Echoes from the Sanctum.

I SUPPOSE it will be necessary for me to say a word or two about "Caledonia,"—to wish my subscribers and readers a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I hope that our intercourse now begun shall long continue for our mutual advantage, and that all shortcomings, on both sides, shall always be looked upon with a friendly eye and a kindly spirit. Let us banish from our hearts and minds all malice, discontent, and envy. If we do this our lot will be a happy one, no matter what position in life we may fill.

Now that the good ship "Caledonia" is fairly launched, we ask one and all to wish her a prosperous pleasant voyage. This will of course depend on the crew and the man at the wheel, and also if good and wholesome food be always provided for the passengers.

Now a word about the future. My good friend, Douglas Allan Scott (he has got a fine sounding name, has he not?) will begin in an early number a series of articles, entitled "Scotland's Sweet Singers," which is to be illustrated by fine portraits of the

song-writers. He will start with James I. of Scotland, the author of "Christ's Kirk on the Green," and "Peebles to the Play," and end with William Thom of Inverury, author of "The Mitherless Bairn," and "The Blind Boy's Pranks." In the series, among others, will be Allan Ramsay, Robert Burns, Robert Tannahill, William Motherwell, Hector McNeill, and Caroline Baroness Nairne. As a nation, we are proud of our songs—so that bright, short sketches of the lives of the men and women who wrote them will be very suitable for the pages of "Caledonia," and will, we are sure, be heartily welcomed by our readers.

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Speaking about Scottish song reminds me of a note written by Allan Cunningham to Burns' lay, "When Rosy May comes in wi' Flowers," where he says, "Song was once as natural to man as music is to the birds of the air; but hard work—incessant drudgery rather—has silenced song at the plough, at the loom, at the forge, in the garden, at the carpenter's bench, and the mason's banker. A song is seldom heard in the land now, save when some ragged wretch raises 'a melancholious croon,' as he holds out his hat for alms. Perhaps the ploughman still chants an air as he turns his furrow, and the shepherd still sings as he watches his lambs among the pastoral mountains; in the cities music is mute, save when hired; the pale mechanic has so much to endure in keeping his soul and body together that song is out of the question. Music with him has died into a 'quaver of consternation.'" If this be a true picture, we hope to live to see it all changed.

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Just a word or two about our Astrological Bureau. Some wise men, wise in their own conceit, have ventured the opinion that this astrology is all bosh. Well, it is easy for one to sneer at a thing because one does not understand or know anything about it. Would our would-be wise men, who condemn astrology, be surprised to learn that nearly all the great men of the past, and many of the great and learned men of the present, have held, and now hold, the science of astrology to be a true science?

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The famous Robert Burton, in his great work, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," tells us that "Ballantius, Pirovanus, Marascellerus, Goclenius, Sir Christopher Heidon," &c., &c., were all believers in the science of astrology, and he says, moreover, "If thou shalt ask

me what I think, I must answer, they (the stars) do incline, but do not compel."

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Burton also says that Paracelsus is of opinion "That a physician without the knowledge of the stars can neither understand the cause or cure of any disease, either of gout, not so much as toothache; except he see the peculiar geniture and scheme of the party affected."

* * * * * *

Robert Burton was born in 1576, on the 8th of February; Wood, his biographer, tells us he was an exact mathematician, a curious calculator of nativities; a severe student; a devourer of authors; a person of great honesty; plain dealing and charitable. He may be said to have lived for many years among the books in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. When he died, on the 27th of January, 1640, he was buried in the North Aisle next to the Choir of the Cathedral of Christ's Church. Over his grave, on a panel, his bust is painted, and on his right is a tracing of his horoscope, or calculation of his nativity.

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Goethe (who, according to Madame de Stael, a good judge) represented in himself alone the whole of German literature, had a strong belief in astrology. He begins his autobiography in these words:—

"On the 29th of August, 1749, at midday, as the clock struck 12, I came into the world at Frankfort-on-the-Main. My horoscope was propitious, the sun stood in the sign of the virgin, and had culminated for the day; Jupiter and Venus looked on him with a friendly eye, and Mercury not adversely, while Saturn and Mars kept themselves indifferent; the moon alone, just full, exerted the power of her reflection all the more as she had then reached her planetary hour; she opposed herself to my birth, which could not be accomplished until this hour was passed. These good aspects, which the astrologers managed subsequently to reckon very auspicious for me, may have been the cause of my preservation; for, through the unskilfulness of the midwife, I came into the world as dead, and only after various efforts was I enabled to see the light."

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There is scarcely an extraordinary character in antiquity who did not believe in astrology. Hippocrates said "a physician who was ignorant of astrology deserved to be called a fool rather than

a physician"; and another great man in ancient medicine, Galen, also said "that no man should trust himself to that physician, or rather pretender, who is not skilled in astrology." In the days of old, Chaldea was the centre of its power, while in China, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, it was universally accepted.

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The masters of ancient poetry—Homer, Virgil, Horace, and many others—rose to the loftiest strains when praising astrology; and to come to our own country, among the long list of eminent men who believed in astrology we find Roger Bacon; Duns Scotus; Baron Napier, the inventor of logarithms; Francis Bacon: Kepler; Flamstead, the first Astronomer Royal; Sir Elias Ashmole, the founder of the Ashmolean Museum; Chaucer wrote a treatise on the Astrolabe, and John Dryden computed the nativities of his children, and foretold certain accidents to his son Charles.

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In Shakespeare's works we find some of his most beautiful expressions have reference to the power and influence of the stars:

> "Comets, imputing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky."

Again, when *Romeo* and *Juliet* were married, Friar Lawrence prays:

> "So smile the heavens upon this holy act,
> That after hours with sorrow chide us not."

And again:—

> "In my stars I am above thee . . .
> Some are born great, some achieve greatness,
> And some have greatness thrust upon them."

In *Julius Cæsar*, in the second scene of the second act, when *Calfhurnia* implores her lord and master not to go forth to the meeting in the capitol, she says:—

> "When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

* * * * * *

Every educated parent knows the graceful allusion made by the American poet, Longfellow, to the science:—

> "O child! O new-born denizen
> Of life's great city! on thy head
> The glory of the morn is shed
> Like a celestial benison;
> . . . . . .
> By what astrology of fear or hope
> Dare I to cast thy horoscope."

But why should I heap instance on instance—suffice for the present to say, when gazing on the star-sprinkled firmament on a winter night:—

> "These are the rolling lamps God fixed on high,
> The wandering worlds of the azure sky,
> From whom the wise can well the *fate* presage
> Of gaping fool or dolt as well as sage."

* * * * * *

I intended this month to have given the Horoscope of Professor Blackie, so wrote him telling him so, to which the Professor replied:—"I was born in Glasgow on the 28th of July, 1809, the hour I know not"; Mr. Wilde, not having the hour of birth, thought it better not to compute his horoscope. Having the birth moment of Sir David Wilkie, the Scottish painter, he has drawn a figure of the heavens at his birth, and his deductions therefrom as an example of his work to the readers of "Caledonia."

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Speaking of Professor Blackie, I may state that the author of "Linnburn Farm" had a characteristic letter from him, of date the 26th of October, in which he says "I have subscribed to 'Caledonia' with much pleasure, both as a good Scotsman and as a person who, though born in Glasgow, has had the advantage of breathing Aberdeen air, and admiring Aberdeen strength from three years old and upwards."

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Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, M.D., F.R.S., has been delivering an address on "How to make the most of Life." This is a subject in which the learned Doctor should be at home, and he is. The only blemish on an otherwise first-class lecture is his usual *rampage* about drink as being "The Devil in Solution." What a mad world it is, my masters. We are told that drinking is the father of all horrors, "crimes, lies, deceits, murders, and deaths." It seems to be a question well worth consideration, if the Teetotal craze is not as effectual in putting the human mind off its equilibrium as drunkenness itself.

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It will not be denied that, as a nation, we are year by year imbibing more strong drink, and yet, let us see if we are, in proportion, sinking into crime and all its attendant evils. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his "Aspects of Life," told us the other day "we had 87,668 'habituals' in 1868; now the evil roll is only 52,153.

When the population was 19,257,000, in 1889, there were 52,153 persons undergoing penal servitude; now, with a population of 27,830,179, the number is only 947. In 1878, the entire number of prisoners in our gaols was 20,833; the entire number at the same date in 1892 was 12,663, though the population had increased by six millions."

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And yet there is much food for thought in the Doctor's address. Here are a few home truths it would be well for us to take a note of:—"In little children the skeleton sometimes grows up rickety and badly shaped when food, deficient in earthy solidifying material, is supplied to it. We may see the skeleton of a young person, who is fairly fed, bent and distorted by various mechanical errors; bow-legged because made to stand too early; unshapen in the palate, rabbit-shaped of mouth, because the mother or nurse allowed it, as an infant, to suck its thumbs; we may see the young cyclist spine-bent because he has curved himself too determinately to the shape he thought necessary in order to make pace; we may see the older person made bow-legged, or spine-bent, because forced to work in a crouching condition for long hours at a time."

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But it is where the Doctor treats on mental exercise and health of mind that he is at his best. With regard to the question of heredity, he gives, in the following sentences, a rare thing to be found now-a-days, a new idea, at least the idea is new to me:—"The mind is a kingdom, into which all the universe pours, and in which, during life, all the immediate universe of every person concentrates for environment. It is not altogether according to environment, for in it heredity plays so distinct a part that *we carry with us the mind of our ancestors,* and are often doing unconsciously what they, under the same circumstances, would have done. My own impression is that memory itself extends, in some instances, through ancestry, and that those curious phenomena of so-called 'pre-existence,' which many feel, are continuous memories."

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He strongly recommends the study of biography, and calls it the grammar of the human mind, and he tells us of a find he once made, when reading biography, about an old Charter-house pensioner, named Stephen Gray, who, in 1729, made the discovery of electric telegraphic communication. This old man, with a

little glass tube, rubber-ball, Dutch gold leaf, resin, and wire, on the 29th of May, 1729, discovered electrical conductive insulation and induction, as well as the method of transmitting an electric current a distance of seventy feet along a cord supported by silk bearers. "Think of that alone," he says, "as one trifle of biographical history"; think of the present girdling of the world in twenty minutes; think of the thousands of miles, thousands of tons of wire; think of the thousands of messages that pass through electric channels; think of voices conveyed for miles, and then think of this old man, almost unknown, and not himself seeing the future glory that his discovery would be, and then you will believe that the lesson to be learned from biography, read profitably, is one of the best lessons for making the most of life.

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A number of Books have been sent to us for Review, among them a very interesting compilation, entitled "Narratives and Extracts from the Records of the Presbytery of Ellon," by Thomas Mair, in two parts. The first part runs from 1597 to 1607, and the second part from 1607 to 1628. These dates, as our readers know, cover a very interesting period in the history of our country, and this publication by Mr. Mair throws a flood of light on the manners—or want of manners—social customs and spiritual manifestations of the people then living. The time was when Ellon was not the insignificant village it is to-day, it was the assize town of a populous district—the scene of many a penal trial, the doom place of execution, and the battlefield of mortal combat.

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I know that such work will be hailed by the future historians of Scotland with enthusiasm, because it is from such material that the real history of the nation has at some future time to be written. "The Records of Trials for Witchcraft," "Of the Suspension of Ministers," "The Laws enacted against Vagabonds," and "The Sitting on the Stool of Repentance" as a penance for immoral delinquencies, is more important in tracing the progress of a nation in culture, in manners, and in spiritual advancement, than long stories of battle by sea and land, the espousal of princesses, or the marriage of kings. Mr. Mair's book will receive, as it well deserves, an extended review in an early number of "Caledonia."

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

LORD ROSEBERY.

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"*Breathes there a man with soul so dead,*
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand.
If such there breathe, go, mark him well:
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth, as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concenter'd all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

A YULE LILT.

