds, albeit its full beauty can be realised and felt only by the artist. The flaming red of the beeches, brighter in contrast with the glaucous green of the surrounding Scotch firs; the delicate, pale gold of the lace-work-like leafage of the silver-boled birch; the wild cherry flicking the rosy

remnants of its summer's pride; and the bronze of the fading oak are all painted with nature's lavish and liberal hand. Flowers there are none; but their place is taken by something more massive and splendid and on a scale eclipsing their minuter beauties. The doghips, still intact, shine bright on every rosebush by the wayside, and the bare stubble fields are relieved in colouring by the contiguous green of the leafy turnip. Within the wood, the beech nuts and acorns are pattering to the ground; through the withered bracken, dry and sapless and light chocolate in hue, creep the trailing bramble shoots, beaded here and there by glistening fruit; and the litter of leaves already fallen—without, to all appearance, materially diminishing the glories overhead—and not yet compounded with the earth from which the sun's magic lured them, rustles crisply under the passing foot. Where the wind has not disturbed them, the scattered leafage lies inches deep, and suggests Milton's "thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa"; but, aloft, the breeze whistles and soughs and surges in the tree tops; here, in the covert, you are in a haven of peace, and your footfall on the velvet carpet of moss, or a springy bed of fir-needles, makes no sound; you are in a hushed retreat which no boisterous gusts can pierce.

You emerge at the river bank, where the flying gold of the woodlands is being rapidly liquidated by the spendthrift gale and whirled into the swift and silvery Dee. You are soon equipped for warfare, and your fly is searching the depths of a likely pool. Carefully you cover one pool after another, but without result, and you begin to credit the wisdom of your would-be prophets. The wind is furious and troublesome, and, as they predicted, the stream is aglow with floating leaves; but you do not despair. The sun breaks through the clouds and sends a jubilant ray into the pellucid stream, lighting up each rounded pebble in the river bed. You are casting mechanically, for you have not had one spark of encouragement to keep

your attention on the alert, when suddenly you feel a sturdy jerk, and that indescribable electric tremor that comes from contact with a living thing, and in a flash you realise that your fly has gone home, and that you have an exciting struggle before you. At first you see nothing, but your line moves with a steady pull up-stream into the more broken water; gradually the pace increases as your victim seems to realise the gravity of his predicament, and when he reaches the neck of the current he sends your heart into your mouth by plunging for a brief moment into visibility. So sudden is the movement, and so unexpected the size of the fish, that for a second your will-power is paralysed, and you forget that most elementary precept in such circumstances, the necessity of lowering your rod; but fortune is kind, and no mishap occurs. He darts across to the opposite bank, while your reel "skirls" fiercely, and your nineteen-foot rod bends like a bow. That short glimpse of his shining bulk bespeaks a twenty-pounder at least, and your friends who have come to give help and guidance begin to speculate on your chances of a successful issue. "Remember the smallness of your hook, and be cautious." "Do not dally, for something may get chafed, and he may break away." It is needless to attempt adhering to these contradictory counsels, for the fish has it all his own way for a time—down-stream on this side, then awthart the current and up-stream on the other side; then a fall back to deeper water and again a charge forward, and these see-saw manœuvres are repeated again and again. If your prey had only the wit to rush up-stream in one continuous and sustained effort, he would leave you hopelessly behind and soon exhaust your reserve of line, and liberty would be his; but, fortunately, this policy has not dawned as yet on the piscine brain. You keep a tight line, and, being constantly on the move, he by and by begins to labour and roll. For twenty minutes you pace up and down, muscle and mind on the strain, till your

biceps, unaccustomed to this kind of exertion, trembles and aches. A happy moment is chosen, and your friend steps out with the gaff to bring the fish to land, but his spirit is yet unbroken, and the sight of a human being in so close proximity sends him forth once more on his wild career. A second time and a third time the same thing happens, but at last he is flapping his tail on the pebbly strand. He turns the scales at 22½lbs.—a plump and silvery fish with a cicatrix behind the dorsal fin—interesting record of an attack by seal or otter, from which he happily escaped to fall into more appreciative hands.

It is time for lunch, which all are agreed has been well earned, but, after an hour's adjournment, operations start afresh. The wind is more violent, the shower of whirling leaves thicker than ever, but the sun continues to throw his bright gleams over the wooded banks, brightening the islets of colour in the sea of pines. There is no fresh excitement until you come to the scene of your early triumph, and at the identical spot where that took place, you hook another fish. His tactics are the same, but he is less heavy, more sombre in colour, less determined in spirit. Moreover, you are more at your ease. "Use lessens marvel." In a few minutes he, too, is jerking his expansive tail on the clean pebbles—a nineteen-pounder, which, if he had stood alone, would have been something to speak of, but he suffered from eclipse by a greater.

The sun declines in the west, and with it goes the sobbing wind; the hush of a cloudless autumn evening settles on the hills. A star peeps out, and in the gathering dusk you make for the railway station and the bustle of the city streets, but you will fight your battles o'er again, and recall that October day with no mean pride.

