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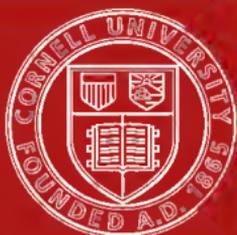
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ABERDEEN AWA'



GEORGE WALKER.

ABERDEEN AWA'

SKETCHES OF ITS

MEN, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS

AS DELINEATED IN

BROWN'S BOOK-STALL, 1892-4

BY

GEORGE WALKER, of Aberdeen

Revised and largely extended, with Portraits and Illustrations



ABERDEEN · A. BROWN & CO

EDINBURGH: J. MENZIES & CO

1897

Dedicated
to
Aberdonians
at home and abroad.

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P R E F A C E.



THE origin of this volume is entirely fortuitous and accidental, and but for the solicitation of Mr. E. T. Smith, my successor as proprietor of the business of A. Brown & Co., it would not have appeared in print, or obtruded itself on the attention of the public.

In the go-ahead style of the youth of the present day, he aspired to have an advertising medium of his own, intended for circulation amongst the customers of the old firm of A. Brown & Co., and knowing that during my fifty years' connection I had accumulated much information regarding the firm and its various partners since it began in 1785, he asked me to furnish some details of its origin, progress, and work, which might be padding to his projected serial, and form something like a thread through it to bind the past with the present.

His singular venture became plural, and for three years (1892-94) I had to furnish samples of my reminiscences, such as they were, and had to adapt them according to the space allowed. As they progressed in number the interest in them increased, and numerous demands for the earlier numbers of the *Book-Stall* were received which could not be supplied. From being considered mere padding, the sketches came to be eagerly looked for, were most favourably criticised by the press, and on their conclusion were considered by the proprietor as "our mainstay, our backbone . . . so appreciated that the public, like another Oliver Twist, is asking for more."

So, in reply to numerous requests from many Aberdonians at home and abroad, backed up by the press critics these sketches are submitted to the public as now revised, corrected, and largely extended, by desire.

Preface.

When, sixty years ago, I first read Pryse L. Gordon's article, I was much impressed with the desirability of preserving it, and have not only done so (see Chapters ix. and x.), but appropriated the title he adopted ; because, during the long life of Alexander Brown, the founder of the *Book-Stall*, extending from 1766 to 1843, the prominent part he took among the citizens, and the influential position he occupied, made him one of the principal actors in all the important events of the marvellous period of change which has made Aberdeen awa' what it now is.

In this fleeting world it is a pleasure

To help to "save from what traditions glean,
Or age remembers, or ourselves have seen ;
The scattered relics care can yet collect,
And fix such shadows as these lines reflect."

It has been asked, "What is history for but to recover forgotten names that ought not to be forgotten, to make rich our memories, to connect the life of the present through an avenue of increasingly strong recollections with the life of the past !" and to recall past times, and bring back the days of old.

Acknowledgments are due to my esteemed friend, Dr. Alexander Walker, for his ready assistance both in information and illustration ; to Mr. Isaac Smith for specially providing for my use the portrait of his father, to Messrs. Wilson & Co., Mr. William Smith, printer, Messrs. Lewis Smith & Son, and to Messrs. Falconer & Co. for the use of illustrations.

G. W.

OCTOBER, 1896.

CONTENTS.

I.—Aberdeen of yore. The Craigdam minister. His son Alexander Brown begins business,	1
II.—Alexander Sheriffs and his stock. Old books. The Grey Goose Quill &c. Shorter Catechism,	12
III.—The Upperkirkgate shop. Customers. Town squabbles. David Wyllie and Lewis Smith. Broad Street shop. Marriage. Publications. Shop signs. Homer's head,	23
IV.—The passing century. Dawn of Reform. Light and leading. The Scottish burnie. Police bill,	32
V.—Extension of the city. New streets and buildings. Suburbs. Antiquity,	41
VI.—Mr. Brown prospers. Social position. Old times. Convivial clubs. Distributor of stamps. William Farquhar. Forbes Frost. Paper ruling. James Brownie. The Mogul Club,	53
VII.—Early printers and booksellers. Angus and Sons. The Narrow Wynd. London smacks. Publishing. Dr. George Campbell,	71
VIII.—Municipal election. Management. "Sandy Bannerman" and Blumine. Baillie Brown at Edinburgh. Sir William Curtis. Provost. Bridge of Don. New Parishes. Stormy times. Augean stables. Provost Hadden. Farcical elections,	84
IX.—Pryse Gordon on Aberdeen. Sir W. Scott's kindness. Kennedy the Annalist. High jinks. Duellings. Professor Gordon. The Laird of Culrossie. Sheriffs and Russel. Adams and Chalmers. W. Forsyth's cure,	106
X.—Clerk Carnegie introduced to Bailie Nicol Jarvie. Young Aberdeen. County characters. Lord Kintore. City riots. Loyalty of Aberdeen mob,	122

Contents.

XI.—Town Council Work. William Brown. David Wyllie. Forbes Frost. Jacobitism. The Gentle Persuasion. “Honest John.” A young bookworm,	134
XII.—Brisk publishing. Union Buildings. Sir Alex. Anderson and his litany. Ritualism, Jacobitism and Persecution,	143
XIII.—Book-Stall employees. Succession. John Cormack. Colonel Fraser,	155
XIV.—Bigotry and prejudice. Romance. The old, old story.	166
XV.—Influence of books. Examples. Young pilgrims. Power of fiction. Spiritual manifestations. Convivial raillery. Clerk Carnegie,	175
XVI.—In memoriam. G. W. Wilson. Experiments. Excur- sions. West Coast. Staffa. Simples in medicine,	189
XVII.—(Continued) Elgin. Travelling trials. Royal Patronage. A lost friend,	202
XVIII.—Music in Aberdeen. Appreciation. William Brown. Organ Question,	212
XIX.—(Continued) Ancient celebrity. Thomas Shannon. Sang Schule. Musical Society. Precentors. James Davie. Geordie Weir. Paganini.	223
XX.—Foreign visitors. Religious revival. W. C. Burns. Moderates. Disruption,	236
XXI.—Address to Library association. Aberdeen, a royal city. The Scottish Oxford. “A lazy town”. A sterile soil,	244
XXII.—Bookmakers. Churchmen. Civic corporations. Univer- sities. Professors. Printers. Libraries. Eminent Men,	255
XXIII.—The Victorian Era. Scott and other poets. Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews. Constable. Annuals. Periodi- cals,	265
XXIV.—The local poets. Booksellers. Lewis Smith. Lemon Tree.	277
XXV.—Chess play and clubs. Steel pens and envelopes. Annuals. Theological literature. G. King, . . .	289

Contents.

xxvi.—Bibliomania cs. Dummy books. The road to Scotland. Caller water at home and abroad,	299
xxvii.—Edinburgh booksellers and society. Sydney Smith, &c. Charles Elliot,	311
xxviii.—Aberdeen Booksellers. Lewis Smith and old books. Revolution in Book-Stall, -	318
xxix.—Permanency of books. Prestige of Scotland. Dislike of Scotchmen,	328
xxx.—Old book catalogues. Sales by auction. Book buyers,	335
xxxi.—Downie's slaughter. Author of the story. Fictitious autobiography of Laurence Langshank,	343
xxxii.—Use of Free Libraries. Robert Mudie. Sandy Banner- man and Clerk Carnegie. Bannerman's new history of Aberdeen,	357
xxxiii.—Value of portraits. The <i>Little Club</i> . Carnegie's en- counter with Auld Hornie,	362
xxxiv.—George Colman. His escapades at Oxford. Banish- ment to Old Aberdeen. Rory Macleod. Coll. McLeane. Oxford versus Aberdeen. English students. Robert Hall. Chas. Burney and James Mackintosh,	370
xxxv.—Aberdeen characters. Historians. Wags and wickedness. The baby Mrs. Grundy,	384
xxxvi.—Forbes Frost. Deaths of partners in the Book-Stall,	394

ILLUSTRATIONS.