Sin' we hae met to spend the nicht
In harmless glee an' sweet delicht,
Let ilk ane strive wi' a' his micht
To mak' his neebour cheerie.
Sair Sorrow, wi' a deidly drug,
Gie Care a skelp ahint the lug;
Set Mirth aside the reamin' jug,
An' tak' her for oor dearie.

Then let us lauch as lang's we may,
Whate'er the warld think or say,
An' let oor aim be, nicht an' day,
To mak' ilk ither cheerie.

Let lawyers scheme an' draw up deeds,
An' rival bigots rive their creeds
Until the truth, their hearts an' heids
Are a' turned tapsalteerie.
Let wad-be saunts extend their face,
To pass it as an act o' grace,
But in it we can easy trace
That Mammon is their dearie.
Then let, &c.

Leave hypocrites to roose themsel',
They need it a' to keep them well;
Honest hearts require nae spell
To lauch an' never wearie.
Let ilk ane truly play his part,
Awa' wi' selfish hollow art,
An' ilka face reveal the heart,
Then we will a' be cheerie.
Then let, &c.

Thrums. W. L.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

THE first month of 1895 came in like a lion raging and storming. While I write, the wind still howls in the lum-top, shrieks round the corners, and whistles through the keyholes. Christmas was past before we got a single taste of what people call "seasonable weather," but sometimes since then we might as well have been stopping in the polar regions.

Let the well-to-do always remember that this so-called "seasonable weather," when it comes at Christmas and New Year times, means a terrible time of misery and suffering to the poor in general, and to the unemployed poor in particular. The artist John Frost has covered the window-pane with a delicate tracery of beautiful leaves and flowers. He has also enabled the curlers to have bonspiels on the lochs and ponds, and thereon we also see fine ladies and gallant gentlemen, both clad in furs to the eyes, gliding over the ice on skates, all the world like huge birds on the wing. Oh, how this class of people do enjoy this "seasonable weather!" But there is another side to the picture. In garret and cellar, with an insufficiency of rags to keep out the cold, with little food and less

fuel, such "seasonable weather" means to thousands helpless, hopeless distress.

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A valued contributor, Miss H. I. Grant of Elgin, has sent me, no doubt prompted by this "seasonable weather," some musical verses on old Jack Frost:—

That Wizard of winter, old Jack Frost,
 Is back in our land again,
Bringing the ghosts of the flowers which died
When far away the summer hied
 To peer through the window-pane.

A wonderful wand has old Jack Frost,
 For, while we slumbered and slept,
The shades of the palms and moss, and the vine,
Of the flowers, and the ferns, and the sweet woodbine,
 Out of their graves have crept.

A slumberous hand has old Jack Frost,
 For he lulls the winds to rest,
Out on the deep and on vale and hill;
Under the moonbeams all is still
 As a bird in its little nest.

He is not musical, old Jack Frost—
 He hears but a rippling rill,
So he muffles its sound, and the raindrop's stream,
Out in the starlight's flickering gleam,
 Is an icicle starkly still.

A faithful friend has old Jack Frost;
 He is known to men as Death:
At the dead of night, on wold and street,
Those trusty old comrades often meet
 To still frail mortal's breath.

But the world is soon again to wear a brighter aspect, for—

An enemy strong has old Jack Frost—
 'Tis the sun; 'neath his glance of pride
The buds awake, and the winds and the streams;
And back to the beautiful land of dreams
 The phantom flowerets glide.

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Everybody connected with the production of the first number of "Caledonia" — editor, artist, poets, contributors of every class, publisher, printers, binder—every one, in fact, has just reason to be proud of the praise given them by the press. Out of over a hundred press notices from all over Scotland, "Frae Maidenkirk to John O'Groat's," all, with only two or three exceptions, pipe our praise. I will here take an extract or two from the two nearest to the two places mentioned in this line from Burns. *John O'Groat's Journal*, of date the 28th December, says:—

"'Caledonia,' the new monthly magazine of literature, antiquity, and tradition, whose advent we announced some time ago, has now appeared, and fully justifies the favourable forecast we gave of it. The Editor is Mr. Alexander Lowson, Forfar, whose name is a sufficient guarantee that the literary department of the magazine will be ably attended to. The literary contributions to the first number are varied and readable, and, generally, "Caledonia" is attractively got up, and has all the appearance of having come to stay."

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Maidenkirk, so named by Burns, as all my readers know is an inversion of the name of Kirkmaiden, in Wigtonshire, the most southern parish in Scotland. I do not have a notice from Wigtonshire, so I will take the one from the Old Town of Ayr. *The Ayrshire Post* of the 28th December says:—

"The first number of 'Caledonia' ought to make Scotchmen everywhere hail the appearance of this excellently printed, ably written, and deeply interesting publication. The cover is a beautiful piece of workmanship. It is not too much to say that this magazine has no equal in the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood."

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I am also glad to record that the first instalment of our serial story "Linnburn Farm" has drawn forth hearty praise. One lady writes, "I have got a taste of 'Linnburn Farm,' and think it promises to be very interesting. Miss W. seems to be a very sensible person. I like the tone of your story, so far as it goes, exceedingly. The different characters introduced are not of the

subtle and pernicious type we too often meet in our current literature." I can assure this lady, and all our readers who love pure and healthy literature, that the same high tone is sustained throughout the entire story. My own opinion is that "Linnburn Farm," for purity and fine domestic feeling, clothed in apt and beautiful language, will rank among contemporary novels pretty much as "The Cottar's Saturday Night" ranked among the poems of Burns' day and generation.

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I have neither space, time, nor inclination at present to reply fully to the objections to the article in our last issue on "The Drink Traffic in Scotland Fifty Years Ago," but would submit for consideration the following letter written by that great and good man, David Macbeth Moir, the famous M.D. of Musselburgh. It was addressed to Charles Dickens, and when speaking about their mutual friend George Cruikshank, Moir says:—

"We were friends in ten minutes, and he gave me some curious and most interesting details of his early life and progress. 'The Drunkard,' and 'The Drunkard's Children,' I had both admired and shuddered over; but I must say, in spite of this, that the only thing in him I was not prepared to meet with was—the teetotaller. Be it right or wrong for himself, one thing requires consideration. I have known several men of talent and genius who, under the impression that they had been accustomed to live too fully, had become *water-drinkers*; and it has struck me that the abstraction of the wine might also be noted in the abstraction of the vigour and originality by which their compositions were formerly distinguished. It is a curious subject, and worthy of investigation. Admitting what I have stated to be a fact, the only plausible counter-argument would be, that some breaking-down of the constitution—some threatening of mischief—was the cause why stimulants were abandoned, and not the effect of the abandonment. Wordsworth has been all along a water-drinker: is this the cause why his compositions of early and later years are so much akin to each other? Is it thus 'the child is father to the man?'"

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The critics have been somewhat severe on J. M. Barrie's little poem, entitled "Scotland's Lament," for Robert Louis Stevenson. The editor of the *Edinburgh Evening News* even took the trouble

to write a leading article on the subject, in the course of which he says: "In the *Bookman* he has written what purports to be an elegy on R. L. Stevenson, but which reads like the production of a comic poet with a weakness for sarcasm. The poem is entitled 'Scotland's Lament.' If Scotland does her lamenting in the J. M. Barrie fashion, then all that falls to be said is that Scotland is fast reaching the stage of the dotard and the driveller. Mr. Barrie's poem reminds us of the wailing gibberish of some old crone, or the spasmodic splutterings of the village 'natural.'"

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This is plain-speaking, is it not?—but then is it true? I do not think so. Mr. Barrie has seventeen verses in this lament, and there are six of them good—the first three, the thirteenth, and the two last. Had he limited his lament to these six verses it would have been a neat little thing—not great but good. I am sorry to say that the other eleven verses in the poem are very weak, and some of them nonsense. Can any of my readers tell me what Mr. Barrie means by this:—

> "He egged me on wi' mirth and prank;
> We hangit gowans on a string,
> We made the doakens walk the plank,
> We mairit snails withoot the ring?"

Information will be thankfully received.

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Max O'Rell, in one of his clever books published the other day, pays some very high compliments to our nation. "The English colonies," he says, "are in the hands of the Scots. Out of seven governors, five are Scottish; the President of the Legislative Council is a Scot, and so are three-fourths of the Councillors; the Mayor of Melbourne is of the same nationality, and the Agent-General in London is another Scotsman. England ought not to call her colonies Greater Britain, but Greater Scotland, and the United States might be named Greater Ireland. As for the South of New Zealand, it is as Scotch as Edinburgh, and more Scotch than Glasgow. Go to Brokers' Hill, the richest silver mine in the world, and you will see five great shafts leading to the treasures of the earth; these five shafts bear the following names: Drew, M'Intyre, M'Gregor, Jamieson, and M'Culloch—five Scots. The lucky inhabitants of this beautiful country have every blessing

that can help them to success—a perfect climate, a fertile soil, no wild animals, no snakes, and plenty of Scots."

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It would seem that the gentlemen who write for the press are as a rule ignorant of the facts of Astrology, and as it would be a great pity that the idle talk of persons so ignorant should be allowed to pass unchallenged, and so be re-echoed by an ignorant public, I will from time to time record a few facts and figures thereanent.

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We are told by Mr. Stead, in the January number of his Quarterly Review *Borderland*, that according to one of the New York papers, one of the most thriving life assurance managers in America never engages a clerk without consulting the stars. When asked by an interviewer if this was true, he replied:—

"Yes! and plenty of others do as I do—ask what the planets have made of those they wish to employ. I have followed that course now for years, and have not, in a single case, had cause to regret it. I could give you names of half-a-dozen men in similar positions to my own, besides three or four bankers, and at least one publisher. Yet so far we have but little more than learned the accidence of this our spiritual grammar, though the thing itself is as old as nature. The Bible is full of it."

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Many kind friends, since the publication of our first number, have written to say that there is only one thing that can prevent the certain success of "Caledonia," and they all agree that that one thing is the fear that it will not be made *truly National*. To this we reply that, from Peterhead in the East, to Oban in the West, from John O'Groats in the far North to Kirkmaiden in the extreme South,—yes; from each and all of the thirty-two Counties in "Bonnie Scotland" we will from time to time cull our sketches, ballads, and traditions. We know that there is not a county in the "Land o' Cakes" in which there does not exist rich stores of traditionary, antiquarian, archæological, and historical matter hitherto untouched. The only good reason for our existence is to collect these treasures, and, with the help of our contributors, to put them into an attractive form, so that the Scot, both at *home* and *abroad*, may know, not only the history, but also the weird legends and tragic stories of the land of his birth.

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

W. QUARRIER.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

PROVERBS have been well defined as "The concentrated wisdom of ages." They have also been called "The thoughts of many and the wit of one." We have some reason to congratulate ourselves if all this be true, because according to proverbial weather saws, snow storms in February presage good luck in the future, an early spring free from frosts that nip the tender plants and blossoms, a genial summer with warm sunshine to ripen the crops, and a pleasant autumn to make the various fruits of the earth fit for being stored in the granary.

Let us see what the concentrated wisdom of ages has got to say about February weather:—

> "February fill the dyke either wi' black or white:
> But if white the better to like."

Of course this means that our ditches are to be filled with rain or snow, but if snow so much the better. We really deserve some

compensation for all we have been made to suffer by blissard, snow, frost and rime, during the past month; by all means let us try to believe that we will.

* * * * * *

In order to clinch the certainty of the good in store for us, there is yet another proverb which says:—

"A' the months o' the year curse a fair February."

There will be no need for the other eleven months of the year to curse the bygone February. If there is to be any cursing—it will come from those to whom the bitter blast has brought bronchitis and rheumatism, and catarrh and chilblains, and from the poor to whom it has brought hunger, cold and death.

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It would seem from the above that good weather in February is looked on as an unfavourable sympton of what is to follow—for in England we find they have yet another proverb on the subject:—

"The Welshman would rather see his dam on her bier:
Than see a fair Februeer."