A BLIZZARD IN BUCHAN

LECTURING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

"'Twas a rough night."
"My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it."

—"*Macbeth*"

THE good people of Aberdeen who on Friday evening sat comfortably at their own firesides and rejoiced over the break-up of the frost can hardly realise the furious tempest that raged during the night in the exposed uplands of Buchan. Some experiences of the East Aberdeenshire weather that has to be faced in the course of an electoral campaign have recently been recorded; it was the lot of the present writer to encounter a series of misadventures which he humbly thinks surpassed them all. He was not in Buchan for the purpose of exploiting any political propaganda, but merely to deliver an innocent lecture on a non-political subject. The roads were reported clear, the abnormal frosts of the previous days having performed their silent ministry, unhelped by any wind, but the partial and half-hearted thaw of Friday afternoon brought with it a stiff north-wester which, gathering force as the evening hours drew on and making a plaything of the loose, unpacked snow, soon built it up in long, deep, fantastic and corniced drifts that made locomotion of every kind a struggle.

As we left the snug village of New Deer, bound for the more upland region of Cairnbanno, some four miles distant,

the snow powder was drifting across the highway in a fashion that boded ill for the return journey, but this did not frighten us. It was just 7 o'clock. The anonymous comet was clearly visible as an interloping intruder low down in the western sky; the merry tinkle-tinkle of the sleigh-bells was cheery antidote to the crunching and rasping sound of the runners as we glided swiftly over a somewhat bumpy road. We were soon out in the open country where the drifts lay athwart the road, not at right angles, but askew, and tapering off in uncertain and irregular ridges not easy to negotiate. In the dim, weird light just preceding moonrise, the drifts were discernible only by the rise and fall of the sledge, as it took the billowy ridges like a boat heaving on waves. All went well for half the distance, although several times our steed, plunging unexpectedly into wreaths of great depth, lost his foothold and came down on his knees. He always righted himself, however. Then we reached a much-exposed part of the thoroughfare, across which the wind whistled with terrific fury, whirling clouds of fine snow particles in blinding gusts, right in the face of man and beast. All eyes were shut in self-defence for a brief moment. This lapse from attention cost us dear. The sledge bumped, turned sideways at a high angle, and then, canting over gently to the left, deposited driver and passenger headlong in a deep drift. The sway of the sleigh shafts caught the horse unawares as he made a wild plunge forward; he slipped, stumbled and fell, and there we were all blent in one white heap! It was a downy fall; the only risk was from the kicking horse. The driver promptly flew to the animal's head; the passenger humbly strove to right the inverted sleigh—a task quite beyond the strength of one pair of arms. In the absence of extraneous help we were paralysed, and might pass the night in this predicament. No house in view; nothing but blinding drift and a wind that cut like a knife. I was planning to run ahead and call for succour, when providentially appeared a youth,

looming out of the haze—a white and ghost-like figure. Grasping our plight, he promptly retreated to summon assistance. Soon a dancing lantern was visible in the rear, and behind it came several willing helpers, wind-swept, snow-white forms, looking larger than human in the thick gloom. We made a weird picture, something between Lieutenant Shackleton's illustrations of Antarctic blizzards and the half-light scenes that we are accustomed to associate with the dim underworld of Hades and classical mythology. A second lantern hove in sight. A "lassie" with brown hair and flying skirts came to join the company. There we stood, a semi-circle of blanched figures, with backs to the wind—hair, whiskers, headgear, every garment powdered.

"Ay, Geordie, that's an immas nicht."

"Man, I nivver saw the marra o't."

"Bit far's the horse?"

The query was relevant, for meantime both horse and the driver holding down his head were all but out of sight in the accumulating snow, and the sleigh itself was also fast disappearing from view. Willing hands, however, set to work; shovels were procured; the shafts were at last withdrawn from the vehicle and the good horse, relieved from his awkward and constrained horizontal posture, once more stood on his feet. It was, however, pronounced useless to proceed further with the sleigh. Horse and trap were relegated to the adjacent farm, whence such opportune help had come. The remainder of the journey had to be accomplished on foot. So the writer trudged on, under guidance, to Cairnbanno School. On entering the schoolroom, he must have looked a veritable Father Christmas. The humorous shout that greeted him from a packed audience, which after waiting patiently for half an hour was beginning to despair of his appearance, was cheering, and put hearers and speaker in touch at once.

The lecture over, there was the ordeal of the return journey.