AUTHOR,	<i>Front.</i>
PROVOST BROWN,	92
WILLIAM BROWN,	216
BAILLIE L. SMITH,	282

	<i>Title.</i>
MARKET CROSS,	9
UPPERKIRKGATE SHOP,	22
WALLACE NEUK, -	76
NARROW WYND,	105
JAMESONE'S HOUSE,	235
BYRON'S HOUSE,	288
KING'S COLLEGE,	298
OLD EAST CHURCH,	350
ST. MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL,	98, 393
BRIG O' BALGOWNIE, -	399
MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, - 1 3 - -	400
UNION BRIDGE, 1820, - -	

Errata.—Page 62, line 4, for “instuted” read instituted.
 „ 77, „ 4, „ “Excerises” „ Exercises.
 „ 80, „ 28, „ “similiar” „ similar.
 „ 151, „ 1, „ “Carlyle” „ Carlisle.
 „ 303, „ 7, „ “let” „ lit.

ABERDEEN AWA'.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

“EVERY one of the ages are telling on us at the present time ; every man who thought or worked in them has contributed to the good or evil which is now around us. The past ages are not dead, they cannot be. If we listen they will speak to us.”—*Carlyle*.

“Prythee, friend,
Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear
The good and bad together.”—*Shakespeare*.

“OF all the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things which we call books. Still does the Press toil ! innumerable Papermakers, Compositors, Printers' Devils, Bookbinders, and Hawkers grown hoarse with proclaiming, rest not from their labours : and still in torrents rushes on the great array of publications, unpausing to their final home ; and still oblivion, like the grave, cries Give, Give.”—*Carlyle*.

BERDEEN, now reputed to be one of the most radical cities in the country, was at one time considered the Oxford of Scotland.

Is it the principle of heredity operating on men—enabling them when so often inclined as they are—to lay all their faults on their fore-fathers, and claim all their virtues for themselves, which has, to a certain extent, preserved that fine, old, and altogether respectable conservative feeling which undoubtedly exists in the city and also in the surrounding district? For in Aberdeenshire the old Catholicism had deeply rooted itself in the primitive and granitic district, and could never be entirely extirpated from its suitable soil. There in after days was the stronghold of the newer metamorphic Episcopacy, the outcome of the age ; where in spite of all that the Covenanters could do in

the way of rough persuasion, its adherents got the ugly name of "Malignants" and so earned the thorny crown of irritating persecution, although locally

"No martyr fires could witness be
'Twixt Presbytrie and Prelacy."

Thus there it lingered longest, suffered less severely than elsewhere in Scotland, and more readily revived.

There in 1688 the Revolution settlement was not cordially welcomed, owing to the strong Royalist and Episcopalian element being in the ascendant. There in 1715 the Earl of Mar raised the banner of revolt against the Hanoverian dynasty, proclaiming the Chevalier at the Market Cross, while James holding his mock regal court at Fetteresso was there presented by the City Magistrates (of his own making) by the University Professors, and Episcopalian clergy with "a foolish address." There in 1745, although the cannie citizens when they saw which was likely to be the winning side gave an effusive welcome to the butcher Duke of Cumberland, yet only some months previous the fickle mob smashed the windows of those who would not accept Prince Charlie as their darling.

Not for nearly a generation after the Revolution were the parishes supplied with Presbyterian clergymen, and considering that some of them had to be inducted by an armed force it is not much to be wondered at although the district became known as "the dead sea of Moderatism," and that the 'deil's books' as playing cards were in Aberdeenshire not held in that "holy" horror as they were in more puritanic districts.

Moreover, the county contains the residences of some of the oldest Scottish families, some of whom carry their pedigrees, their titles, their position, and culture back for hundreds of years. Four centuries ago the poet Ariosto mentions the Aberdeenshire Forbesses as leaders of men, and we have them still.

"The Forbes and the Farquharson
Are ours, and baith are names o' note ;
By Bogie, Deveron, Dee and Don
The Gordons hae the guidin' o't,
Frae Border Tweed to John O' Groat
Can lives o' meikle fame afford,
But nane mair free o' blur or blot
Than what belang to Bon-Accord."

Joseph Robertson, in his *Book of Bon-Accord*, informs us that the earliest theatrical exhibition on record in Scotland is the play of the *Haly blude*, acted on the Windmill hill in 1440; and that in such like performances Aberdeen was pre-eminent. The tailors had to provide "Our Ladye, Sancte Bride, Sancte Helene, Sancte Joseph, and their attendants. An Emperour, the three Kings of Cologne, twa Bishops, twa Doctors, four Angels with one Messenger, the Archangel Gabriel, Symon, Moses, twa or three Woodmen [Satyrs], Knights in harnace, Menstralls"; and honest Squires were all to be provided by the other crafts, and each craft—with the exception of the tailors—had to provide "honest squires."

So conservative were the citizens that neither legal enactments, nor statutes and ordainments made and provided by the Magistrates and Kirk Session could eradicate the love of the drama from the hearts of the people. An attempt to prevent a pageant of this character in 1785 led to a riot, when the mob took their revenge by breaking the windows of the Town House, and human nature being always the same, a partial revival, but in great style of splendour, of this drama, dazzled and delighted our young eyes on the 8th of August, 1832.

All these things are influences, silently but surely operative in their action on the inhabitants of the district; plainly visible to those who study the men, and who look under the surface, but not visible to the same extent in more changeable places as Glasgow and Dundee.

One proof of the existence of this reverence for antiquity is evidenced by many business firms in the city retaining their old titles long after the founders have been dead and gone. "Men may come and men may go," but these old firms, changed indeed in men, manners, and, it may be, in place, go on, still retaining the old business and the old name.

Brown's Aberdeen Book-Stall may justly be reckoned one of these. A generation has come and gone since a "Brown" had any connection with it, and of the five individuals who at various times have been partners, only two of them were "Browns," yet the others have all been willing to sink their own personalities and loyally give honour to whom honour was due in the person of the founder, who was connected with it for sixty years.

This was Alexander Brown, the third son of the Rev. William Brown, the first Secession minister of Craigmadam (born 1728, ordained 1752, died 1801), a man of marked individuality, of abounding zeal and untiring activity, and whose influence for good spread far and wide, and has not ceased yet. In 1758 there was published—"The Great and Chief-Concerning Gospel Question," being the substance of some Discourses delivered on the Lord's Day, the first of October, 1758, at Cortecram, in the parish of Lonmay, by William Brown, Minister of the Gospel in the associate congregation at Craigmadam. Published at the desire of the hearers. 2 Cor. iv. 5. Printed by J. Chalmers & Co., Aberdeen. 12mo pp. 52." Some traits of his character are given in a booklet ("Craigmadam and its Ministers"), published by the firm, which does not by any means exhaust the subject. There are yet some additional stories worth preservation.