* * * * * *

Burns tells us in his Common-place Book that there was scarcely anything earthly gave him more pleasure than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood on a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plains. "It is my best season," he says, "for devotion; my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who in the language of the Hebrew bard 'walks on the wings of the wind.'" In one of these moods he composed Winter, a Dirge—the first stanza of which it would be hard to match as a picture of a wild winter snow storm:—

"The wintry west extends his blast
And hail and rain does blaw:
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae:
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day."

* * * * * *

It would not require an expert in Physiognomy to tell, even looking at the portrait only, that the poor fellow Reginald Saunderson, who killed the girl Augusta Dawes at Kensington, was in such a mental condition that he was not in any respect responsible for his action. The law with regard to the mentally weak is not so clear as it should be, it wants applicability to individual cases; and then the law on this question gives too much power to a judge, for the power rests entirely with him of admitting or excluding expert medical evidence.

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In connection with this case of Saunderson, it would be well to keep in mind the speech delivered by that great authority on mental disease, Dr. Weatherly, to the Bristol conference the other day. When speaking of his experience in asylums, he said:—

"We can show you cases of general weakening and deficiency of the intellectual powers, of the will and of the control of emotion, and yet the capability of knowing right from wrong still exists. We can ask you to examine a patient whose mind is full of delusions, hullucinations, and illusions of one or all the senses, and yet defy you to prove the absence of this specific knowledge. We can point out to you patients who are at times the subjects of transitory fury, and of whom, if we were put on our oath, we could not affirm that they did not know that they were acting contrary to the law of the land. We can take you to one man who reasons insanely on sane premises; to another whose sane reasoning is built on insane foundations; and yet to another who bases his insane reasoning on

insane grounds, and yet all will have that knowledge which makes them in the eyes of the law responsible beings. Any one of these people may commit a crime by reason of their mental disease, and may well know at the time that such act is wrong and against the law of the land. Should we hold them responsible for their insane condition? Certainly not. Why, then, should the law consider them responsible for a crime which can be proved to be directly the outcome of their brain affection?"

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"Eccentricity of Youth Leading up to Crime" is the title of a book written by Dr. Forbes Winslow. The Doctor draws attention to the fact that many of the young men whom their friends call peculiar are in reality insane, and ought to be under care, as they are liable at any moment to commit a sudden criminal act, and thus these eccentric youths become dangerous pests to Society.

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In *Blackwood*, the other day, John Skelton records some delightful reminiscenes of James Anthony Froude. He gives among the rest an extract from a letter of Froude's, dated the 21st June, 1871, which is worthy of reproduction, because, as Skelton tells as, it is almost the only time his friend alluded to the charges of inaccuracy that were unjustly brought against him by Freeman and others. When speaking of an article in the *Quarterly*, Froude writes:—"I never resented anything more than that article. I felt as if I was tied to a post, and a mere ass was brought up to kick me. Some day I think I shall take the Reviewers all round, and give them a piece of my mind. I acknowledge to five real mistakes in the whole book—twelve volumes—about twenty trifling slips, equivalent to i's not dotted and t's not crossed. Every one of the rascals has made a dozen blunders of his own, too, while detecting one of mine."

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So much for what we might call the real critics, so what are we to say about the small fry? Those busybodies who are every morning discovering some great genius who is to revolutionise the world of letters: they have been well described by a philosopher as "men of the most restricted reading, totally ignorant of the literature of any department of thought. Yet they do not hesitate to style a man original, if he has enlightened or surprised, or

agitated *their* minds, thus making their own ignorance a standard of judgment."

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In thinking about the noble work carried on by William Quarrier in Glasgow, and at the Orphan Homes at the Bridge-of-Weir, I could not help being struck by his methods, which may be shortly put down in three heads: *First*—His entire dependence on Providence for the supply of funds. *Second*—Destitution being the *only* title of admission, and *Third*—The preserving of the individuality of the orphans—or trying to do so—by bringing them up in separate Homes under the charge of a step-father and step-mother. Every one who is in any degree of a devotional or religious tendeney, *must* acknowledge that God's hand is in the work, and that Mr. Quarrier is a fit and worthy disciple of the MASTER.

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We hope, with the help of our subscribers, before the end of this year to get a fund established wherewith to erect, at the Bridge-of-Weir, a "Caledonia Home." "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

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There is a bright little magazine, written, printed and published by my friend Mr. Peter Davidson of Loudsville, White Co. Ga., U.S. America, which he has well named "The Morning Star." It is now in the 10th Number of the third volume. It only costs five cents a number, and can be got from the Agent for Scotland, Bernard Goodwin, 24 Crawford Street, Partick. This *Magazine* is always choke full of original articles of great erudition, strength and beauty, and the reader can see that the author is a man very deeply read "In Nature's infinite book of mystery."

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There is an article in the January number entitled "Strange Freaks in Nature—What is Electricity," in which we are told that savants have at last captured the passage of this strange fluid—Electricity—and fixed its image by means of photography. A learned Russian gentleman, M. de Narkiewicz-Iodko, member of the Imperial Institute of Medicine at St. Petersburg, lately left his home to bring to his learned confreres at Paris a series of photographs doubly interesting through the profound connection which they show between Electricity and the human organism.

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"The French savants who have lately assembled with him are specially occupied in these studies; they have with interest examined the very curious photographs that M. de Naskiewicz has made of magnetic sparks obtained by him from the surface of the human body. These proofs take the form of a luminous ball, presenting more or less brilliancy, taking on delicate forms of Arborescence, such as trees, plants, etc., according as to whether the subject may be Anœmic, Nervous, Sanguine, or exceptionally vigorous. In the latter case the image upon the plate appears as a veritable explosion of electric molecules. A new science is born, the realms of real magic are opening up, and at least one of the transformations of the *Akasa*, the *Astral Virgin*, or *Anima Mundi* are herein encroached upon."

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"It is only a few years back since the late Professor Tyndal ushered us into a new world, peopled with the most gorgeous airy shapes, phenomena of the most ravishing beauty. The vapours of certain volatile Liquids, Nitrates, Iodides and Acids are subjected to the action of concentrated sun-light, or to the concentrated beam of the electric light, in an experimental tube lying horizontally, in such a manner that the axis of the tube and that of the paralled beams of light are coincident. The vapours form clouds of gorgeous tints, arranging themselves into the shapes of cones, shells, tulips, roses, sunflowers. 'In one case,' he tells us, 'the cloud-bud grew rapidly into a serpent's head, a mouth was formed, and from the cloud a cord of cloud resembling a tongue was discharged.' Finally to crown all the marvels 'once it positively assumed the form of a fish, with eyes, gills, and feelers.' The twoness of the animal form was displayed throughout, and no disk, coil, or speck, existed on the one side that did not exist on the other."

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Mr. Davidson, in concluding his interesting article, asks the question, "Why is it that those sparks took on arborescent forms, why do the soundwaves describe such beautiful figures, how account for the fish, the serpent's head, the flowers of diffierent varieties, the shells? How is it that in the above experiment such weird and significant images appear. Occultism alone solves the difficulty. Those who have given little or no attention to the subject will be surprised to find how much was known in former days of that

all-pervading subtle principle, which has recently been baptised *The Universal Ether*. The ancient Sages or Magi of all schools and countries produced their wonders, because they were perfectly familiar with the imponderable—in their effects—but otherwise perfectly tangible waves of the *Astral Light*."

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Can any of my antiquarian friends favour me with a short Sketch of the life of a once celebrated Jacobite Ballad Singer, a native of Aberdeenshire, named Charles Leslie. He died, I am told, in the year 1782, in the 105th year of his age. I have a curious print, said to be a Portrait of this worthy, and if I could get a sketch of his history, I would give both a place in the pages of "Caledonia."

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I cannot but feel gratified and not a little proud at the brilliant reception that has been accorded—I may say by nearly all the Scottish newspaper press—to our humble efforts to produce a really National Scottish Magazine. I have to assure these kind friends—one and all—that as we proceed with our work a still greater degree of interest will be imported into our columns.

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Arrangements are pending with some talented writers for papers on the following literary, historical, and biographical subjects, viz.: (1) "Scotland's Sweet Singers," from James the I. of Scotland to William Thom of Inverurie (with portraits); (2) "The Honours of Scotland," being a history of our Regalia, which is a very strange and curious one, with illustrations; and (3) "Biographical Sketches of Remarkable Scotsmen," with portraits. This series will include such historical characters as:—The Admirable Crichton; John o' Groat; Lord Lovat; Patie Birnie, the Fiddler of Kinghorn; John Law, the Author of the Mississippi Scheme; William Brodie, City Councillor and Housebreaker; William Douglas; Duke of Queensferry, and many others.

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The byeways of Scottish History have hitherto somehow been, to a great extent, unexplored, and it shall be the mission of "Caledonia" to try and remedy this, by putting on record many matters pertaining to the "Land of brown heath and shaggy wood," which might otherwise have slipped into the limbo of oblivion.

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

SPRING has come! balmy, beautiful spring! decked with snow-dropes and crocuses, and other early flowers of many colours; fresh, fair flowers, bathed in the bright beams of golden sunshine that "comes o'er the mountain with light and song." The presence and progress of smiling gentle spring—the wind-winged emblem of hope and love and youth and gladness—may be traced:—

> **"O'er the wakening earth**
> **By the winds that tell of the violets birth,**
> **By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass."**

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Is there a good man or woman on earth who does not love flowers? "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow, they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Flowers are the best emblems of our life beyond—pure, innocent, guileless. Let us for our soul's good walk in the early morning in the garden, where:—

> **"Along the blushing borders bright with dew,**
> **And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,**
> **Fair-handed spring unbosoms every grace,**
> **Throws out the snow-drop and the crocus first;**

> The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
> And polyanthus of unnumbered dyes:
> The yellow wall flower, stained with iron brown;
> And lavish stock, that scents the garden round."

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Perhaps the finest description of the advent of Spring is our poet Burns' opening verses in the touching pastoral which he wrote some months after the departure of Clarinda, when time had mellowed the poet's passion, and calmed, to a certain extent, the wild tumult of his feelings:—

> "Now in her green mantle blithe Nature arrays,
> And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
> While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
> The violets bathe in the weet o' the morn.

The subject is so fascinating that one might write on for hours—but duty says turn to other matters.

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I devoted a whole afternoon this past month to reading my good friend, J. B. Salmond's "My Man Sandy—being experiences and reflections of Bawbee Bowden," and I can truly say that a more pleasant afternoon I have not spent for many a day. The humour is genuine, and the occasional touches of real pathos makes it delightful reading. Every sketch in the work has its own individual merits, and these are so strong and characteristic that it would seem invidious to select, where all are so good, so very good. But I may be excused for saying that the two I enjoyed most was "A talk about heaven," and the one quite in a different vein, entitled "A Magic Lantern Exhibition." This last has great dramatic force, and makes one long for more of the same class from the pen which wrote it. The "slice o' a drunkard's liver" is just irresistible, and "Fat they dee wi' creeminels or notorious fowk noo a days," is a stroke of humour worthy of Artemus Ward. The book is certainly the work of a man of real genius.

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When I have said this much I will perhaps be understood not to be disparaging the real merits of the book in any way when I say that I don't like the dialect. Not that I do not think that it is a

true representation of the lingo used by the lower classes of the "Red Lichtes;" I believe it is so. My objection is to books written in any dialect, because, as I think, this leads to a deterioration of the language of the country in which it is used. Now the Scottish language is a precious inheritance, we should therefore try to keep it classical. Allan Ramsay, Robert Ferguson, Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, John Galt, David Moir, in fact all our masters in Scottish literature eschewed dialects. Only use such "Doric," when occasion required, as will be found in the pages of our best Scottish dictionaries or vocabularies. In my humble opinion the weakest point in the new school of Scottish writers is their exclusive and slavish use of the dialect. There is fine thought, pleasant humour, touching pathos, and sparkling wit in Mr. Salmond's "My Man Sandy;" it does not require the questionable aid, if it is in any sense an aid, of the local dialect to make it palatable.