The wind had, if anything, increased, and the wreaths had grown larger in the two hours' interval. Our plans were to return on foot to the farm where the horse and trap were in shelter. This took time, but the lantern of a friendly guide was a great help. It warned us of the proximity of a drift, and gave us the chance of circumventing it, where that was possible. Notwithstanding this aid, blinded by the gale and advancing with half-shut eyes, we made occasional false steps and found ourselves suddenly up to the waist in a slanting ridge, and must wrestle out as we best could. The unwonted exertion sets the circulation in a glow; we are breathless and gasping, but plunge on. Ultimately we have to take to the cultivated land—snowfields, waste and pathless—where the drifts are less in evidence than in the roadway, and thus by a circuitous route we reach the comfortable stable where our horse is in shelter. Munching his hay in sweet content he seemed averse to taking the road again; but there was no remedy. For a mile we paced along slowly and warily without mishap, pausing now and then, after the fiercer gusts, to let the steed recover his wind; then forward to the next series of obstructions. By and by we reached a more perverse section than ordinary. The horse was up to his haunches at every step, and quite unable to keep his feet. Right ahead the same conditions seemed to persist as far as the eye in the misty moonlight could pierce. It was impossible to proceed; the sledge must be left behind. Most opportunely we succeeded in finding an open gate, led the horse into the field, unharnessed him, and, leaving the sleigh to be recovered in daylight and under less strenuous circumstances, we once more took to the highway on foot. It was a weary and exhausting journey. My cheery driver, lantern in hand, led the horse; I followed, carrying the useless and irrelevant whip. By a frequent shout he ascertained whether his passenger was keeping in touch with his lead. Wreath after wreath had to be

laboriously surmounted. We advanced but slowly. At last, however, the welcome lights of the village of New Deer came in sight, and at midnight I was seated before a blazing fire, drying my steaming garments, and thankful to have reached a sheltering haven. At the inn I found a fellow-traveller—a well-known citizen of Glasgow—whose sleigh had preceded mine by an hour, and just succeeded in getting through safely. A pipe was heaven upon earth after such exhausting efforts. My dreams were all of ghostly forms emerging from regions of gloom, of horses plunging wildly up to their haunches in piles of soft, yielding snow, and of my own helpless legs sinking deeper and deeper in drifts that seemed to be bottomless.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

[Dumfries, 19th August, 1900.]

WHO will not pause, great soul, beside thy dust
And silent cast his thought far back to days
When thou didst tread these very streets, with praise
From few and bitter blame from many thrust
Into thy feeling ear? Our times, more just,
Forgetting frailties of the blood, thy blots erase
And know thee better; crowd thy tomb with bays
And keep thy purer metal clear of rust.
The limpid Nith, since death first laid thee low,
Has babbled past thy mouldering clay and borne
Thee many a greeting from thy leafy cot
At Ellisland; there still the daisies grow;
The scudding hare and tim'rous mouse yet mourn
The kindly heart that sang their humble lot.

A BLACK FISHING

"DIV ye think, Geordie, 't ye cud get a salmon for the morn's denner? I hiv twa deuks an' the turkey 't yer auntie sent, bit I think a bittie salmon wud be something oot o' the ordinar', an', min' ye, we've a lot o' fowk comin'. There's fourteen, coontin' wersels, an' they'll a' be gey yap aifter their lang walk in this snell weather."

"Ah, weel, 'ooman, it's easy to say 'salmon'; there'll be nae diffeeculty in gettin' plenty o' fish, an' they were sae lang in winnin' into the fresh watter this year, owin' to the great drucht, an' they're in gran' order an' nae a bit reed, an' I'se warran' they'll ett weel. Bit, min' ye, the baillies is aye hingin' aboot, an' if I wis catched, it wud be a dear fish to me an' to you, tee. Hooever, since ye've set yer hert upon haein' a bittie to set aff the big denner, I'll risk it. I'll tak' Jock wi' me, aifter it's weel gloam't, an' wi' the help o' a lantern we sud bag a braw fishie in a handclap."

It was Christmas Eve, and Geordie had finished his mid-day dinner, when this conversation took place. The house in which they lived was on the highway, at no great distance from the river, and it must be confessed the temptation was very great. Geordie Howie was a decent, respectable man, who would have disdained a theft or any other kind of immoral conduct, but to take from the river a fish which was no man's actual property, somehow struck his ethical sense as no crime at all, if only the deed could be done outside the knowledge of the properly-constituted authorities whose duty it was to guard against such offences.

Geordie smoked his pipe meditatively for twenty minutes, and then summoned his son Jock to make a preliminary reconnaissance.

"Jock, min, yer mither's verra anxious to get a salmon for wir denner the morn; div ye think we cud manage to grab ane, on-been seen, the nicht?"

"Och, fine that; I wis up the waterside yesterday, an' the Haugh Pot's jist swarmin' wi' fish that hinna begood to spawn yet. Come awa' up bye Cottie's fyord an' I'll lat ye see them. Bit we'll need to keep a gleg e'e for the baillies. I saw them dodgin' aboot, up this wye, yesterday aifterneen."

"Ye're richt, Jock; that's the warst o't, an' if we were ta'en it wud be an awfu' disgrace, nae to mention a gey heavy fine. I'm thinkin' we'd better be content wi' the deuks an' the turkey an' nivver min' the salmon."

"Na, na, we'll tak' the risk, I hinna been at a black fishin' for a while, an' I wad fain hae a try."