In building up the Craigmadam congregation, the novelty of the doctrines and the earnestness and zeal with which these were proclaimed drew large audiences; and large audiences in themselves have a tendency to keep together, from various reasons. One farm servant, who came from a long distance away, frankly admitted that the powerful magnet which drew him for miles to the church every Sabbath was not the sermons, but the bright eyes and comely looks of a young lass who was one of Mr. Brown's members, and to whom he had lost his heart. Whether in consequence of his regular attendance, his kindly glances, and his honeyed words (without the first, the last two would have been certainly useless) his suit prospered, and when he got a farm of his own, but at a considerable distance from Craigmadam, Jeannie became his wife, and, of course, was married by her own minister. After the ceremony there was an entertainment, and the company were handsomely treated. Mr. Brown had been narrowly scrutinizing the husband, and watching all the proceedings, which were of a free and jovial character; perhaps rather more so than he approved of. Before leaving, in reply to the toast of his health, after thanking the company for the honour done him, and giving some exhortation to the husband, he turned to the new-married wife, and couthily addressing her as one of his own flock, he said—"Noo, Jeanie, my lass, I'm very

blithe to see you married, and weel married, I hope. You've got a good-looking husband, a good doon-sitting, a braw house, and plenty o' frien's—but, Jeanie, I've missed *ane* I would have liket to meet wi' here"—the company wondered, but he continued—"Christ was bidden to the marriage at Cana, an' He can'; ye've maybe forgotten to bid Him, but it's no too late; He winna tak' it ill to be bidden yet; and O, Jeanie, if He comes He'll turn a' your bread into manna and your water into wine, and a' your joys into foretastes o' heaven itsel'." Thus plainly, faithfully, and affectionately did Mr. Brown deal with the members of his flock. Need it be added that they were members of his flock to the last of their lives. And like pastor, like people; the model being set up, the power and example and the force of imitation came into play, with results varied by national characteristics and hereditary influences. What a sturdy, freely, outspoken race his flock proved themselves to be, copying their pastor in his pithy sayings!

In these old days, with remnants of the feudal system still existing, there was an agreement in tenants' leases that so many days' services were to be given to the Laird at harvest. So one autumn a good many Seceders were in the draft, getting in the crop at Haddo House under the superintendence of Mr. Chalmers the overseer. He, noticing that whether at work or meals, the Craigdam folks always contrived to be together, though he could find no fault with their work, yet, as often as he could, he managed to show his aversion, saying in their hearing—"I must say I don't like thae Seceders;" when one of them, Andrew Coutts of Belgove, turned up his big burly head and broad face, and with great coolness, said—"Weel, Sir! I dinna wunner at that—the deevil disna like them aither, an' it's bit naatural for his bairns to tak' aifter their father."

While his family was young Mr. Brown carefully superintended their education, and one of the exercises prescribed was that they should take notes of his sermons, which notes were read over to him afterwards. How his two elder brothers acquitted themselves is not recorded, but on the best authority it is said that Alexander, who was slow at writing, never made a good job in recording the rapid and

impassioned oratory of his father, and was out-distanced by him. His notes were meagre and unsatisfactory, and he was told he had not been attending properly. In this dilemma he had recourse to Nanny Lind, an old member, and a constant attender at Church, who had a remarkable memory and a thorough knowledge of the evangelical doctrines she had been accustomed to hear and to relish. With her assistance Alexander passed muster for a time, and was even commended. But on one occasion as he was reading, he was peremptorily stopt by his father with "What! what! I certainly never said anything like that—indeed, it is an entirely new idea to me and rather interesting!" Making the best excuse he could, but concealing the source of his information, he speedily found his way to Nanny and told her the serious difficulty she had brought him into. Nanny instantly scouted any possibility of difficulty. His notes were produced and read over to her and the particular new passage objected to was pointed out to her. "That's it, is it?" said Nanny, "weel, weel, all I can say is that if he didna say it he ought to have said it, for its juist a naitural inference."

Nanny Lind of Craigdam and the great Roman painter Raphael were farther removed from each other's influence than the poles; but one touch of nature making the whole world kin, how naively and unconsciously does she repeat the painter's saying that "he painted that which *ought to be!*" Although she did not pretend to be able to make a sermon, yet it is clear that she could draw an inference.

After enjoying and profiting by the services of Mr. Cowie, a then student of divinity, who for a time was a tutor in Mr. Brown's family, afterwards a minister in Huntly, and celebrated by George Macdonald in his *Alec Forbes*; Alexander, like his two brothers, John and William, migrated to Aberdeen, then considered a very land of Goshen for all the aspiring young people of the district who declined to be farmers. John—the eldest—was a student of medicine, and died in comparatively early life. William was apprenticed to a merchant there, and afterwards went to Dundee, where he became editor of the *Dundee Repository*; went from there to Edinburgh, and had a bookseller's shop in the Parliament

Close in 1793 ; edited the *Edinburgh Herald and Chronicle* ; next he became editor and part proprietor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, and while prospering in business died in 1809. In 1793 he published in Aberdeen a clever satirical poem in the broad Buchan dialect, entitled, *Look before ye loup, or a Box o' Healin' Sa for the Cracket Crowns o' Country Politicians*, which went through several editions. By his poetical productions he earned a place in *The Bards of Bon-Accord*, where there is an appreciative notice of him, from whence the following stanzas to his brother John are extracted.

Ye dinna sham folk wi' riff-raff,
 Hech ! hoo ye screed the Latin aff ;
 That classic lear is noble scaff—
 I'd fill ye fou
 Wi' Fairintosh, to hae it half
 As ready's you.

Ye ken, I ne'er was well vers'd in't,
 But what I had is feckly tint,
 The best's awa, an' left ahint,
 But jist a smatterin',
 My mither's tongue is a' the print,
 I read or clatter in.

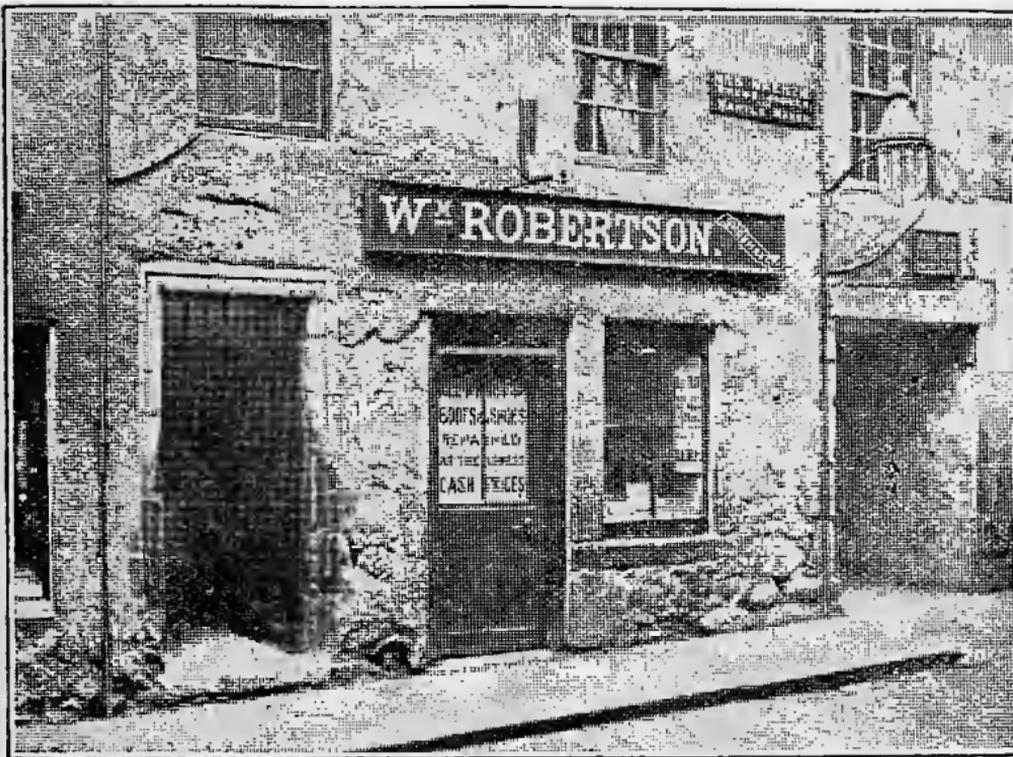
Alexander was sent in to Aberdeen in 1782, specially recommended to the care of his father's friend, Mr. Knight, an old Antiburgher seceder bookseller in the Gallowgate, whose shop is unchanged, as it is still No. 12 ; was slightly projecting and was entered by some steps up from the pavement. But by the extension of the University buildings it will soon be amongst the things that were. At the time, Aberdeen, with its 20,000 inhabitants, was compressed into small compass, and the Gallowgate competed with the Broadgate as to supremacy in stately buildings and influential residents, although in width the Broadgate appropriately carried off the palm. The Shiprow was the main approach from the South, as the Gallowgate was from the North, and the last was considered the first fashionable street of the town, for in 1494 the earl of Mar had his corbelled and castellated mansion in it, still to be seen, and the street retained this character far longer than the Shiprow, for in Pigot's Directory for 1825-6, in the list of "Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Advocates," no fewer than