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Our "Gude Auld Mither Tongue" is a language, whereas our dialects are only samples of how the vulgar have tried to murder it. About the real "Doric" an accomplished writer thus comments, when speaking of the wonderful change that less than a hundred years has brought about in its use:—"Time was," he says, "within living memory, when the upper classes prided themselves on their native 'Doric'; when judges on the bench delivered their judgments in the broadest Scotch, and would have thought themselves guilty of puerile and unworthy affectation if they had preferred English words or English accents to the language of their boyhood; when advocates pleaded in the same homely and forcible tongue; when ministers of religion found their best way to the hearts and to the understandings of their congregations in the use of the language most familiar to themselves, as well as to those whom they addressed; and when ladies of the highest rank—celebrated alike for their wit and beauty—sang their tenderest, archest, and most affecting songs, and made their bravest thrusts and parries in the sparkling encounters of conversation, in the familiar speech of their own country."

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A Little Scottish World, as revealed in the Annals of an Ancient Ayrshire Parish. By the Rev. Kirkwood Hewat, M.A. (Kilmar-

nock: D. Brown & Co.) It is difficult to decide whether the literary matter, the illustrations, or the general get up of this book are most to be praised. They are all uncommonly good; and although we have considerable knowledge of local histories, it has never been our fortune to hold in our hands a work equal to the large paper edition of Mr. Hewat's work. We know, too, that with the exception of less marginal space, the ordinary issue, costing three and sixpence, is equally fine. The result has been as we might have anticipated: the first issue almost exhausted, and the lucky author contemplating the publication of a second edition.

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It is not necessary to occupy our space with quotations, or lengthy encomiums on its rare merits. Suffice it to say, that it deals with the parish of Preswick and Monkton—chiefly the former—in their historical social aspects, with special reference to these when they converge with the national life; presenting a vivid and fascinating picture of this ancient burgh, its archæology, eminent natives, historic houses and their owners, folklore, churches and manses, etc. And all this is written with rare fidelity to facts, clearness of perception, and lightness and gracefulness of touch, the whole having an artistic finish rarely to be found in any book, and never, that we know of, with such deftness of execution in a local work, as in the one before us. The concluding chapters deal with the flora and fauna of the district, and there is an admirable index. The work is an intellectual treat to a reader whose artistic, literary or scientific tastes are susceptible of these subtle graces born of a cultivated mind, which are everywhere to be found in this book. The author and publishers are to be congratulated, and it gives us pleasure to commend a work which has been more than favourably spoken of in the press.

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Every student of British History is aware of the important part which the Highland Regiments played in establishing and consolidating the British Empire, by their indomitable bravery on the field of battle. The writer lately met with a grandson of one of these veterans—a Col. Wm. Blair. This gentleman, by bravery and distinguished conduct in the field, rose from the standing of a common private to that of Colonel before he received his discharge,

which would be about the beginning of the present or the end of the last century. After his discharge from the army, Col. Wm. Blair settled in Upper Canada. His house was built on the site where the City of Perth now stands, and gave the name to the district. Here he married an English lady of great wealth. The regiment in which Col. Blair so honourably served was "The Frazer Fencibles," which was disbanded soon after the battle of Waterloo. As further particulars of this hero's romantic career would be interesting, I will welcome any information relating to the events of his life.

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Some critics, when commenting on my sketch of Professor Blackie, in the first number of "Caledonia," declared that the little story that has been so often told of the "classes and asses" was not true. I put myself to some considerable trouble to try and settle if it was or not. The evidence being about equal on both sides, an esteemed contributor wrote the Professor asking what was the fact, to which he received the following reply:—

To
Mr. J. G. Carter, F.S.A.,
The Rotchell,
Dalry,
Galloway.

7 Bruntsfield Crescent,
Edinburgh, 13th February, /95.

Dear Sir,

The columns of the daily papers are full of fancies changed into facts. There is not a word of truth in the story, so far as I am concerned.

Sincerely Yours,
JOHN S. BLACKIE.

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One would have thought that the above would have settled the whole matter for ever, but a letter from George M. Lawson of Newtyle, of date 11th March, 1895, addressed to the Editor of the "Dundee Advertiser," is rather startling. Mr. Lawson says:—

"At a time when everything relating to Professor Blackie is of interest, your readers may be pleased to learn, on the authority of

an eye-witness, that the oft-quoted incident about the "classes," "lasses," and "asses" is not mythical. One morning in the spring of 1879, as the students attending the Greek class, then held in the north-east corner of the old University, were hurrying up at nine o'clock, they were confronted by a notice, posted on one of the pillars outside, somewhat to this effect:—'Owing to the outbreak of fire this morning, Professor Blackie regrets that he will not be able to meet his classes to-day." One of us—I do not claim the distinction—stroked out the 'c' of 'classes,' whereat the laughter of the undergraduates became extreme. In the course of the morning, as I was lounging about the quadrangle awaiting the next class hour, I saw Professor Blackie emerge from what I think was the Senate Hall, at the south-east corner of the buildings. A small crowd still surrounded the notice, and at sight of the Professor the laughter and the shouting were renewed. He walked across to see what the excitement was about, and the students readily gave way to let him see the joke at his expense. Without saying a word the Professor took out a pencil, stroked out the 'l,' and walked off. He seemed to think little about the incident, and evidently before he next heard of the joke he had forgotten all about it, as it has been reported that he doubted its authenticity. For various reasons, which I need not trouble you with, I am able to fix the date approximately. The cause of the classes not being held on the particular day, I am absolutely certain, is the one I have given. Reference to a file of the *Scotsman*, where the fire would certainly be reported, would enable me to determine the exact date."

The question is, who is right? Mr. Lawson or the Professor. Mr. Carter, in a letter to me, dated the 15th March, says: "The 'Classes and Asses' story is an instance of how difficult it is to know what is the truth. It does not, however, strike me, from my intercourse with Professor Blackie, that he was the man to forget such an incident. He was anything but dreaming, and the fact that he took the trouble to write that post card so shortly before his death, shows that he wished it contradicted."

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Mr. Coulson Kernahar has given the world a very good dignified little book, entitled "Sorrow and Song." There can be no doubt of the truth of what Shelley told us so long long ago in his Skylark:—

"Our sweetest songs are those
That tell of saddest thought."

Mr. Kernahar's description of the great German Poet Heine's style is beautiful as well as true. "The lines seem to drip blood as we read them. Then there flashes across the page, with the suddenness of purple lightning, one of those deadly dagger stabs which Heine struck at many a reputation; and then there is a sudden change in the music, and the verses skip and leap, ripple and run, as if to the accompaniment of dancing feet. In the next stanza, it may be, he holds us hushed and spell-bound as when we stand at sun-down in the darkening aisles of an ancient church, and then he startles the silence which he himself has created with a wild burst of mocking and ribald laughter."

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The Rev. Alfred Gardner of Dundee, in a lecture to "Young Men," the other day, spoke with great freshness, strength and originality on the subject of "The Rewards of Life." He told his hearers that there was one reward which never failed—the joy in doing the good action itself. Happiness was quite independent of success, as the world accounted success. "Fancy," said the preacher, "Moses having made a fortune in leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt! Think, if you can, of Isaiah receiving a cheque from his publisher for the writing of his prophecies! Imagine John being lionised, as Mr. S. R. Crockett has lately been lionised in London, for his spiritual gospel! or Paul receiving a pension for his contribution to literature in the shape of his Epistles! In all such cases the idea of compensation is unthinkable. God has paid these great works of His as He always pays all faithful doers. He has paid them, not in money, not in fame, but in the love and reverence of millions throughout the generations."

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Everyone has heard or read of True Thomas, otherwise Thomas the Rhymer, otherwise Thomas Lermont of Ercildoun, the author of the melodious and beautiful ballad, Sir Tristrem. We intend giving this ballad, both in the old and new dress, some month soon, with notes on the life of the great Seer.

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One of True Thomas's predictions was the death of the King Alexander the Third, who was killed by falling over the rocks at

Kinghorn in the year 1285. Bower, the historian, who flourished about the year 1430, presents us with a circumstantial account of this prediction. On the night preceding the King's death, Thomas of Ercildoun, visiting the castle of Dunbar, was interrogated by the Earl of March, in the jocular manner which he was wont to assume with this reputed prophet, if to-morrow should produce any remarkable event. The said Thomas, fetching a heavy sigh from the very bottom of his heart, is reported to have expressed himself distinctly to this effect: "Alas! for to-morrow; a day of calamity and of misery! Before the twelfth hour shall be heard a blast so vehement, that it shall exceed those of every former period; a blast which shall strike the nation with amazement, shall reduce those who hear it to a state of insensibility, shall humble what is proud, and what is fierce shall level with the ground." The solemnity of this denunciation made some impression on the earl and his companions; but having next day continued on the watch till the ninth hour, without being able to remark any unusual appearance in the elements, they began to deride Thomas as driveller, and afterwards hastened to enjoy their wonted repast. The earl had scarcely placed himself at the table, and the hand of the dial pointed towards the hour of noon, when a messenger appeared before the gate, and with importunate strokes demanded instant admission. On entering the castle and being questioned concerning news, he exclaimed, "I do indeed bring news, but of a lamentable kind; to be deplored by the whole realm of Scotland. Alas! our renowned King has ended his life at Kinghorn." When the messenger paused, the earl and his companions roused themselves as from a profound sleep; and beating their breasts in the agony of despair, acknowledged that the prediction of Thomas had been fatally verified.

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Winton, in his "Cronykil of Scotland," vol. ii., page 202, and Blind Henry in his "Wallace," vol. i., page 27, both corroborate this story as told by Bower. When looking over some very old books, the other day, treating on Ancient Scottish Literature, I came across two verses—or to give them their right name, an elegiac sonnet on the death of Alexander the Third. The sonnet is said to have been composed by a contemporary poet, and is preserved in "Winton's Chronicle":—

"Quhen Alysandyr oure king wes dede,
That Scotland led in luve and le',
Away wes sons of ale and brede,
Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle'.

Our golde wes changyd in to lede,
Cryst, born in to virgynyté,
Succour Scotland and remede,
That stad us in perplexyté."

The above is well worthy of particular attention, as it is the earliest specimen extant of the language of the Scottish Lowlands over six hundred years ago.

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In another old book I find the following: "The North Water, near Brechin, was suddenly dried up in the beginning of 1763, from 6 o'clock in the morning to 12 o'clock at noon, when the water began to flow again as usual." Can any of my readers refer me to any record giving an account of this strange natural phenomenon; it seems to me "very like a whale," or a weasel, or a camel, or anything but the truth, or are we to understand that it was frozen?

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

I WAS reading the other day Robert Kempt's "Convivial Caledonia," a very interesting little volume, giving a bright, cheerful account of the Inns and Taverns of Scotland, and of some famous people who have frequented them. I cordially recommend this book to the attention of our readers, for they will find in its pages a pleasant story of the manner in which the people of the days that are gone ate and drank and enjoyed themselves. We are told all about the frugal tavern suppers ate by the learned Aberdeen philosophers of the last century, Drs. Thomas Reid, George Campbell, John Gregory, James Beattie, and David Skene, and of the "Nine Tumbler Club," and "The Bonny Wife's Inn"—both famous houses of entertainment in days of old in the Granite City.