"Weel, weel, laddie; your wye be't; bit foorty years ago, we eesed to be at it ilka week in the winter time, an' mony a guid dookin' hae I gotten in sic ploys. An' aince a man wis drooned ae November nicht fan the watter wis in spate. It wis Willie Mutch fae the smiddy. He miss't his stroke at a fish an' fell aff the bank into deep watter, an' though we heard his cries, naebody cud see him i' the dark, an' he wis cairrit doon wi' a strong current. That stoppit the black fishing here aboot for that winter, I can tell you."

While this conversation was proceeding, the two would-be poachers, father and son, made their way across stubble fields to the river-bank and moved up, their eyes fixed on the river-bed, to the Haugh Pot. Here they stood a considerable time, counting the fish, which were easily visible in the clear water, and planning the attack, which was to take place under cover of the darkness.

This was their fatal blunder, and one which they were not

likely to have made if they had been more "habit and repute" poachers. While they stood by the Haugh Pot, pointing this way and that as their plan of campaign evolved itself in their minds, they were observed by the two bailiffs, who happened to be taking a short cut round the hillside to another part of the river.

"Fa's that stan'in' at the Haugh Pot, Duncan?"

"I think it's Geordie Howie an' his sin Jock. Fat are they deein' there, I winner? I some doot they're castin' a covetous e'e on the fish."

"Man, it looks verra like it, bit Geordie's a most respectable man, an' wadna try ony tricks seerly."

"I dinna ken; I widna trust 'im verra far. Ye ken, he's ane o' the auld school an' wis brocht up here in the days when black fishing wis a regular thing, so he's weel up to the job."

"Doon amo' the heather wi' ye, than, an' I'll scan them through my gless. They're bidin' ower lang at that spot."

Unaware that they were being spied upon, the two Howies made their arrangements and then quietly retraced their steps the way they came. Every movement they made was closely watched through the glass concealed among the brown heather.

"I really believe they're arrangin' to spear a fish or twa this verra nicht. We'll need to be here, Duncan, aifter dark. I'm convinced frae the wye they're lookin' an' talkin', an' frae the pointin' o' han's an' shakin' o' heids, that there's something in the win'. Lie low here till they're back an' into the hoose."

Half-an-hour afterwards the two watchers rose from their covert on the heathery hillside and stepped leisurely down the highway past George Howie's cottage. George himself they encountered a few steps from the door.

"Ay, George, that's a fine nicht."

"Ay, min, is't; it's gyaun to the frost."

"We'll be nane the waur o' that; it'll help to harden the roads a bit for them 't has trampin' to dae the morn."

"Faigs, ay, min, that's weel min't; it's Christmas day. Faur are ye gyaun to ha'd it this year?"

"Ow, we're jist on wer wye doon to the village, for there's a bit ploy on the nicht—a kin' o' a concert, wi' readin's an' recitations an' that; the morn there's to be a hare-drive at Tilly-yon."

"Weel, weel, I houp you'll enjoy yersels. Gweed nicht."

"Gweed nicht, George."

So they parted. When out of earshot, Duncan said, with a wink to his colleague—"That was a good shot, wasn't it? He'll think the coast's clear for ae nicht; but we'll see."

Night fell, clear and starlit, but without a moon. As soon as the last streaks of twilight had been absorbed in the darkness, Geordie and Jock set off with a dark lantern and their well-sharpened leister. They took no precautions to conceal their movements, being completely taken in by the bailiff's plausible bluff. Soon they were at the Haugh Pot. The lantern was opened, and Geordie cast its "long levelled rule of streaming light" far across the pool in the direction of the spot where several fish had been seen swaying backwards and forwards in the river-bed during the afternoon. A few fish rose to the light and gradually approached the bank, following its gleam. Jock was ready, two or three feet below his father, with the salmon spear in his hand.

"They're comin' in fine, bit be in nae hurry. Pick oot a guid ane an' keep aff o' reed, ugly brutes. That's a reed ane on the richt; dinna min' him; bit yonner's a sma'er fish on the left, clear an' shinin', wi' nae reed aboot 'im. That's yer fish! Keep yer e'e on 'im. I'll bring the licht roon, an' coax 'im nearer. Noo, wait till he's close in an', min' ye, be sure ye dinna lose yer balance an' get a dookin'! Now, then, in wi't!"

Jock struck as directed, and in an instant the fish was struggling like a mad thing on the grassy bank. A blow or two on the head from Geordie's stick brought the struggles to a sudden end. The lantern was closed, and Jock shouldered the fish.

"That's quick work. Yer mither'll get her salmon aifter a'. We cud a' ta'en half-a-dizzen an' naebody ony the wiser. We've fairly diddled the baillies this time."

But a hand was laid on George's shoulder, and Duncan, the bailiff, said in a quiet tone:—

"Nae sae fast, Geordie; ye're catched red-handed; we thocht the concert micht be slow, so we took a step back to see if there wis ony poachers aboot."