sixteen names are given as resident in the Gallowgate, and within the recollection of many still living, two Provosts resided there. In 1833, there were several houses in it, with wood fronts which overhung the street and the Vennel, one of the most disorderly places in the city, led out of it towards George Street in the line of what is now St. Paul Street. Rich and poor, high and low, the best and the worst society lived in the closest proximity. That "elegant street," Queen Street, was only laid out in 1776, and it was fourteen years after before the Lochlands were feued, and George Street, Charlotte Street, John Street, and St. Andrew Street were formed; and it is amusing to read that at the time this was thought "to be the only quarter in which the town could be extended to any great extent."

So, from its proximity to Marischal College, and being the direct approach from Old Aberdeen, the Gallowgate was a good business street, and Mr. Knight's shop was the natural resort of the Professors and literary men in the city. His son, William, was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy in Marischal College, and held this from 1822 to 1844, having the character of a strict disciplinarian, and very exacting in money fines from the students. On his death in 1844, the Rev. Dr. William Pirie conducted the funeral service in the College Hall, and alluding to heaven in his prayer, and using the Scriptural language that "there shall be no night there," the irreverent nicknoms of students—overjoyed at the thought of no more fines—ruffed loudly, greatly to the discomposure of the gravity of those present.

Alexander Brown, a brisk, active, good-looking young fellow of sixteen, kept his eyes and his ears open to all the influences by which he was surrounded, and profited by them as he might have been expected to do at his age. Three years' service seems to have given him confidence in himself, and he then started business on his own account in a very humble way in a small shop on the north side of the Upperkirkgate, next to Drum's Lane, buying the stock of a Mr. Taylor. He opened this humble shop on June 7th, 1785, and the first entry in his Day Book is the sale of Guthrie's Grammar of Geography, price 7s. 6d.

Run into the Scottish mould, with its native "sagacities, veracities; with its stedfastly fixed moderation, and its sly twinkles of defensive humour"; he had acquired a thorough



THE SHOP IN WHICH ALEXANDER BROWN BEGAN BUSINESS IN 1785.

mastery of the broad Buchan dialect which, as he rose in position, he tried to submerge, but which in his unconstrained moments came out delightfully free and fresh.

Aberdeen had never lost the character it acquired of being the most literary city in Scotland, Edinburgh not excepted. In the previous century, and during the Covenanted struggles, the literary productions of its famous doctors in behalf of Charles I. gave it great celebrity in England, where, as has been said, it was reckoned the Scottish Oxford. In a purely literary point of view, and as an educating centre, it even outshone Oxford, for whereas

in all England they had but two Universities, Aberdeen could boast of two for itself. Spalding, in his "Trubles," tells us how dear this reputation cost the city, and how it was the frequent battle-ground of the contending factions, each spoiling it in their turn again and again. Nowhere in all the land could the effects of competition in the dissemination of knowledge be better observed. Books, even rare and precious, were abundant. The numerous Professors, and the still more numerous students, must have them. Every Highland minister, and each landed proprietor north of the Grampians, and many from the sunnier south, carried with them from Aberdeen their love of literature, and formed valuable libraries. And as death breaks up all things, every now and then in the newspapers of the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, one comes on announcements of the sale of valuable and extensive libraries bought by the Aberdeen booksellers of the time, and advertised by them.

In 1780 Joseph Taylor published a small 12mo, entitled *Lessons in Prose and Verse*. In the *Aberdeen Journal*, 20th June, 1785, he intimates that he gives up business in favour of Mr. Patterson and A. Brown, who solicit the support of the public.

This is the only notice of Patterson which appears, and it may be suspected that he was guarantor for Mr. Brown's liabilities. Or it may have been a similar case to that of the first John Murray, who in 1768 started in business in Fleet Street, London—who, although he had no doubt of success, yet offers his chum, "Dear Will," a partnership. This was William Falconer, the author of *The Shipwreck*, a brother Scotchman and a warm friend—blood being thicker than water amongst Scotchmen all over the world.

Falconer—a purser in the Navy—preferred the chances of his profession, and sailing in the *Aurora* frigate bound for India, in 1769, was never heard of afterwards. His poetic *Shipwreck* brought him fame and fortune, but his real shipwreck cost him his life.

The cases are parallel, both Murray and Brown were negotiating for the purchase of businesses; were willing to share their confidently expected profits with others who disappear, while the firms then proposed still prosper.

A bookseller of the present day would hardly recognise

his own business as it was then conducted. New books were delivered from the printer to him in their naked sheets, and he had to clothe them, read them, put them into his own mind, and then into the minds of others, by recommending and selling them.

The sheets had to be folded, stitched together in boards, and covered with drab grey paper, with small printed titles on the back, and this was the dress of all new books until about 1825, when gay cloth covers and gilt titles revolutionised the trade. Constable's *Miscellany* was the first issue of books bound in cloth, and the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge* the first to have gilt titles. Authors and publishers in those days depended on what was in the inside of a book; the books were like oysters, and had little attractions on their outside, whereas now-a-days most books—like a great many men—are more or less of a failure, according as they are dressed, and all sorts of devices are now employed to catch the eye, everything being now sacrificed to æsthetics. Such is the way of the world for—

“Although it is wrong I must frankly confess
To judge of the merits of folk by their dress;
I cannot but think that an ill-looking hat
Is a very bad sign of a man for all that.”

And so elegant bindings, delightful paper, delicious printing, and striking illustrations with old and quaint title pages are half the battle in the first life of the books of to-day.

The world has adopted the maxims of Lord Chesterfield: “Not solid virtue, but good manners, good breeding, politeness, and the arts of society” lead to fortune in the career of a man of this world. And the result in the case of his son was that after all the polish and the glitter, the finesse and the falsehood which was inculcated, the son was a failure, and cheated his father by the precepts he had imbibed from him.