We have also pictures of the celebrated Taverns of Edinburgh, the convivial haunts of Robert Burns, and also Tibbie Shiel's little Cottage Inn in the Vale of Yarrow, a cosie retreat, on the banks of St. Mary's Loch. Tibbie's name will be handed down in history, because she had the honour of supplying the good things of life to

a galaxy of great men, who all agree that she was the kindest of hostesses, and worthiest of women. Among the many notabilities who patronised Tibbie's humble Inn, I may name Sir Walter Scott, Sir David Brewster, Professor Wilson, De Quincey, Hogg, Lockhart, Aytoun, Allan Cunningham, Scott Riddell, Glassford Bell, Robert Chambers, Alexander Russell, and, in later days, Robert Louis Stevenson. There are many stories told about Tibbie, but perhaps the most unique is her opinion of James Hogg, the poet-shepherd of Ettrick Vale. She said he was "a gey sensible man for a' the nonsense he wrat!"

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The reading of this capital little book on our Scottish Inns has set me a-thinking and further reading on the subject. Montgomery the poet sings:—

> "Hail to the timely welcome of our inn!
> Hail to the room where home and cheer begin;
> When all the frost-bound feelings melt away,
> And soul-warm sympathies begin to play;
> While independence shows her manly mien,
> And sterling traits of human life are seen."

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On one occasion, when Boswell and the great Dr. Johnson were dining at an excellent inn at Chapel House, the doctor expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house (said he) in which people can enjoy themselves so well as in a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody shall be easy—in the nature of things it cannot be; there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests, the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man, but a very impudent dog indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome, and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give; the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir, there is nothing

which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced, as by a good tavern or inn." He then repeated, with great emotion, Shenstone's lines:—

> "Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn."

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Nor is the above the only time that the great *littcrateur* Dr. Johnson speaks in terms of high praise of taverns. Sir John Hawkins, in his bulky tome of reminiscences, tells us that the doctor once said to him—"In contradiction," says Sir John, "to those who having a wife and children, preferring domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert 'that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity.'" "As soon," said he, "as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and of freedom from solitude. Wine there exhilarates my spirits and prompts me to free conversation, and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love; I dogmatise, and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion I find delight."

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Taverns, ale-houses, inns, and hotels, figure largely in the history of mankind; all our literature teems with scenes in, or descriptions of them. In poetry, fiction, and painting, inns are minutely delineated by Shakespeare, Chaucer, Tennyson, and Longfellow, among the poets; Cervantes, Hugo, and Dickens, among the novelists; and by Hogarth, Sir David Wilkie, Teniel, and George Moreland, among the painters. Shakespeare, in King Henry IV., has painted some scenes that will never fade of the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap, in which figure Prince Henry, Bardolph, and Poins. It is here that the genial old rogue, Sir John Falstaff, philosophises on men and things, and plays "high jinks" with Prince Henry and his boon-companions. Hear him talk: "You rogue, here's lime in this sack too. There is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man; yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it. A villainous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then I am a shotten herring. There live not three good men unhanged in England, and

one of them is fat and grows old." And then a little further on he crys:

"But, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors: watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! what, shall we be merry? shall we have a play extempore?"

* * * * * *

The father of English poetry, old Geoffrey Chaucer, in his "Canterbury Tales," gives us a fine picture also of the manners, customs, dress, and appearance of men and women of the various classes of society in the fourteenth century. As we read we seem to sit in the great kitchen or common room of the jolly innkeeper, and to hear the merry voices of the guests, their loud jests and frank laughter, as they are introduced to us one after another. The pilgrims, as all the world knows, were to start in the pleasant spring-time, when the sweet showers of April had pierced the drought of March to the root, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas-a-Becket at Canterbury. Their place of meeting was a tavern called the "Tabard" (The Herald's Coat), and at that old hostelry had assembled nine-and-twenty guests, all bent on paying their devotions at good St. Thomas's shrine.

* * * * * *

The admirers of Lord Tennyson, our late Poet Laureate, will be familiar with his Will Waterproof's Monologue, in which he sings the praises of his favourite house of call, the famous old chop-house, the Cock—

"For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay;
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble:
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double."

. . . .

"Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part; I hold thee dear,
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after."

It was well known among his familiar friends that the late Laureate dearly loved to "tipple" sweet old crusty port wine.

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Many of good, mad, old Don Quixote's laughable exploits, along with his fat faithful squire, Sancho Panza, took place in the roadside inns of Castile and Arragon, in Spain, which he imagined to be castles. Some of the best tales told in this famous work of Miguel de Cervantes are those related while sitting around the kitchen fires in the old hostelries. Hugo and Dickens, graphically and grotesquely, give us pen portraits of the curious old Inns of Paris and London. Sir David Wilkie's "Village Politicians" meet in an old Scottish inn to read the newspapers, and discuss state matters over a pipe and a can of ale. Teniel may be said to have spent his life painting Dutch inns and Dutch drinking bouts; and poor George Moreland had often to pay his score to the landlord by painting a signboard for the establishment; and last, though not least, it may be stated with truth that no great painter that the world has seen for the past six hundred years, but has at some time of his life tried his hand at painting the famous historic inn where the Saviour of all the world, the infant Jesus, was cradled in a manger, because there was no room in that inn.

* * * * * *

The accommodation of a Scottish hostelry or inn in the sixteenth century may be gleaned from Dunbar's admirable tale of "The Friars of Berwick." Simon Lauder, the "gay ostler," seems to have lived very comfortably, and his wife decorated herself in a scarlet kirtle, and a balt of silk and silver, and rings upon her fingers:—

"Scho cleithis hir in ane kirtil of fyne reid ;
Hir kyrtil was of silk, her keyis gingling fyne,
Within ane purs the reid gold did schyne.
On ilkane fyngar scho weirit ringis tuo :
Scho was also proud as ony papingo."

And this gay landlady of the olden time feasted the jolly old Abbot of Berwick on rabbits, capons, partridges and good wine from Bordeaux. If the Scottish inns were not good in the reign of James I. it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature, for it was at that time enacted "that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostelries, having stables and chambers, and provision for men and horse, and, by another statute ordained that no man travelling on horse or on foot should presume to lodge anywhere except in

these hostelries, and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such travellers, under the penalty of forty shillings for exercising such hospitality." But we read that, in spite of these enactments, the Scottish hostels of that time were but very indifferent, and strangers continued to seek and find reception and entertainment in the houses of private persons.

* * * * * *

In a book published the other day we find a graphic description of the ale-houses that at one time were planted all over the country, and afforded refreshment to man and beast. "The ordinary cottage—and country ale-houses were often only ordinary cottages —had two apartments—a but and a ben, or kitchen, and a ben end or *spence*. The passage inside the door connecting them was the trance (Lat. trans, across). The kitchen was the famous ha' where, as at Ellisland, master and servant took meals together, and where the "big ha' Bible" was produced for family worship. The floor was the uneven earthen solum, and the roof showed its open joists, the bauks of cabers, where hung the winter store of the kitchen— that is braxy mutton—with strings of onions:

> "He ended, and the kebars sheuk
> Aboon the chorus roar;
> While frichted rattens backward leuk
> And seek the benmost bore.

Here, too, roosted among the peat smoke that followed its own course from the great open hearth, the reek-hens, that paid the tacksman's Kain-rent. They entered by a hole in the thatch over the doorway. In the gable and near the floor was the dog-hole, by which the collie got in and out at will; a wooden bar-block secured the door, and when a neighbour called he "tirled at the pin." The furniture was on a scanty scale. On either side of the fireplace was a small box or "bale," the one for the saut-backet and the other for odds and ends. Near by stood the "let-pat" filled with dye-stuff, and there was one in every house. The large oaken settle was the guidman's seat, and in the corner behind him stood the chicken-cavie or hen-coop. On the wall hung the "haik," an open rack for homely delf-ware, green horn spoons, and a variety of vessels—cogs, bickers, quaichs, frigget caups, cotties, luggies, leggens—and beneath it the deas or dias, a closed cupboard; a box-bed filled up the other parts of the wall. The spence was the

state-room, where slept the master and his wife, but almost as modestly furnished."

* * * * * *

The subject of use, abuse and condition of Scottish ale-houses and inns of the olden times would make a readable volume. One would of course require to go back long before the time covered by Mr. Kempt in his "Convivial Caledonia." There would be no lack of matter, as our inns are often alluded to in all our ancient literature, and much knowledge of them could be gleaned from the books written by Englishmen who visited Caledonia, and wrote accounts of their visits long, long ago. I will note a few of the titles of these old books, as some of my readers, curious in such things, may wish to consult them:—(1) "Fynes Monyson"—an English gentleman who visited the "Land o' Cakes" in the year 1617. (2) "Northern Memoirs," by Richards Francks—written in the year 1658. (3) "Letters from a gentleman in the North of Scotland to his friend in London," by Captain Burts—1730. (4) "Tour in Scotland," by Thomas Pennants, in the year 1771.

* * * * * *

The dashing of a cataract over a precipice, or down the side of a mountain, the roar of a river as it wends its way through green meadows to the mighty ocean, the murmuring music of a running stream, or the noisy gurgling of a little brook in its rocky bed, have each and all charmed the hearts and invoked the muse of the poets of all ages. Burns, in his fine poem Halloween, has an exquisite description of the rivulet where "three lairds' lands meet," to which the wanton widow Lizzie has gone to dip her left shirt-sleeve:—

> Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
> As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
> Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,
> Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
> Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays
> Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
> Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
> Below the spreading hazel.
> Unseen that night.

* * * * * *

Lord Alfred Tennyson, our late Poet Laureate, also sings, or rather makes the brook sing, in musical measure:—

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
  I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
  That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
  Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
  Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
  In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
  I loiter round my cresses.

And out again I curve and flow
  To join the brimming river:
For men may come and men may go,
  But I go on for ever.

* * * * * *

My esteemed contributor, J. G. Carter, has sent me three sweet verses, entitled "The Brooklet," which he has translated from the German of Goethe:—

Oh! silvery, sparkling, little brook,
  You hurry on for ever;
Upon thy banks I musing look—
  Whence come or go, small river?

. . . .

I come from dusky mountain fells,
  My course is over moss and flowers,
And in my mirror softly swells
  Blue sky with imaged cloudy towers.

A dancing, child-like soul I own,
  It moves me on I know not how;
But He who called me from the stone,
  He guides, I think, my course e'en now.

Would the close similarity of thought in the above three poems by the three great poets, Burns, Goethe, and Tennyson, be only remarkable literary coincidences? Surely we could not say that any of them were likely to be guilty of the mean crime of plagiarism Or will the true explanation of the similarity be found in the saying of the inspired bricklayer, Ben Jonson, that "great wits jump?"

* * * * * *

I think it is Wordsworth who says, when speaking of a character who is void of imagination or poetic fancy:—

A primrose on a river's brim
Only a primrose was to him
And nothing more.

As a slight token that he has not forgot Primrose Day, my good friend, Mr. John Smith (auld C) of Alyth, sings:—

O, the bonnie, bonnie primrose,
Sae fairy-formed an' sweet!
There's no anither flower that grows
Can e'er wi' it compete.
It sweetly blinks upon the bank,
Blooms bonnie in the dell,
An' Spring wid be a dreary blank
Withoot its magic spell.

Nae wirds can tell the joys sublime
It yields to childhood's eyes;
What ither bloom retains its prime
Till Summer flooers arise?
An' far an' near its clusters spread
Wi' Nature for its guide;
It fills the woodland, lea, an' glade,
An' climbs the mountain's side.

The yellow linnet near it sits
To warble oot its sang;
O, I cou'd lis'en to its lilts,
Nor think the day owre lang.
O, ye bonnie, bonnie primrose!
My heart-strings still you'll thrill;
And till life's day draws to a close,
I'll sing your praises still.

* * * * * *

The common primrose, *Primula Vulgaris*, adorns the woods and groves and umbrageous banks and grassy wastes, and other similar places of most parts of Britain; and is, or ought to be, known to everybody as one of the most charming of our wild flowers. Its root is somewhat fleshy, and has long fibres; its leaves are radical, numerous, obovate—oblong, unequally-toothed, soft, wrinkled, and slightly downy, and stands on short, broad footstalks; and its flowers are generally solitary, but sometimes unbelled, and are large, numerous, and sulphur-coloured, with a darker radiating central spot, and bloom from March till June. The Scottish primrose, *Primula Scotica*, is a native of the lofty

mountains of the Scottish Highlands. It is somewhat akin to the mealy primrose, and quite resembles it in the colour of the flowers and in the time of blooming; but its mealiness is yellower, and spreads more or less over both surfaces of the leaves.