Mrs. Howie's dinner party was a failure in so far as the menu did not contain a toothsome dish of salmon, and there were vacant chairs, the head of the house and his eldest son being unavoidably absent. The two unhappy culprits enjoyed a humble dinner in less lovely surroundings, and on the Monday following were fined thirty shillings each, with the expenses. Needless to say, they have no more longing to taste the forbidden joys of a black fishing.

A CHRISTMAS TURKEY

A PROTTY bird an' wechty took my e'en at Buchan's store,
Wi' his heid amo' the rabbits and his lang legs near the door;
He wis saxteen pun, untrussit, and brocht fifteen shillings clear
Fan the shopman dump'd him doon, markit "sold," upo' the fleer.
Awat he wis a hansom bird; we nivver ate his marra,
And hatch'd and bred he wis, they said, oot ower the wye o' Turra.

A fairmer's wife, ca'd Murdo, got a present frae a frien'
O' half a dizzen turkey's eggs for something she had deen;
She set them in the month o' Mairch an' oot cam' chuckens five,
But ane dee't, bein' dorty, and that left fower alive;
They threeve gey weel a' simmer, feather'd fast, nor trailt a wing,
Syne ae bird shot ayont the rest an' grew a kin' o' king.

The bairnies ca'd him "Wallace," an' pettit him forbye,
Gaed him bitties o' their "pieces" an' pat taties in his wye;
The rascal kent them brawly an' cam' sornin' roon the byre
Wi' his "bubble-bubble-bubble" an' his heid as reid's the fire.
An' ilka week the bigger an' the fatter did he growe,
Till there wasna turkey like 'im a' up an' doon the Howe.

He focht wi' ilka ither cock an' maister'd ane an' a',
He frichtened the fite pussy cat an' fleyt the dog awa';
He wis first oot i' the mornin' an' the last to bed at nicht,
An' aye at every feedin' time he gorged wi' a' his micht;
When unco fowk gaed up the close, he kent them by their claes,
An' syne he puff'd his feathers oot and set his heid ablaze.

When Yule-tide cam', the merchan' sent roon for hens and deuks
To feed the hungry toon's fowk, an' mak' wark for sonsy cooks;
So, on a winter's mornin', 'fore the bairns were to the road,
The gude-wife an' the herd loon pu'd him aff his sleepin' brod,
An' lytht the neck o' Wallace, an' the necks o' twa-three mair,
Syne pluckit them an' weyed them an' sent them aff wi' care.

Nae winner tho' he drew me that day at Buchan's show,
He wis, onleet, the snoddest bird in a' the bonny row;
I bocht him, an' we ate him, little thinkin' o' the woe
That clooded a' the bairns, who had loo'd him like a Joe,
When at porridge-time they learn'd that murdered he had been,
An' was aff, in Sandie's cairt, on his wye to Aiberdeen.

THE MAIRRAGE

I—At the Hen-Wife's

IT was a Saturday afternoon at the end of May, and Marget, the hen-wife at Castle Brand, had just "maskit" her tea when she was favoured with a visit from Janet Broon, the gudewife o' Hillbrae.

"Weel, Marget, an' foo are ye the nicht?"

"Eh, I'm glaid to see ye, Janet. Come ben an' le'n ye doon. The tay'll be ready in a han'clap. I'm nae that ull, only jist for-foch'en wi' ower muckle te dee. I hae nae less nor ten big brodmils o' chuckens to feed, forbye's my deuks an' my geese an' my turkeys. An' this weet wither mak's the craiters dorty—specially the young turkeys. They get trachled amo' the weet girss, an' syne they begin to trail a wing an' jist dwine awa'. They're deein' aff, twa-three ilka day. Weel-a-wat, they keep me in a fry fae mornin' to nicht, an' it's an anger to see them pinin' an' slippin' oot amo' yer verra fingers."

"Hoot awa'; bit seerly the wither's gaun to brichten up a bit. Saw ye iver sic a time o' weet? Oor road's for a' the earth like porridge. Look at my queets! A day or twa like this wud seen dry them up though. I howp it's sattled. Bit fat's a' this reerie aboot doon at the Castle? I heard the terriblest squallochin' o' fowk, an' skirlin' o' pipes, an' platoons o' sheetin' doon-by, as I cam' ower the hill. It wis a din by ordinar'. I nivver heard the like in a' my born days."