CHAPTER II.

“Once more again unroll the page,
Nor need one fear a lack of store;
Ungathered yet is all the lore
That groweth still from age to age.
We would not that the past should be
Forgotten with the years of old,
And we would gather into fold
All things deserving memory.”

“Books! those miraculous memories of high thoughts and golden moods; those magical shells tremulous with the secrets of the ocean of life; those love letters that pass from hand to hand of a thousand lovers that never meet; those honeycombs of dreams; those orchards of knowledge; those still beating hearts of the noble dead; those mysterious signals that beckon along the darksome pathways of the past; voices through which the myriad lispings of the earth find perfect speech; oracles through which its mysteries call like voices in moonlit woods; prisms of beauty; urns stored with all the sweets of all the summers of time; immortal nightingales that sing for ever to the rose of life; Books, Bibles—ah me! what have ye become!”

Richard Le Gallienne, *Prose Fancies*.

“When I unfold some favourite book,
Chaucer and I grow boon companions then,
And Shakespeare, deigning at my hearth to sit,
Charms me with mingled love, philosophy, and wit.”

NDREW SHERRIFS, termed by Burns “a little decrepid body with some abilities:” the brother of Dr. James Sherrifs, minister of St. Nicholas Church, 1778-1814; and of Alexander Sherrifs, President of the Society of Advocates—was a bookseller, a poet, and a musician. In 1786 he published, under the patronage of David, Earl of Buchan, a collection of *Forty Pieces of Original Music* of his own composition, price six shillings. In addition to his volume of Poems, he issued a rhyming shop bill, in which he has so graphically described his stock in trade, that it may be referred to as a sample of a bookseller’s stock, which was somewhat miscellaneous:

" *Imprimis*, German flutes and music,
 Variety of books on physic,
 All kinds of Classics, Homer's Iliad,
 Sermons, Plays, and Balm of Gilead,
 Songs, Bibles, Psalm-Books and the like,
 As many as would big a dyke.
 Young, guid aul Shakspear, and some dizzens
 O' Catechis and Thomson's Seasons ;
 Hoyle's Rules for those who choose to gamble.
 Philosophy by Doctors Campbell,
 Beattie, Gerard, Blair and Reid,
 The world's wonder for a head.
 Books, too, he has for Arithmetic,
 And Chalmers' Almanacks prophetic."

And after a clever and whimsical combination of book titles, amusingly placed to be read in rhyme, he ends with—

" Scales, Compasses, and ither trocks,
 Fit only for your learned folks :
 With mony mair—a strange convention—
 Too tedious, just now, to mention.

In spite of the literary atmosphere which produced musical and poetical booksellers like Sherrifs : in which Dr. Beattie wrote, Dr. Campbell studied, Dr. Gerard lectured, Professor Copland experimented, and Francis Peacock danced, fiddled and painted, while all were readers of books : the new productions of the day did not suffice to occupy the whole time of the booksellers. As compared with the present days life was then longer, if not in years, yet in time at one's own disposal, which seemed to give more seconds to the minute and more hours to the day. So booksellers had to deal in old or second-hand books, and had time to read them. Mr. Brown did both, and dealt in the books so extensively that he struck out a general overturn in the books and a new activity in the trade, which had formerly been in a very sleepy condition, in which hurry and bustle were unknown things.

It was the ordinary practice of the merchants in those days to lock the doors of their shops, placing a notice in the window that they were off to the links to play golf, but would be back at noon. No special holidays being provided, each merchant made them for himself. They did not wait for customers, these had to wait for the merchants, as is still the case in many small towns in Germany to the

present day. All over the town—even in the Rotten Row—the *Route de Roi*—the King Street, by which his majesty approached the town house from his palace in the Guest-row—an important thoroughfare, and the scene of many a pageant—it was the same easy going fashion. At the close of the day a merchant there, leaning over his half-closed door, would ask his neighbour across the street—"What ha'e you done the day, John?" to which John would reply—"Oh, nae that ill; I've drawn fifteenpence." And often, on the heads of that, they would close their shops, adjourn to the New Inn, or to a quiet, cosy "howff," afterwards known as the "Lemon Tree," and spend their day's drawings—perhaps more.

Old books are the test of a bookseller's knowledge of literature. New ones may be sold by the hundredweight or the bushel, according to their spicy appearance; and a present-day bookseller may, in many cases, be as well selling Bathbricks for any knowledge he has of the books. The name "old books" is often a misnomer, for are there not books which can never be termed, or can never grow, old? They came with, and they have retained, the freshness of the morning dew—and is there not something in having them in the very form which the author designed, and in looking on the page he himself perused?

As Smetham, the artist and writer, says—"An old book is an awful thing. It preserves its identity. Paper is more unchangeable than stone. We have the very books on which Henry of Huntingdon wrote and looked, and the drawings upon which Raffael rested his hand; but the drifting sand, the changing earthmounds, and crumbling stones have really altered the very being of scenery. Nothing remains but the latitude and longitude. The eye walks the enclosures of an old book as patiently as the feet traverse meadow and wilderness, yet it remains for traveller after traveller to wander in. At a cunning corner of the road, at the same page top or bottom, lies lurking the witty sentence that relaxes every traveller's face into a smile, or the pathetic lines that unlock the fountain of tears: and in years to come the travellers that come that way will weep there."

Again—"Does the reader know the interest belonging to an old book; an interest quite by itself, something which is not in the date, the shape, the size, the printing, the subject, nor even in the accidental memorials of other possessors long dead? It is somehow compounded of all these, though independent of any one of them; a sort of animal attraction, like the appearance of a likely covert to a keen foxhunter, or the look of an untried secluded pool to an expert fisherman; the feeling of having one's hand upon some mysterious, perhaps some long lost thread of humanity going back to the dark depths of the past."—*MacMillan*, Jan., 1895. How aptly and deftly does the writer describe the feelings of a book hunter in his prowls! What a romance he manages to throw around an old book! Let no man say that we live in a prosaic world when an old tome may have as romantic a history as an old castle.

And of dress it is said: "A Shakespeare or a Milton (unless the first editions) it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's *Seasons*, again, looks best a little torn and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves and worn-out appearance—nay, the very odour, if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness—of an old 'circulating library,' *Tom Jones* or *Vicar of Wakefield!*" And Mr. Dobson tells us how his goodly bindings in goodly cases 'gather the dust no less.'

'For the row that I prize is yonder
Away on the unglazed shelves—
The bulged and the bruised octavos,
The dear and the dumpy twelves,—'

books battered with kindly, constant service."

To the student groping in the dark of his winter discontent, books are as welcome as the dawn of the day or the breath of spring.

"Age cannot wither nor custom stale
Their infinite variety."

Shakespeare, "young, guid aul' Shakespeare," as Sherrifs calls him, may now be got for one shilling; but the 1632

folio brings hundreds of pounds, and in those days copies might have been, and were, picked up for a trifle. And no matter in what "questionable form" they came, whether in the shape of stately, ponderous folios—the delight of Charles Lamb—Baskerville quartos, or duodecimo Elzevirs, so prized by collectors; whether they came from the press of a German Guttenberg, an English Caxton, the Scotch "immaculate" Foulis, or our own Aberdeen Raban, they were always valuable; and if the bookseller was not himself a bibliomaniac, could be turned into hard cash for his own sustentation fund, the extension of his business, or the gratification of an intelligent customer. Sometimes, indeed, none of these inducements could tempt him. Instances are on record when in the eager pursuit of old and rare volumes for their own libraries, collectors have turned booksellers. Dante in his *Inferno* could scarcely have invented a severer torment than that of the collector, who had patiently and perseveringly gathered a stock of this kind, and who had spent days and nights gloating over his treasures, in the very thought of parting with them. A customer with any of the marks of a book hunter, was a terror to him; if not, he was a joy.