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

NOTHING gives me greater pleasure at this season of the year than to take a walk in the cool of the evening over the crest of a high hill that stands a little to the south of the small town in which I dwell. One night not long ago I was standing near the top of this hill. The still beauty of the lovely scene moved me. I recalled the words of a well-known local poet, who, when he composed them, had more than likely been standing on the same spot where I stood:—

> "The sky was clear, the air was still,
> Calm silence slept upon the hill;
> Sweet balmy sleep, dull care to droon,
> Had hushed the hum o' yonder toon."

What made the scene more weird was the fact that the moon was then at its full. As I gazed on the lady queen of the heavens, Milton's lines came from my lips:—

> "The moon, whose orb
> Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
> At evening, from the top of Fesole,
> Or in Baldarno, to descry new lands,
> Rivers or mountains, in her spotty globe."

The words of the poet were hardly out of my mouth when I saw a man standing just beside me, whom I knew at once to be *Julius Cæsar*. I had so often seen his head in books and prints that I knew I could not be mistaken. At first I felt my limbs trembling under me, but he had so kind a look on his face that I soon became quite at my ease. Still, as I gazed on the great warrior, historian, and statesman, I could not help a feeling of awe creeping over me. He began to speak in English, and as he noticed that I looked surprised, he laughingly informed me that he could speak all the languages under the sun.

"I have been permitted," he said, "to rise from the grave, and to again revisit the earth and see with my own eyes what condition society was in towards the close of the nineteenth century."

I looked bewildered, and was about to speak, but as he continued to address me, I held my tongue and listened attentively.

"I do not wish to astound you," he said, "but rather to give you some instruction. Human nature has been the same in all ages, and I fear will always be so. I find you in Britain almost in the same state that Rome was in when I took all the power into my own hands. Rome was corrupt to the heart at that time, and long before that time I saw all that clearly, and so I knew I could lay her prostrate at my feet. I fixed the attention of the people on outward show and glitter, so that they could not closely watch my actions. I undermined all the power of the people, increased the military forces of the state, bribed the magistrates to sell their country, and then I held all the power of Rome in my own hands."

After saying this he stood silent for some time, and seemed in deep thought, and then he spoke again.

"You are going downhill to despotism in exactly the same way that Rome did of old. The central Government is slowly but surely sapping the foundation of all your municipal institutions, and at the same time greatly increasing the military forces year by year. Your rulers seem to be as ignorant and unprincipled as they were in Rome, and a country in such a state is sooner or later doomed to despotism."

"Will the education of the people have no effect," I ventured to say, "in preventing such a consummation?"

"No; it will only," he replied, "make the job more easy; for, you see, the Government will yet take all educational matters into

its own hands, and by that means it could form the public mind to its will, and thereby corrupt the very heart of the nation at the close. After a time I found the bribery of the educated Roman easy. Education has never made a nation free, and never will. Look at Germany and Belgium. They are the most enslaved nations in Europe at the present time, and yet it is said they are the best educated. Your central government can prove at any time that your school boards are a body of men who know nothing at all of education, and this will be the excuse made when the time comes for the government to take all that power into their own hands."

"It was the educated class that corrupted Rome and brought her to the dust, and it is the very best educated that have corrupted all nations, and government and powers."

"I see you have mills, factories, and public works in your midst, and you have to pay a very heavy price indeed for them.

"In the first place they are dwarfing the frames of your people, and that, bear in mind, is the greatest loss a nation can endure. Your people are not so stout and hardy-looking as they were when I invaded the country, and no increase of riches can make up for this want. This system of labour in mills and factories will throw all the wealth of the nation into the hands of one class, and all the poverty into another class. You have, I see, in their extremest form, the Patricians and Plebeians, the two classes that hastened on the ruin of Rome. You are a vain people, like what we were; you have all our faults and not many of our virtues. You call yourselves Christians, but if Christianity means leading a noble life, I see very little of such among you. Are you honest in your dealings with each other? Do you lead chaste lives? And why does so deep poverty dwell beside so great riches? Do you respect the good man? Do you lie and backbite, or speak scandal of your

> "brother man
> And gentle sister woman?"

Do your magistrates deal out justice to the rich and poor alike? Do you keep the marriage vows pure? These are a few questions I would put to you and to your society, and I doubt much if the replies would be at all satisfactory."

The great Roman stood silent again for a few minutes, and then he began in a more animated tone than before.

"What is civilization?" he said. "It is only comparative, and

none of it in the world as yet has been of a high order, and, I fear, never will. Greece produced a few great poets, orators, and statesmen, but her people were never civilized at all. She kept slaves, and her petty states were often fighting and quarrelling with each other. Your own poet, Byron, truly painted their down-fall.

"Yes; self-abasement paved the way
To villain bonds and despot sway."

Rome was never well civilized, no more than Greece. I lived in the palmy days of her greatness, and often came in contact with her learned men, and I can assure you that their morality was low."

"What would you call true civilization," I asked. He shook his head and replied:

"Honesty may broadly be said to be the corner-stone of all true civilization, and not learning at all. Men may be great poets, statesmen, and orators, and yet be the very worst of men. How often has the tongue and the pen, like the sword, led nations to destruction? Try and count up the good and evil they have done, and you will find the evil far surpasses the good. There was slavery in Greece, slavery in Rome, and you have also much slavery now. The slavery in the olden time was chiefly in the open air, but now it is in the mill, the factory, and the mine, and in many respects yours is the worst of the two. In your case the taskmaster has the poor slave more in his power than we had. Slavery in the country has never been so hard as slavery in the cities and towns. In the cities and towns men and women are more closely huddled together, living from hand to mouth under the eye always of the oppressor, surrounded by soldiers and police ready to shoot them down if they refuse to obey their masters. All your land is in a few hands, as well as all the property and capital of the nation, and what can your Free Libraries—and your so-called Free Press—do against all this? When the factory whistles are blown in the morning you have often to run through frost and snow to your work. We had not to do this in Rome. The whip of starvation flogs you in, and you cannot stay its scourge; when you are old you have only charity to fall back upon; and this is all your boasted civilisation can do for you."

"Could not the government," I said to him, "do much to make this state of things better?"

"Very little," he replied, "a government may do much evil to a country, but alas, it can do very little good. Are you weak enough to suppose that the subsidies a government gives come from the pockets of the government? Not one penny of it. The money is all your own, and that so-called free education grants, and the police grant, and the like, are just the flood-gates of corruption opened upon you to drown you all the sooner."

The old Roman now looked towards the west where the moon was just beginning to set.

"All nations," he said, "have had their rise and fall; the life of some of them has been far longer than the life of others, but fate has pronounced the sentence of death upon them all. Look on yon setting moon how she goes down and down until she sinks altogether out of sight, but she will rise again in all her glory; but a nation that goes down rises no more for ever. Some of the nations have been better than others, but none altogether good. I intended to speak to you about your literature, your pulpit, and your press, and some other things, but the night is getting late, and time presses. I will perhaps see you again soon."

He gave a gentle wave of his hand, and the next minute I was left standing alone on the crest of the hill. I took my way to the old town in the valley, pondering deeply on all I had seen and heard.

* * * * * *

Thomas Hood, in his inimitable history of the famous "Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg; a Golden Legend," after he fully describes her christening, her childhood, her education, her accident, her fame, her fancy ball, her courtship, her marriage, her honeymoon, her misery, her last will, and her death, closes with his moral:—

"Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammer'd, and roll'd!
Heavy to get and light to hold!
Hoarded, barter'd, bought, and sold,
Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled!
Spurn'd by the young, but hugg'd by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould!
Price of many a crime untold!
Gold! gold! gold! gold!
Good or bad a thousand-fold!

How widely its agencies vary—
To save—to ruin—to curse—to bless—
As even its minted coins express,
Now stamp'd with the image of Good Queen Bess,
And now of a Bloody Mary."

* * * * * *

What has called to my mind this golden poem of the wit, Tom Hood, the elder, is the re-opening of the gold-fields of the El Dorado of Scotland, Kildonan in Sutherland. Gold-finding in Scotland is not of yesterday. A writer in the first volume of *Hogg's Instructor* (1853) says: "When gold was first used in Scotland, the fashionable equipment for a warrior consisted of bow and arrows, the latter having heads of flint, a spear similarly shod, and probably a stone hammer, for use when an enemy closed with him. The Scottish aristocracy of that day dwelt in holes dug in the ground, and slenderly roofed with branches. Our streams 'rolled over sand of gold' at a time when the bear and the wolf and the wild horse drank of their waters in the deep stillness of the primeval forest. Ages before our earliest written record—in the dim antiquity whose single ray of light gleams from the graves of the dead—we know that our savage ancestors had learned to prize ornaments of gold. And as they had then little or no intercourse with foreign countries—certainly none which would attract the precious metals to their shores—we have no difficulty in concluding that their gold was native. Many graves have been discovered belonging to what archæologists term the Stone Period, and in these, massive bracelets of the purest gold have been found encircling the neck and arm of the mouldered skeleton. It was the custom of the time to bury with the dead the things which they prized most in life, and these seem often to have been their ornaments. And thus it is that the scanty history of the men of those far-off times is written mainly by their vanities and love of little distinctions. Their courage, their kindness, all their nobleness and their strength, have left no traces so legible as one of their weaknesses."

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In the twelfth century we are led to recognise the Kingdom of Fife as a region where gold was certainly obtained. There is a charter of David I. granting to the Abbey of Dunfermline one-tenth part of all the gold found in Fife and Forthrif, a district to

the westward. This is that David who is known to history as "a sair sanct for the crown." His extreme liberality to the church, together with the circumstance that Dunfermline was the favourite residence of his mother and the abbey of her foundation, afford a strong probability that such an amount of gold was then found as to render the benefaction a respectable one.

* * * * * *

The sixteenth century abounds with evidences that the production of gold in Scotland was very considerable. James IV. worked some mines at Wanlockhead with decided success. The extensive and valuable lead mines near this little village in the parish of Sanquhar are said to have been discovered by some Germans in the pay of the King, searching for gold.

* * * * * *

Sir David Lindsay, in his loving recital of the advantages which his country possessed, but which were rendered unavailing by bad government, enumerates the following:—

> "Of everilk mettell we have the rich mynis,
> Baith gold, silver, and stanes precious."

During the reign of Sir David's master, James V., the search for gold was actively prosecuted. James coined into what are called bonnet-pieces the gold which he obtained at Leadhills, and at his marriage-feast in France he caused a vessel containing these coins to be set before each guest, telling them these were the fruits which grew in his country.

* * * * * *

There is a book written by a Mr. Bulmer, who lived in the times of Queen Elizabeth, on "The Mineral Wealth of Scotland," in which he gives the following list of stones and metals which he had found: "Gold, silver, copper, lead, iron, marble, alabaster, amethyst, and pearls." So you see gold in Scotland is an old, old story indeed.

* * * * * *

There is no doubt whatever that gold does exist in the Kildonan, Saisgill, and Torrish burns, and the only problem to be solved is whether it exists in paying quantities. During the past twenty years scientific experiments have been made, and they went to prove that the yield would not defray the cost of the work. The County Council of Sutherland has now obtained permission from

the Duke to make a three months' test on the area of the Saisgill farm. We should be thankful if this experiment should prove a failure, for it would not be desirable to attract the vagrant blackguardism of the world to our shores. Goldfields in any country may be looked upon as a perilous distinction it would be far better without.