"Weel, ye may jist say't. Heard ye iver sic a panamonia? Bit far hae ye been, 't ye hinna heard the news? It's wir gair'ner's waddin'. He's ta'en the quine Mackenzie, auld Donald's dother, the Heelan' keeper. It's been keepit something secret, I'm thinkin', bit it's a fyow days now sin I heard o't, an' I oonerstan' there wis to be a great gaitherin' o' fowk, an' awat they made plenty o' din. Auld Peggy Stewart

wis up here the streen an' gae me a' the rinnins o't. Ye see, Geordie's a muckle-thocht-o' man, an' a grait faavorit' wi' the leddy, an' awyte he's a weel-deein' chiel, an' a weel-faured, strappin' lad. He his a gey gude billet noo, sin' the laird biggit a' that het hooses an' vineries. He his half a dizzen o' men ooner 'im, an' they sen' up hampers o' flooers, carnations an' roses twice ilka week to Lunnon, an' cairns o' ither things forbye—peaches, an' grapes, an' strawberries oot o' sizzon. Awyte he's far ben wi' the muckle fowk. Weel, it's bit nait'ral 't the chappie sid tak' a wife to keep's hoose snod for 'im. An' I'se warran' he's been leukin' oot for a fylie. Only he's been some bauch aboot it, an' naebody guesst far he wid licht. He'd ees't to pey some attention to the merchan's dother, bit, aye sin' she spint that sax ooks wi' her auntie in Aiberdeen, she's been haddin' her heid gey heich, an' wis ance or twice barely ceevil tae the gair'ner. My certie, she mith'a deen waur nor tak' 'im. She'll maybe hae to bide awee afore anither seeks her; bit it wud appear there's nae ane here-aboot gweed eneuch for 'er. Weel, as I wis sayin', Peggy taul me 't the gair'ner hid been gaun aff an' on to the gamekeeper's hoose ilka ither ook, bit Kathie's Heelan', ye ken, an' though she cairrit on a hyse wi' 'im an' wis fond o' a' kin' o' daffin', she wisna abeen makin' fun o' 'im noo an' then. She's a tongue 't wid clip cloots, ye ken. Geordie's nae verra ready wi' *his* tongue, that's nae his strong pint, an' the cuts she gae 'im neer han' frichtened 'im. He wis a kin' o' fley't to taikle 'er, an' he hung back. He wud'a fain speert 'er, bit bein' a trifle dootfu' gin she wid hae 'im, an' 'er aul' fadder haein' naebody bit 'ersel' to leuk aifter his hoose, he thocht her fadder wid be sweer to lat 'er go. So, that wye, he nivver cam' to the pint. Min' ye, I dinna ken; I'm jist tellin' you fat Peggy taul' me. Weel, this had been gaen on sin' the New Yeir. They war makkin' nae heidwye at a' tull the en' o' Febberwary. An' this is Leap Yeir, ye ken. On the twenty-

nint o' the month Geordie set oot to pey his usual visit (he turnt up aye ance a week); he wis dresst like the laird wi' ane o's grand reid carnations i' the button-hole o's kwyte, an' leukin' as spruce as a new preen. Her fadder hid been awa' a' day at the salmon fishin' wi' Sir John's cousin, Maister Hardy, fae India, an' wisna come hame. So Geordie for ance got Kathie a' tull 'imsel'. They sat awa' at the fireside an' warna seemin'ly gettin' muckle to say, for the lassie wis aye brichtest an' jolliest fin a third pairty wis present. Geordie wis pittin' in the time playin' wi' the black retriever, fin Kathie made his hert dunt by askin' 'im if he kent fatna day this wis. He's some blate, ye see, tho' weel up to his ain wark, an' it nivver struck 'im 't it wis the leap year day. Weel, wud ye believe 't? Peggy says 't there an' then the jaud proposed to 'im, an' peer Geordie, glaid to see his diffeeculties ta'en awa', agreed to tak' 'er at Whitsunday. It wis to be keepit dark till near-han' the time. The invitations war sent roon' only a fortnicht syne. Awyte there wud be a gran' turn oot; an' a big denner wis to be ready at the Castle. The ooner-gair'ners an' a' the dogmen and gillies war to be there, an' they war to bring their guns and keep up the splore by sheetin' nae end. Nae winner tho' ye h'ard the din o' them."

"Weel, weel! It's keerious 't I nivver h'ard a cheep o't. Bit ye see we're at the back o' the wardle up by at Hillheid, an' I hivna been at the chop for a fylie, an' the last twa Sundays hae been sae weet 't I didna gang near the kirk or I wud'a been seer to hear something aboot it."

"That wye ye've been a' ahin'. Bit that's the story, an' I'm seer I wuss them baith weel. Kathie's nae an ull craiter, an' awyte she's aye been verra kin' to 'er aul' fadder. An' for a' 'er reid heid an' her lang tongue she's a trig, bonny deemie, an' sud mak' a gude wife to Geordie. I'm sair pay't tho' for the aul' gaimie; he'll hae to get some ane to manage for 'im. He's nae sae young as he ance wis. They say 't

he's worth a hantle o' siller. Ye see he's aye been in the wye o' gettin' gweed tips at the sheetin' time fae the laird's freens, fin they come to slaachter the pairtrichs an' the phe'san's, an' some o' the Lunnon fowk, them 't kens fat's fat, hae taul' 'im far to invest his savin's. An' that wye o't he'll leave a gey curn bawbees fin he weers awa'. An' I heard that the Laird had presented George wi' a spaacious mahogany sideboord, an' gien 'im an eke tull's salary."

"Ye fairly hae the news, Marget. I'm glaid I leukit doon. Bit it's time I wis settin' hamewuth. I'll get up my fit for bidin' sae lang. Gweed nicht to ye. I'm muckle obleegt t' ye for a' yer braw news."