According to Sala, the journalist and historian Tomlins, in his old age, took up the trade, and laid himself out for the purchase of mediæval literature, and issued a catalogue of the debris of his stock. A customer entered one day and said he would take No. — if it was still to be had. "That book," said Tomlins, "surely that is not in the catalogue." He got his long steps, ascended to the highest shelf, took out the volume, examined title page and colophon, saw that it was complete, put it into his pocket, descended and sternly addressing the would-be purchaser, said: "Sir, if you think that I would part with that volume at any price you might offer, you are greatly mistaken. I bought it for my own use."

So Mr. Brown, seeing the good field he had, entered the happy hunting-ground with much enthusiasm and with great tact, buying "old books" in parcels or in whole libraries, and undertaking to auction them on commission. No doubt he had to learn by experience; for Mr. Knight's business was a quiet-going concern compared with what Mr. Brown aimed at. He could not certainly have adopted any better

plan for speedily acquiring that knowledge which he ultimately possessed of the mercantile value of books, as well as of their contents and authorship.

Of course, he supplied all other requisites necessary for literary men. First and most notable was, we should say, "the grey goose quill," so superior to the painter's brush, which can only depict the lark as a material subject, while the pen can give the very trill of the lark's song. That must have been the way in which Dempster, "The Scottish Vocalist," acquired his great gift of song, and made his fortune, for Dempster began life as a quill manufacturer on Gilcomston Brae, passing the business, on his retirement, to Duncan in Crown Court, to whom the tuneful Gordon (long first violinist in the Catholic Church choir) succeeded, carrying on the business in the "elegant" Queen Street. And on his death Aberdeen lost the credit and renown of having the largest quill manufactory in the world, by Waterston, of Edinburgh, buying the business and goodwill, and to make assurance doubly sure, in order to secure the genuine original article, taking over the employees along with the business, just as the miners in Fifeshire went along with the property; and so worthily retaining in Edinburgh its prestige, let us note.

But we in Aberdeen may well ask—What has become of the old familiar grey goose quill? that little instrument which Lord Lytton in his *Richelieu* so truthfully says "is mightier than the sword," in all the contentions and quarrels of men. Do the degenerate geese of the present day produce it, or are they trained now to grow steel pens? Has any one, under twenty years of age, ever seen a quill in actual use? There are floating traditions in some Government offices of its existence in some remote sanctum, like traditions regarding the Great Auk; but it is never seen, and only heard of by reading the estimates, which show a good round sum given to provide its continuance. That always ensures a long life, though it may be an invisible one. But when it was not only visible but in common use, big officials—like our celebrated Carnegie, "who had been Town Clerk of Aberdeen ever since his father dee'd," never used a quill twice. That he or Government officials, like Her Majesty's ministers and the humblest clerk to them, should have to waste their precious moments in mending a

pen was considered a waste of Her Majesty's stores of time ; and so up to the year 1860, if not to the present day, those second-hand pens were sold all over England, and, being the very best that could be got, were largely purchased.

Cardinal Newman never mended a pen, and even Charles Lamb never did so, at least so long as he was in the East India House, but on his retirement says, "now I cut 'em to the stumps : I cannot bear to pay for articles I used to get for nothing." And he wielded the stumps to such good purpose that he might have said :—

"Ye artists, and ye etchers all,
Of velveteen and plush ;
With easels, stools, and stretchers tall,
Chalk, needle, stump and brush.
I dare your whole utensils fine,
Your oils and pigment mill,
To match, with paints of pencil fine,
My old goose quill."

In consequence of the large and regular trade which Aberdeen had with the Baltic, exporting stockings, wool, yarn, with smoked herring and pickled pork ; and importing in return timber, flax, and quills, Aberdeen-manufactured quills were famous. But the manufacture is now extinct. Like the poor wife who, on the introduction of gas, and the consequent decrease in the demand for oil, in pity asked :—"Fat would come o' the peer whaals noo ?" one is tempted to sympathize with the geese ; for, without the annual plucking, life must become very monotonous to them. The wailing cry, "Is life worth living ?" heard so much of some time ago, can only have been originated by the unplucked geese ; and it shows that education has been really brought down to the meanest capacity when that cry found its way into the newspaper press. And yet this all important question was answered in the negative by such men as Carlyle and Tennyson, when their medical advisers ordered them to give up smoking. Tennyson could see no beauty, not even in Venice, simply because he could get no good tobacco in it. Life to him was not worth living—at least there. Disappointed men like Kossuth might say, "Plato was right ; life is no blessing, no gift, but a duty," but such sentiments depended on their digestion, and that again on the attainment of their desires.

“Boileau, the celebrated French comedian, delighted in assembling the most eminent geniuses of the age in his villa of Auteuil, where Chapelle, Racine, Moliere, and La Fontaine met. On one occasion the company having largely indulged in wine, were led into a grave discussion as to the value of life, and all agreeing that *it was not worth living*, heroically resolved to drown themselves in the Seine, and it being not far off, they proceeded there at once. Moliere however, remarked, that such a *noble* action ought not to be buried in the obscurity of night, but was worthy to be performed in the face of day and before the eyes of the world. A pause ensued. Some one said, ‘He is right.’ Chapelle said, ‘We had better wait till morning, and meantime return and finish our wine.’ They did return, but did not again revisit the river to carry out their resolution.”

“Life is not worth living” has been blasphemously said, as if the creatures were the supreme judges of the wisdom of their Creator in bringing them into being. In these mad moments, being left to the freedom of their own will, if they, discarding their God-given reason, chose to drink the cup of sensual indulgence to its very dregs and find it a cesspool and utterly nauseous, beyond endurance, a broad and easy path to lunacy and suicide, certainly life was not worth living to them. But the saying is utterly opposed to general human experience.

Mr. Brown would also sell wafers for the commonalty, and sealing wax for the nobility and gentry and advocates in the Gallowgate. Here again a question arises—Has any young person ever seen a wafer, or knows what it is? Wafers and quills ought to have been shown in the Industrial Exhibition, and specimens secured for the proposed Antiquarian Museum before they become obsolete.

Of course, ink was requisite; of course it was, for it is said by Byron:—

“Words are things, and a small drop of ink
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.

And then it was supplied to the bookseller by the cask by some native intelligent druggist, or, as we should now call

him, a chemist. The selling of it was a black business for booksellers' assistants who wished to preserve their white hands, while others contrived to save black gloves by dabbling in it. Not till half-a-century after did Morrison, of Perth, taking advantage of the cheapness of stoneware and glass bottles, make its manufacture a specialty and a fortune for himself.

He sold paper also, which, in those good, old-fashioned days, was indeed paper, and not, as so much of it is at present, a film of cotton or jute, plastered over with pipe-clay. It was good, honest hand-made paper, which would have satisfied even Mr. Ruskin. It was kept in two sizes—post, for ordinary correspondence; and foolscap, for writers of accounts, Gallowgate advocates, Government officials, and those who wished to save double postage; for, with tormenting ingenuity to torture, the authorities charged single postage for every slip of paper enclosed. So excessively stupid were the then restrictions on correspondence that it is a wonder they did not attempt to prohibit the use of ink itself, or at least tax it heavily. Account-books of native manufacture were unruled. If money columns were required they were added by the booksellers' assistant. If blue-lined the books had to be got from Edinburgh. How Mr. Brown fretted over this, and got it remedied, will, as Clerk Spalding would say, be seen afterwards.