* * * * * *

I was very much pleased to receive the following letter from the United States, not only for the valuable information contained therein, but also as a proof that we are read and appreciated in the land of the west:—

No. 210 West 103rd Street,
NEW YORK CITY, *March 23rd, 1895.*

MY DEAR SIR,

In the March number of "Caledonia" you make inquiry for a short sketch of the life of the Jacobite Ballad Singer, Charles Leslie. I have a work entitled "Jacobite Songs and Ballads," edited by Gilbert S. Macquoid, published by White and Allen, New York and London, the frontispiece of which is a woodcut of Charles Leslie, or "Mussel-mou'd Charlie," as he was commonly called. It represents a very tall, thin man, leaning on a staff which he holds in his right hand, and in his left is a book. Underneath is printed "Charles Leslie of Aberdeenshire, who died 1782, aged 105." Among the Notes to this book is one giving a short sketch of this man, which I here give in full:—

"Mussel-mou'd Charlie, like Homer, composed and sung his own compositions for his daily bread. Sir Walter Scott speaks of him as 'an old Aberdeenshire minstrel, the very last, probably, of the race who, according to Percy's definition of the profession, sung his own compositions, and those of others, through the capital of the county, and other towns in that country of gentlemen.' The man's name was Charles Leslie, but he was known more generally by the nickname of Mussel-mou'd Charlie, from a singular projection of his under lip. His death was thus announced in the newspapers for October, 1792 (1782). 'Died at Old Rain, Aberdeenshire, aged one hundred and four (five) years, Charles Leslie, a hawker or ballad singer, well known in that county by the name of Mussel-mou'd Charlie. He followed his occupation till within a few weeks of his death.' Charles was a devoted Jacobite,

and so popular in Aberdeen that he enjoyed in that city a sort of monopoly of the minstrel calling, no other person being allowed, under any pretence, to chant ballads on the causeway or plainstanes of 'the brave burgh.' Most of Mussel-mou'd Charlie's songs were of a jocose character. The following account of him is taken from a letter written by Mr. James Troup (who knew him personally) to Alexander Irvine of Drum: 'Sir,—Enclosed I send you "M'Leod's Defeat at Inverury;" allow me to also send you some accounts of Charles Leslie, the last of the Sennachies or old Scots bards, who, I believe, made the first eight lines of the song, or at least some of them.

"'Charles Leslie was a natural son of Leslie of Pitcaple, in the Garioch, an old family on Uryside, commonly called Mussel-mou'd Charlie. He was a remarkable, thin made man, about five feet ten inches high, small, red, fiery eyes, a long chin, reddish hair, and, since I ever knew him, carried a long pike staff, a good deal longer than himself, with a large harden bag slung over his shoulder before him to hold his ballads, and a small pocket covered Bible, with a long string at it.

"'About the year 1780, Mr. Wells, painter, took his likeness. The last time I saw Charlie was in Marischal Street, led by a woman, carrying some milk in his hand. I suppose he was blind. The Magistrates of Aberdeen were very ill-natured to him: they often put him into gaol for singing, and asked him what for he did it? "Why," says Charlie, "for a bit of bread." "Why," says the Provost, "cannot you sing other songs than those rebellious ones?" "Oh ay," says Charlie, "but they winna buy them." "Where do you buy them?" "Why, far I get them cheapest." He was in gaol when the news of M'Leod's defeat came to town, and a great many more townsmen, until it could hold no more. Mr. Alexander Macdonald, Merchant, Broadgate; Mr. Francis Rose, in the Green; and a good many more were put into the guard-house. Mr. Rose was put in for lending Troup, the dancing master, a pair of pistols to go to Inverury. However, next day the accounts came of the defeat, and they were all liberated, and the prisoners from Inverury put in. Charlie was no sooner at the cross than he began to sing "Come, countrymen," &c. This I had from an old lass when I was a 'prentice in town. She was a servant in a gentleman's house—I believe Mr. Turner of Turnerhall—who sent her every day with victuals, &c., to Charlie, who sung the whole daytime to plenty of

company; and she and Charlie had the pleasure of standing in the crowd, and saw some gentlemen and Provost James Morison mount the cross, and caused him to take off his hat and drink a glass of red wine to the Prince's health, and proclaim him Prince Regent.'"

I have no doubt you will receive from antiquarians in Aberdeen, his native place, better and more complete accounts of Mussel-mou'd Charlie than the foregoing, but if you should not this may prove of use. It certainly is very interesting, so far as it goes, and is undoubtedly an authentic account.

I was very much pleased when I discovered on the counters of a news company the first issue of "Caledonia," and particularly when I noticed the proposed scope of the magazine, for surely no country presents a richer field than Scotland for traditional and antiquarian research. I have been much pleased with each number issued.

Might I suggest that the District of Athol, in Perthshire, is one of the most interesting districts in Scotland, historically and otherwise, and I think if the inquiry was made some of your readers from there might furnish a sketch of that country, or give some of their many traditional stories. The people of this district distinguished themselves particularly during the wars of Montrose and Dundee, and, seems to me, have received very scant notices in the histories, etc., for their devoted loyalty, for which they suffered most severely.

Very sincerely yours,

HENRY C. STUART.

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Apropos of my remarks of the use or abuse of dialects is the following from the *Daily News:* "All dialect is wearing; German- or English-French is wearing in a French novel; French-English is as bad, anywhere but in Thackeray. English-Scotch is absurd; so are English-Irish and English-American. . . . The marvel is that English people read Mr. Barrie's Forfarshire Scots." Of course the *Daily News* people do not know, but it is a fact, that Mr. Barrie's words, which he puts into the mouths of his characters, is neither Forfarshire Scots—or anything else.

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W. B. Harte says, "The vulgarisation of literature as merchandise made to tickle fools is complete in our day. . . . It outlaws all thinkers who recognise the sanctity of words."

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Three things, which at first sight do not seem to have much affinity with each other—to wit, Fate, a new Act of Parliament, and a public appointment—have rendered it expedient that I should cease being Editor of "Caledonia." I am glad to be able to say that a far abler hand than mine is to take the helm, to steer the good little ship past the rocks and shoals and quicksands that abound in the sea of literature. I have to thank the whole Scottish Press for their kind comments on my humble labours, and to tell them that in six years or so I will again have the pleasure of soliciting their kind applause—till then, *vive, vale.*

ALEXANDER LOWSON.

Echoes from the Sanctum.

As was only natural after the talk I had about men and things with the great *Julius Cæsar*, my thoughts often turned in that direction, musing and wondering why such things could be—why the great men of the past should be permitted to revisit

> "the glimpses of the moon,
> Not like pale ghosts or disembodied creatures,
> But with their flesh, their bones, their limbs and features."

I had got the views at first hand, what one of the great men of the past thought about our present state; but, after all, it was only the opinion of a man of action. I was anxious to know what one of the old Greek philosophers would say on the subject—what a man like Plato, for instance, would think of our social system. I have been reading his dialectics lately on theology, psychology, and physics, and I confess I am much in love with the wisdom of the old Greek.

On a fine evening not long ago I was again on the hill I spoke of before, the full moon was casting her soft light around on bush and tree. The scene was beautiful—the little town to the north lay sleeping in the valley, bathed in a flood of moonlight, and a little to the west of it lay a fine sheet of water, which in Scotland

we call a *loch*, glittering like gold in the soft yellow light of the moon. From where I stood on the top of the hill I heard the town's clock strike eleven. I was just thinking of taking my way home—indeed, I had turned my face in that direction—when I saw in the distance the figure of a man, who seemed to be wanting to come up to me. I accordingly stood still and awaited him. I noticed that his shoulders were very broad, and I remembered that it was from the great breadth of his shoulders that Plato, whose real name was Aristocles, got his name; some say from the word *Platon.* He walked, I saw, with great grace and dignity; his face was noble, thoughtful, and pale; his hair so gray that it was as white as snow. When he came up to my side, he looked for a few minutes very attentively in my face, and then, while he shook me by the hand, he said:—

"I can see the marks of thought in your face, and therefore to you I can open my mind on subjects of vast importance to the human race."

"My name," he continued, "is Plato; my great master was the renowned Socrates, one of the wisest of all the ancient sages. He and I often framed plans for the elevation of mankind, and I can see very well that our influence is not altogether dead in the world.

"Do not suppose that it is my mere ghost or shadow that is speaking to you. Know that it is the real soul of Plato, still filled with a strong desire to do all the good he can do—and to warn you of the traps and pitfalls that base and false men lay for the ruin of his brother man."

"I shall listen," I said, "with all attention, and I hope my understanding may enable me to profit from all you say—and I will, moreover, act upon it, as far as I can, if it be for the good of all."

Plato seemed well pleased. He wiped his fine brow with a white napkin, and then said:—

"You are a mercantile nation, and you make all things for money. You seem to care for little or nothing else but money-making, and work under such conditions will always be mainly spurious and bad. My works were not written for money at all, but for the sake of truth and right and justice. Had I written for money I might have prostituted the gifts of genius, and sold them in the market where slaves are bought and sold, and that would have been very offensive to the gods and to my own soul.

"Your senators seek office, not for the good of the state, but that they may fill their own coffers; your lawyers plead in the courts, not for the love of justice, but for the love of money. One of your own minor Scottish poets paints a very true picture of how this love of money, or 'sillar' as he calls it, percolates through the very smallest interstices of present-day society:—

'Wi' sillar, baith churchman an' layman will prize ye;
Without it, your ain flesh and bluid will despise ye:
An' preachers may preach, and vain moralists bluster,
But a rich man at a' times can easy pass muster.
Though, when mortals are sleeping and starnies are blinking,
Ye whiles waste the dark hours in raking and drinking;
Though in trade's hurry-gurry an' higglin' an' jargon
Ye whiles tell a whid, just to help on a bargain;
Though ye crush your poor workers wi' strong hand an' steady,
Kennin' weel a' the time that they're ower low already;
Sit warm on your hearth-rug an' birsle your shins,
Your bawbees will cover a great many sins.
A sinner that sins on his rich money-bags
Is anither thing clean frae a sinner in rags.
For sillar, though auld, beauty's fresh-blooming charms
Will drap like ripe fruit in your cauld shrivelled arms;
For sillar the Papist is pardoned and shriven,
An' drives sax-in-hand through the portals o' heaven;
For sillar the gospel-expositor preaches;
For sillar the stiff man o' nouns an' verbs teaches;
For sillar the M.D. prescribes for the dying;
For sillar the quack plies his puffing an' lying;
For sillar the lawyer sells counterfeit passion;
For sillar the sycophant bends wi' the fashion;
For sillar the hack scrawls, the party-scribe scribbles,
The mob-leader bullies, the place-seeker quibbles.'

Ah! all this is too true. Your ministers preach, not for the love of God and man, but for position, power, and pelf. Your newspapers are printed and sold to make money—ay, and every one of them is only too happy to play any tune, if it is likely to bring in the coppers, not caring a copeck for the wise management of the state. Alas! your system of commerce is a system of cheatery and deception, and the only outcome can be but degradation and decay, and then death.

"Your national wealth is very great, but the use it is put to is to overfeed one party and starve another. This is, in a sense, proof that you are still savages who delight in cruel actions against each other. In your great cities and towns you erect fine

monuments to your great men, but all around these monuments can be seen daily the worst specimens of human depravity and suffering. The beggar screams and whines for alms beside your gorgeous palaces, and he finds few or none to pity him. The policeman beats him back to his den in the slums—if he has a den even there; more often he must sleep at night under the arches of the bridges, and then for so sleeping there, or in an out-house or a barn, he is taken up before the judge, who at once sends him to jail because he had no money to pay for a bed. The slums in this rich nation of yours are the most hideous places in the whole world. They are the product of mismanagement and misgovernment, and so long as your chief characteristics are greed, pride, vanity, and ignorance, as long, without any hope of betterment, will you wallow in the mire of corruption and filth.