"Gweed nicht, Janet, an' haste ye back."

II—At the Merchant's

Miss Jeanie M'Eachern, the merchant's daughter, was also favoured with a visit. Her friend, Betty Simpson, cycled over from the village of Littletown to have a chat with her erstwhile school companion.

"Eh, Betty! Is that you? I'm sorry 't oor Jeanie's nae at hame the nicht. She's awa' ower the Sunday to Aiberdeen to see her auntie."

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry; but it really doesn't matter. It was such a fine afternoon that I thought I would run over and see how you all were. But the roads are awful bad with mud. I've just tasht my new cycle. But what's ado in the parish to-day? I never saw such a commotion, and my head's deaved with the shooting."

"It's a mairrage—the waddin' o' that muckle taupie—Sir John's gair'ner. He's mairryin' the keeper's dother, a hally-racket, Heelan' quine, wi' a heid as reid's fire, an' an awfu' lang tongue. She's been huntin' 'im doon for a towmond, an' the peer coof his been nabbit at the lang length. She wis nivver oot o's gairden, I believe, hin'erin' his wark an' spungin' upon

'im for flooers an' fruit an' vegetables. Last year I had to sen' Jeanie to the gairdens geyan aften aboot my jam, an' ilka time 't she gaed, fa wis there bit Kathie Mackenzie an' a' her towsy tykes? Jeanie wis fair affronted wi' 'er; the wye she cairrit on afore the men wis eneuch to scunner a body. I'm sorry for the silly gomeral, only he's pitten his heid into the mink wi' his een open. The gowk'll repent it yet, or a' be deen. Ye nivver saw sic a fizz as there's been aboot this waddin'. Ye wad really think 't naebody had ivver been mairrit in th' pairish afore. The Laird has paintit an' papert the gair'ner's bit hoose for 'im, an' gien 'im a sideboord, nae less. Fat's a common gair'ner deein' wi' a sideboord? An' the leddy has giftet the bride wi' a diamond brooch. Fat's she needin' a diamond brooch for—a gaimie's dother? An' the ither keepers an' gair'ners hae clubbit thegither an' bocht a silver tea an' coffee service. Na! Na! Nae solid silver, I'm thinkin', bit plated goods, an' the hoose-servan's gae her a muff an' him a cigarette case an' a silver-munted walkin' stick. An' her fadder's gi'en 'er a new piano—a Braidwud, I believe. They say he made a bing o' siller by buyin' rubber shares on the advice o' that man 't wis here fae Ceylon fernyear, an' he's waur't some o't on this piano. An' they're gaun to keep a servan' lass an' gweed kens fat a'. The haill kwintra side's fu' o't. They say 't th' brazen-faced cutty took the chance o' leap yeir an' proposed t' th' silly sumph hersel', an' I weel believe't. She his braiss for onything—the impident smatchet."

"This is news. I always thought he would take your Jeanie."

"Haud yer tongue! Nae doot he wud'a fain cast his een oor gait, but my girl his a min' abeen allyin' hersel' wi' a man in his hummel station o' life, an' I reckon she gae 'im little audisence. So he had to fa' back on th' Heelan' limmer. The jaud'll lead 'im a fine life wi' her dogs, an' 'er flooers, an' 'er meesic, an' 'er poetry, an' th' lang Heelan' tongue o' her; only, it's like to like, an' motty saut's gweed for hairy butter."

THE LOON FAE AIBERDEEN

HIS legs war lang an' lanky an' his face wis unco fyte,
As loupin' fae the dog-cairt, he threw aff his muckle kwyte;
He lookit freely sober and nae sowens supp'd ava
Fan sittin' at's bit sipper, a great fairlie to us a';
He cam' to spend his holidays wi's mither's sister, Jean;
But gin ye jist had seen him, on's return to Aiberdeen!

He wistna fat a coulter is, nor kent a drake fae deuk,
He spier'd as mony questions wad hae fill'd a muckle beuk,
An' fan the foreman tellt's to tramp hay-coles into a soo
The laddie look'd dumfoonert fair, an' thocht 'im daft or foo:
Nae winner tho' they leuch, at times, the fowk o' Dubbystane,
He kent a hantle better, or he wan to Aiberdeen!

He cudna stan' the bubbly-jock an' wudna face the bull,
He hoosh'd awa' the rottens aye, fan he gaed ben the mull;
Wi' flauchter-spade an' barrow fan we took 'im to the moss,
He layer'd in a boggey place an' made 'imsel' a soss.
He wis oot an' oot a toon's bairn, an' that wis easy seen,
Yet, twa-three things we taucht 'im 'fore he gaed to Aiberdeen!

He guddl'd i' the burn, an' took to sweemin' i' the dam,
Made freens wi' Jock, the herd-loon, as well's the collie Sam,
Could tell aye far the turkeys laid, gie oil-cake to the mairt,
An' syne he learn'd to single neeps, an' yoke a horse an' cairt;
Tho' far ahin' at startin' he wis gleg an' byous keen,
So he wis better educate, fan back at Aiberdeen!