Long before 1785 the Hornbooks, those manuals of education from which children learnt their letters, had died out, like the Dodo; in the process of evolution their place was filled by the *Shorter Catechism*—that manual which, "along with a little oatmeal," has made Scotchmen a race of Metaphysicians, not only with a school of its own amongst philosophical systems, but one which originated the philosophy of Kant in Germany, and of Cousin in France, and through Hutcheson of Glasgow first enunciated for the good of mankind the principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," the main tenet of our political economy in Free Trade. Every aspiring bookseller had an edition of the *Shorter Catechism* of his own, in which rudimentary lessons were printed; and this along with a Bible, was supposed to contain the necessary material for carrying a scholar through all the six standards.

A politician of no mean celebrity, driven to his wit's-end lately to find a passable excuse for opening a bazaar, facetiously gave credit to the modern bazaar for developing the shrewdness of Scotchmen and so ensuring their success abroad. If this were of modern growth we should hear less of it. It comes entirely from the *Shorter Catechism* and from the national dish for weans—"gweed halesome porridge." Well may the poet sing:—

“Whence springs the power of Scottish grit—
 Staunch loyalty, bold enterprise,
 Her grand romance o' wizard wit—
 Whence did these glorious gifts arise?
 The hardy sons o' Scotia's soil,
 Their stedfast will, and dauntless courage,
 For martial or for mental toil,
 Supped from the bowl o' oatmeal porridge.
 A better fare for bone and brain
 Than modern food,—Liebig or Ridge,
 The quickening dust o' genial grain,
 Compounded in a plate o' porridge.”

There is a natural constitutional reason for boys not objecting to this wholesome hunger-satisfying dish, which does not exist in the case of the *Catechism*. For in 1700 the Magistrates enacted that in the Grammar School “all the rules and questions of the *Shorter Catechism* were to be repeated publiclie once a week.” This was found so difficult and irksome to most of the youths, that nothing but its being modified to “Scripture Lessons” prevented a serious riot and rebellion, and yet only very wicked boys rebel against it. Some years since the principal of A. BROWN & Co., was standing conversing with a minister, when a farmer boy came bouncing into the shop, bawling out, “Hae you *Jack Sheppard*?” “No, my boy,” said the principal; “but we have some nice *Shorter Catechisms*, much better than *Jack Sheppard*.” “Lat's see them;” and, directions being given to an assistant to bring them, their real nature suddenly dawned on the rustic intelligence, and exclaiming, “Na, na; gweedsake! we get owre muckle o' that at hame,” off he bolted, on the direct road to the Reformatory. It was an unsuccessful case of trying to gild the philosophic pill.

Jack Sheppard was evidently the Scottish boys' high ideal, but it is otherwise in the east-end of London. There a teacher examining his class, and telling them that Shakespeare

was the writer of the best plays in the English language, asked if any scholar could name any of his plays; when a boy shouted, "*Dick Turpin!*" "What?" said the teacher. "who told you that Shakespeare wrote that?" "You, sir!" "I never said so!" "Yes, sir, you did; you said that Shakespeare wrote the best plays."



WALLACE NEUK,

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY G. W. WILSON & CO.

CHAPTER III.

It was the time when "the giants of social force advanced from the sombre shadows of the past with the thunder and the hurricane in their hands."

"Bacilli in trees, germs in the running brooks,
Microbes in stones, and death in every thing."

THE rent of the small shop in the Upperkirkgate opened by Mr. Brown in 1785 being only £12, inclusive of a workshop, was not, even with the then enhanced value of money, such a very serious venture we would now think. Allan Ramsay's first shop in Edinburgh was not much better. But it was serious enough for a prudent Scotchman, who, brought up to know the value of a penny, knows full well the value of a pound. Not being one of those men who call upon Jupiter to aid them, while they sit with folded hands waiting for customers, Mr. Brown took measures to bring them, and by his general intelligence, and attractiveness of manner, he, as it were, compelled them to come in, and once in, the most casual visitor became a regular customer.

It has been well said that: "Heaven helps those who help themselves;" and also that:—

"The wise and active conquer difficulties,
By daring to attempt them: sloth and folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and danger,
And *make* the impossibility they fear."

and *here*, his heredity and his training stood him in good stead, for like Hezekiah "In every work that he began . . . he did it with all his heart and prospered."

Activity of mind and body was hereditary, and in a marked degree has been transmitted through, at least three generations.

Given the proper soil and suitable conditions, this mental activity in families, and also in communities, seems an erratic and uncontrollable quantity; it may lie dormant long, and

suddenly it breaks out with the—at present—seeming irregularity of sun-spots, new stars, bad seasons, commercial panics, and epidemics, for none of which we have as yet discovered the bacillus, nor the mode of inoculation to mitigate its effects. All historical writers notice the outburst of mental activity which took place at the end of last century, after a long period of intellectual palsy, or mental inanity, as Carlyle would phrase it. Germany had been so exhausted by the Thirty Years' War that it had never recovered, and was even yet sunk in lethargy, but France was in a state of fermentation. Had Voltaire and the French Encyclopædists been stamped out in time, this torpor might have been indefinitely prolonged all over the continent. But the Liber Expurgatorious was of no avail. Liberty of thought and speech were the bacilli of the age, and were everywhere present, especially so in France, where they found a congenial soil and a feverish atmosphere, in which corruption revelled. There it simmered, all the tokens of Revolution being previously observed by the astute Lord Chesterfield so early as 1758; by the sharp and clever Smollett in 1764; and by the keen observer Arthur Young in 1789 on the very eve of the convulsion. What a hideous picture of the corrupt old world France he gives! "An Englishman," he says, "cannot imagine the look of the women of France, looking at twenty-eight as if they were sixty or seventy; haggard, bare and stockingless; living in hovels with no glass in the windows, and no light but from the door; utterly crushed down by toil and famine." And all this in what was termed *La Belle France*!

"Ah, freedom is a noble thing!
 Freedom makes men to have liking.
 To man all solace freedom gives;
 He lives at ease who freely lives;
 And he that aye has lived free
 May not well know the misery,
 The wrath, the hate, the spite, and all
 That's compass'd in the name of Thrall."

Little wonder then that when Thrall had done its very utmost to make life not worth living, misery should have bred discontent and resistance, that this should have simmered and effervesced to the boiling point, and when the steam valve

of petition or remonstrance of famishing multitudes had been officially closed, "the kettle o' the Kirk and State" should have exploded with disastrous result, with utter ruin to red tape and officialism, with great loss of life, with sans-culottism, communism, devilry (nothing less), and with a great fund of experience which has been found most valuable to the world ever since.