"Not long ago my old master Socrates and I were speaking about Great Britain. He said that you were really a great nation in many respects, but that you were now under the evil influence that had ruined all the ancient nations. When I asked what this evil influence was, he said it was dishonesty. Dishonesty, he said, strips a nation of all that is grand and noble in her life, because it sinks into her affairs, and thus polluting them they become corrupt. He who flatters the mob to delude them cannot and will not have the following of the good and the wise. The basest thing that a man of intellect can do is to take the life of a nation in order that he may get power, and wealth, and position."

Plato then stood still for some time, as if in deep thought, then turning to me he said:—

"I have spoken enough to you for one night. Well, you ponder on what I have said, and, for the sake of the eternal verities of truth and righteousness, I conjure you to make the *good* your rule of life. I will see you again and tell you more."

With a grave look on his noble face he held out his hand. I took it in mine—next moment he had disappeared.

Then I heard sweet music come down from the heavens to my ear, and I thought, surely like this is the song of the angels. The moon and stars shone brighter than ever I had seen them shine, the loch sparkled and glittered in the valley below; then looking up to the sky, I saw it was flaked with beautiful banks of clouds. One cloud hung right over the spire of the old parish church: this cloud was in shape like unto a dromedary, with long, charmingly-

coloured streamers hanging around it. So gay and bright and beautiful were the colours of these long streamers that it struck me they could only have been painted by the hands of angels of light. After gazing on this fine sight for some time, I walked slowly home. My chance meeting with the old sage Plato had supplied me with food for deep reflection for some time to come.

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I would like to say a word or two more about Kirriemuir's famous novelist, J. M. Barrie. We expect that the out-spoken remarks in the article on him will be taken in good part by the whole big host of Mr. Barrie's friends. I know that Mr. Barrie will welcome them himself, for one would think that the change to a little drop of vinegar after such a surfeit of sweets would be refreshing and wholesome. He must long ago "have felt the fulness of satiety," for a more belauded writer does not live. Now and then, to be sure, a free lance, like Andrew Lang, would shoot a dart at him. Shortly after the "Little Minister" was published, the redoubtable Andrew pronounced it to be "an incongruous mixture of Sir Walter Scott and the *Family Herald*, and that the plot of the story is improbable if not impossible, and that some of the characters speak bad English, and that the novel generally is more than *two steps backwards*." It is very sad that the infallible Andrew should say such things about our pet Barrie. But the pity is, 'tis true.

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Let us take one peep at the other side of the picture. This is a passage from a review of the "Little Minister," signed by W. M., which appeared in the *Bookman*: "Mr. Barrie reminds us often of Goldsmith, and in nothing more than in his bold defiance of probabilities under the creature impulse of a generous emotion or a riotous sense of fun. Gavin goes out to quell a riot in which his flock are engaged — a most graphically painted riot it is. He exercises all the terrors of his spiritual authority. He launches curses at the wild gipsy girl who is the heart and soul of the disorder. He sternly calls her "woman!" and admits that he could have throttled her. Yet a little later, when she puts a clod into his hand and bids him throw it at the officer, he obeys. It is an outrageous violation of probability, although Mr. Barrie does prepare us for it by making his Little Minister jump over a gooseberry bush after a most solemn and impressive interview with his pre-

decessor in the charge of the Auld Lichts. But it is delicious invention. To apply realistic tests to it is like stamping on a flower. And so with the happy ending. Babbie is more fortunate than her first-cousins in fiction, 'Madcap Violet' and the 'Daughter of Heth.' Was it probable that a creature so selfish would settle down into the 'douce' wife of an Auld Licht minister? By the end of the story we are in no mood to pursue such a question. We could not have forgiven Mr. Barrie if he had acted differently, any more than we could have forgiven Goldsmith if he had killed off 'Olivia.'" This is very high praise indeed. I wonder which of the two critics is the fool—Andrew Lang or W. M. They can't both be right. I vote for Lang.

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Of course I know I will be called an ass for holding such a view, but I don't care for that. Perhaps it is true, and asses have always had a strange partiality for thistles. Still I am of the opinion that this silly mania of stupid critics will shortly have exhausted itself, and that common sense and reason will again have an innings. Before I leave Mr. Barrie and his writings, let me give a little gem of his full of wit and humour—a genuine little picture of human nature, not very well known, as it has never appeared in any book, so far as I know. It was written for one of the American magazines, and appeared therein some years ago. With this preface I will lay it before my readers, so that they may judge for themselves.

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"I had just returned home from an evening at the play, or rather from visiting my friends the Robinsons, which is much the same thing. If you don't mind my pipe I will picture you the drama.

"Robinson, an amiable man, save when his shoe-lace breaks, sat alone and glum in the study. His teeth were clenched, his face was pale, and he stared hard at the fire. He welcomed me with an effort, and then forgot me. He is a business man, and I am not; so I concluded that the stocks or debentures had fallen or risen (or whatever it is these things do which plunge those who know what they are into despair). I tried the drawing-room, and there found the two little girls crying, and Mrs. Robinson on the couch with her face to the wall. This was serious, and seemed to me to mean at the best a 'corner' in the stocks.

"It was not stocks, however, my hostess told me from behind a

handkerchief—it was Bobby. Had not her husband shown me the letter?

"Bobby is the heir, aged seven, and I concluded from his mother's tragic tones that he had run off to be a pirate or an engine-driver, leaving a written statement to that effect on his dressing-table. I softly withdrew from the drawing-room, and returned to Robinson, who, with trembling arm, handed me the 'letter.' It was from the master of a school to which Bobby goes by train daily, except during the bird-nesting season, when other matters claim his attention. The letter read thus:—

'Dear Sir,—I regret to have to apprise you of the fact that I had to-day to cane your son severely. He is the youngest boy I have ever caned, but his delinquencies have of late been so frequent that no other course was open to me. This communication will doubtless cause you pain, but the punishment will have a beneficial effect, not only on him, but on the other boys of his age, whose leader in mischief he has been. They will no longer make a hero of one whom they have seen publicly chastised. The disgrace of the punishment, indeed, is greater than the punishment itself. That Robert may feel his shame more keenly, I have read this letter to him, and he will be the bearer of it to you.'

'And where is Bobby at present,' I asked when I had read this terrible letter.

'Crying his eyes out in the nursery, no doubt,' answered Robinson. 'Of course I should have him here, but I can't face him, I can't face him. I don't blame his master, but——my dear friend, think of it! The youngest boy ever caned in the school! The marks won't wear off his hands for a week, and think of his agony of mind every time he looks at them. Bobby is a sensitive boy, otherwise I should not take it so much to heart.'

'Why not bring him here,' I said, 'and tell him that if he turns over a new leaf all will be forgotten.'

'Forgotten! How can I expect him to believe that? I know that if I had ever been caned in my school-days, I could not have got over the shame for years. Besides——'

'Besides what?'

'I must not seem to take his part against his master, who is, I know, a most conscientious man. No, Bobby must bear the disgrace. But that does not make me feel less keenly for him. My hands, I assure you, are tingling as if I had been caned myself.'

"I found the two little girls still moaning at the drawing-room window—the younger lest Bobby should die, and the other because his friends would tell their sisters, who could never again be expected to esteem the name of Robinson.

"Mrs. Robinson was for the moment not on speaking terms with Robinson, because he seemed to think that Bobby should continue to go to 'such a school.' If Bobby had misconducted himself, surely the blame lay with the master, who did not understand that he was a boy who could best be ruled by kindness. She had never had the least trouble with Bobby. No, he was not in the house. He had run out immediately after delivering the letter, and she had searched for him everywhere in vain. His pride had been broken. He would never be the same boy again. He was afraid to be looked at. He was no doubt hiding somewhere in the cold night, and he had not even on his greatcoat, and he would catch his death of cold.

'If he does, mamma,' asked the older, brightening, 'will the master be hanged? and oh! oh! do you think we could get tickets?'

"The night was dark, so we lit a lantern and set out to look for the unhappy Bobby. At last we found him—in Mr. M'Kinnon's stable. We looked through a crevice in the wood-work, and this was what we saw:—

"Bobby, in tremendous, spirits was the centre of a group of envious and admiring youths, some of them school-fellows, and other ragged lads of the village. If they began to brag, Bobby stopped them short with—'That isn't nothing! you didn't never get caned!'

'Yes, I did, though,' insisted one.

'Let me see your hand,' retorted Bobby. 'Oh, he! he won't! and 'cause there's not no marks on it.'

'Let me see your hands again, Bobby.'

"Bobby held out his hands as promptly as if they contained a diamond.

'By gum! I say, Bobby, come and play with me to-morrow.'

'Let me walk beside you, Bobby, and I'll give you my cross-bow. It's broke, but——'

'Bobby, I'm the one you like best, ain't I?'

'I'm the youngest he ever licked!' cried Bobby in a transport of delight. He began to strut up and down the stable.

'Well, then, you needn't bounce about it like that.'

'So would you bounce if it had been you.'

'I'll be caned to-morrow.'

'So will I, and then I will be as good as Bobby.'

'No, you won't,' thundered Bobby. 'Though you were all caned twelve times twelve, as is a hundred and forty-four, I would always be the first, I would—I'm the youngest he ever caned. So would you bounce if you was the youngest he ever caned.'

'But, Bobby——'

'Look here, you chaps,' broke in the hero of the day. 'I ain't not to be called Bobby any more. You'll have to call me Robinson now. He called me Robinson when he caned me.'

'Gum!'

'And what's more, I'm the youngest he ever——'

"The other Robinson here retired with a hopeless look on his face. Mrs. Robinson seemed less humbled. I came home reflecting."

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The Evergreen—the spring part or number or division of which was published the other day—has met somewhat hostile criticism. However, though opinions as to its merits may differ, it is certainly a very interesting work. It has sprung from the combined action of a group of the younger school of Scottish writers, students, and men of science, whose historic sympathies are trying to bring back to Edinburgh her old prestige as a literary centre. A striking characteristic of the *Evergreen* is the revival of Celtic ornament and design, which is to be a special feature in the decoration of the four parts. In September we are to have the Autumn parts, and next year the Summer and Winter. The number before us contains Essays, Stories, and Lyric and Ballad Poetry. I do not altogether agree with the writer in this month's *Bookman*, but if his strictures put more life into the management, the world will gain, and Professor Geddes and his colleagues at the University will not be any the worse. This reviewer's verdict is, as I said before, rather sweeping. He says, "The stories are not first-rate; the essays are vague; the poetry is but indifferent good; and the pictures are just as bad as they could possibly be;" and then he holds out the olive-branch by saying, "It may for all that be the first sprout of a vigorous plant, whose fruits will be pure and wholesome to the taste."

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Professor Geddes has a charming article on "The Scots Renaisance," from which I would have liked to have made many extracts, as it so finely expresses my own feeling about the immediate future of Scottish literature. I have only room for one:—"The Literature of Locality, we are told by many reviewers, has had its little day, and is subsiding into mere clash o' kirkside, mere havers o' kailyard; so doubtless the renewal of locality may polarise into slum and respectability once more. Be it so: this season will also have its term. One day noble traditions long forgot will rouse a mightier literature; nobler localities still unvisited bring forth more enduring labours for their crown. Though Charlie may no come back again, though the too knightly king, so long expected back from Flodden, lie for ever 'mid the Flowers o' the Forest, though Mary's fair face still rouse dispute as of old, the Wizard's magic book still waits unmouldering in his tomb. The prophetic Rhymer listens from Elfland, Arthur sits in the Eildon Hills, Merlin but sleeps in his thorn. For while a man can win power over nature, there is magic; while he can stoutly confront life and death, there is romance. Our recent and current writers have but touched a fringe of their possibilities. The songs of militant nationality may lose their power, the psalmody of Zion no more stir the sons as it was wont to do the fathers—yet gentler voices may reappear, older runes win a reading:—

> 'In Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,
> Instead of the voice of monks shall be lowing of cattle;
> But ere the world come to an end,
> Iona shall be as it was.'"