He hyeuk'd an' ran a salmon for half an oor an' mair,
He shot a wheen o' rabbits, tee, an' aince near pinn'd a hare,
Loot bang ahin' a wild deuk, fleein' by wi' whistlin' wing,
But "Gamie" wisna far awa', an' swore like ony thing;
Syne order'd him to cut his stick, or, by the licht abeen,
He'd send 'im, i' the bobby's chairge, het-fit to Aiberdeen!

He tried to throw the haimmer, an' awyte it's Gospel fack,
The first time that he floorish'd it, garr'd a'body stan' back,
He speel't the gean-tree ilka nicht an' fill'd his bonnet foo,
To gie to Jinse, the servan' lass, an' blacken a' her moo,
An' fyles made oot to muck the byre, an' bed the nowt at e'en,
A buddin' fairmer, faigs he wis, or he reach'd Aiberdeen.

He led Jess to the smiddy and rade hame upo' her back,
An' wisna blate to men' her trot wi' jist anither smack,
An' on his hin'most Sunday, drave his auntie to Waulkmill,
An' lows'd an' groom'd the shalt 'imsel', as swippert's hostler Bill,
Till a' the fowk cried "gweeshtins," fan they saw fat he had deen,
"Ye'll miss that loon, I'm thinkin', fan he gangs to Aiberdeen!"

The sax ouks slippit by, altho' he wisna fain to see't,
But's father sent a letter that the skweel wis gaen to meet,
He beet to pack his boxie wi' his torn breeks an' claes,
An' hurl awa' as gloamin' grey wis sattlin' ower the braes;
His legs war swack, his cheeks war reid, tho' tears war in his e'en;
His mither hardly kent 'im at "the Joint" o' Aiberdeen!

THE LOON FAE FOGGYLOAN

HE wore a muckle gravit and his beets were byous roch,
His knickers warna jist the shape to set a sturdy hoch,
His cockit bonnet sat gey stiff upon his huddry heid,
A stoot an' hardy gurk he wis, wi' cheeks like roses reid.
He came to bide in Aiberdeen a month wi's Uncle John;
Anither loon he wis fan he gaed back to Foggyloan.

A train wis something new; he hadna been in ane afore,
For seldom had he liftit fit three miles fae's father's door,
Had nivver seen the sea, nor sailin' ships, excep' in beuks,
Content to sail a boatie ower the dam amo' the deuks.
He keepit's een aye apen tho', an' fan his time wis gone,
He cairrit back a lot, to licht the gloom o' Foggyloan!

He daunert roon the docks a bit an' stuck to Regent Quay,
An' hung aboot the Fish Market as eident as could be;
He made freens wi' a sailor chap an' gaed aboord a tug
That danc'd him ower the harbour bar an' made him sick's a dog.
An' ilka week he stumpit throu' the sands fae Dee to Don,
An' cam' aye back as yap as fae the moss at Foggyloan.

On Fridays at the Castlegate he toited oot and in,
An' kirn'd amo' the orra trock, laid oot to raise the win';
An' syne he stacher'd up the street an' throu' the market door,
An' past the basement far the wives were sellin' fish galore;
"Come buy," they said, "some yellow fish, my bonny laddie, John,
An' sen' them in a parcel to yer fowk at Foggyloan!"

The water-cairts, the taxi-cabs, an' twa-deck'd tramway cars,
The spaacious shops an' offices, the kirks an' drinkin' bars,
The Duthie Park, the theatre, and far-fam'd Bauby Law,
The Music Hall, the Toon's Hoose, an' Marischal College braw,—
His gleg een sized them a', awat, an' syne fan he wis gone,
They gae him things to gas aboot fan hame at Foggyloan!

On Sunday he wis early up, the first ane doon the stairs,
An' keen to meet the sodgers swingin' by to say their prayers,
An' wisna laith to swall the thrang 'at dogs them up the street,
The meesic wrocht like magic wand upon his muckle feet.
An' files he thocht he'd list, an' tartan kilt an' sporran don,
An' nae jist throw his life awa' to roost in Foggyloan!

His fower weeks rattled swippert by; the hairst wis jist in sicht,
"Ye maun," his mither's letter said, "be hame the morn's nicht."
He packit his belongin's and some gifts within his means
He koft i' the New Market to present to a' his freens,
And as the meen began to glower the Foudland Hills upon,
He steed ance mair within a mile o' gweed auld Foggyloan!

Foregatherin' wi' his cronie Dod (his name wis Geordie Broon),
He tell't 'im a' the fairlies he had seen aboot the toon,
The steamers and the engines, the King Street droves o' swine,
The Beach an' Bathin' Station, far the Zoo keeps beasts in pine,
The fire brigade careerin' to Footdee or Gilcomston,
"There's nae sic stur," he finished up, "in sleepy Foggyloan!"

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