But "*Revenons á nos moutons,*" for we have wandered. Comparing great things with small, the bacilli seem to have been in the air at the time and to have reached Aberdeen at an early stage, for at this time there was great fermentation among the Burgesses of Guild. The last straw had been laid on their hitherto patient and long-suffering backs, but now they made loud and indignant complaints of the tyrannical actings of the self-elected Council and Magistrates, of the increased and ever-increasing charges of the Town Clerk, Carnegie. They demanded access to the records of the town, and a fair representation in the Council from their number. The pages of the *Aberdeen Journal* are full of their complaints, and these were all collected in a pamphlet, published in 1785, which shows that John Ewen, jeweller, Castle Street (author of *The Boatie Rows*), Patrick Barron, of Woodside, and some fifty other true and faithful citizens were reformers before the Reform Bill, and set the ball a-rolling which—not however until fifty years after—gave the citizens civil rights and privileges unknown before, and long so obstinately withheld that there was positive danger of an explosion, even amongst cannie Aberdonians.

The man who cannot conduct his own business well is not likely to manage public business efficiently, and Mr. Brown, being prudent, was far too busy looking after his business to take part in this scrimmage. His exertions were soon crowned with success. From the very first Drs. Beattie, Hamilton, Glennie, Livingston and other professors were customers, and so were their students. The patronage of men like these was a good testimonial, almost of itself sufficient to ensure success, and so in a very short time his business connection was large, and so much was he trusted that he had orders from many county families to forward all books of merit to them immediately on publication. No doubt he kept them well posted up in current literature, and so made his own private interest subserve the public benefit.

But that this confidence was not abused is evident, because it was continued for full fifty years with great satisfaction to both parties, his rule of business being that laid down by Pegolotti, an old Tuscan poet, in the early years of the 14th century :—

Always, in all with uprightness to dwell,
 And careful foresight shall become him well ;
 And ne'er to fail of any promise plight ;
 And nobly live, if that he may aright
 With sanction both of reason and of trade ;
 And largely sell with *little purchase made*,
 But without blame, honoured in good men's sight,
 The Church to serve, and to God's service give :
 By one just rule of sale, good fame to win,
 Apart from gambling and from usury live,
 Casting them altogether hence as sin.

He had thus this immense advantage, that of all standard books, "which no gentleman's library should be without," he could with perfect safety order a quantity which must have been gratifying to the publishers. They are always quick enough to recognize the value of agents who can dispose of the largest number of their publications, and so it came to pass that in all after advertisements of books in the local papers by southern publishers Mr. Brown's name always stood first as their agent. Where neither his name nor that of Angus & Son was attached, the advertisement was looked upon somewhat with suspicion, which in the long-run was generally justified.

His first year's cash sales amounted to nearly £300, while his debits amounting to seven times this amount, encouraged him to become a Burgess of Guild, in 1787, Sept., 15 (the entry money having been raised in 1779 from £13 to £26), and his stock accumulating, in 1790 he published a catalogue of his books. Next year he began the formation of a circulating library, following this new fashion first introduced into Scotland by Allan Ramsay about 1725 ; he also advertised a sale by auction in Provost Jopp's Close, Broad Street, of eight nights of books and three of prints, which seems to show that he had not neglected to cultivate a taste for the fine arts. It was generally, but erroneously, supposed, that he was the first in Aberdeen to introduce the auctioning of books, but traditions were current some thirty years ago, that his sales were the resort of all the literary

men of the city, attracted by his knowledge of books, and by the free, *very free*, witty remarks in which he gilded the philosophic pill. Instances might be given, but they do not suit the latitude nor the longitude of the present day.

In one of the local papers, Nov., 1836, there is a notice of Aberdeen Citizens by James Bruce, in which appears the following:—"Brown, Alexander, *Bookseller*: an ex-Provost. It was when he came out of office last that Bailie Milne expected to go in, when, being disappointed, he got new light on the subject, and became one of Mr. Bannerman's tail, which at that time was drawing two-thirds of men after it. Provost Brown, however, is not viciously Toryish, he is too good-humoured for that, and can crack a joke against Tories as well as the Williams, Philip or Clyne. He fairly beat our friend, James Ig. Massie, in the rostrum: and when we were young, we used to spend whole evenings rejoicing at his book sales. Mr. Peter Brown, his namesake, is the only one of the *hammer* who is fit to be put in comparison, but even *he* couldn't palm off an old edition like the Provost."

In 1792, Mr. Brown published his Annual Sale Catalogue, which included the libraries of Mrs. Stewart of Edinglassie, and that of a clergyman. The Catalogue of 1801, 8vo, pp. 212, had 15,000 volumes in 7159 lots, and included the libraries of Principal Chalmers, Professor Thomas Gordon, Dr. Dunbar of King's College, James Gordon of Craig, Rev. Mr. Maitland of Tarland, Rev. Mr. Knolls of Tarves, and Mr. Alexander Glennie.

In 1803, Mr. Brown published for Captain Beatson, of Aberdeen, *Naval and Military Memoirs*, 8vo, 3 vols., and Murray of London published a supplement to it in other three volumes.

He had gradually increased the number of his assistants. And in 1791, he took as an apprentice David Wyllie, who continued in his employment for twenty-four years; and then, starting in business on his own account, he took as his first apprentice a very young boy named Lewis Smith, who in after years filled most worthily the offices of Councillor, Baillie, and Treasurer of the City, and was one of our most notable citizens. Of him much might, and may yet be said; but on the principle of never putting off till to-morrow what may be done to-day, let it be now said, that, next to Provost

Brown, no man was better entitled to be considered a literary benefactor to the city than Baillie Smith, who is still well represented in business by his sons. He was a model man of business; quick in temper, and as quick in exposing all humbug and pretence. He was much too practical a man to ply the pen himself, although he could do it; but of all men he had the keenest appreciation of rising literary talent in others, and in his day, which was much later than Provost Brown's, he did more than any other to encourage and bring to the front the literary talent of the city. He had no petty jealousy of rivals-in-trade, as the present writer can testify, and here he gratefully acknowledges many obligations to him for his invariable kindness and courtesy. At the writer's request, and among the last things he did, Baillie Smith drew out for him, his "Recollections of his Connection with Aberdeen Literature." This is still in existence, and it is matter of regret that neither of his sons, nor his talented and literary son-in-law, have made this public, or even semi-public. It embraced the most interesting period of the history of literature in Aberdeen—the period of transition between the old *regime* and the new—an era worthy of remembrance, and no one better than Baillie Smith could possibly do it the same justice, for no one knew it so well.

In his small den in the Upperkirkgate—not to be looked upon without reverence, however—Mr. Brown soon found himself so "cribbed, cabined, and confined" that, like the hermit crab, he was obliged to look out for a new shell. His frequent auctions in Jopp's Close had doubtless drawn his attention to the adjoining property—the corner house of Queen Street and Broad Street—and on March 23, 1793, he leased the whole house at a rent of £60 10s., with £2 for a workshop, taking over as tenants a Mrs. Paul, and James Staats Forbes, who was Quarter-master, wine merchant in Queen Street, and the proprietor of the Lochlands, which in after years he sold to a Tontine Society for the then very large sum of £10,000. A man of property like this bulked largely in Aberdeen Society at the time, and he and Mr. Brown had many business transactions together. The leasing of this house (afterwards his own property) was an immense advance for Mr. Brown; it was five times his former rent, but it is quite clear he had all his wits about him, and it was well considered.

Two years after (17th Feb., 1795) he married Catherine, daughter of James Chalmers, printer, the proprietor of the *Aberdeen Journal*, and the successor of our first printer, Raban; and, getting rid of his tenants, he got installed into a home of his own. His new family connection seems to have stimulated his publishing propensities, for he now issued a catalogue, including the libraries of the late Dr. Gerard, the Rev. Hugh Hay, Dr. Copland, and Dr. Duncan Shaw, of Aberdeen, all recently purchased by him. The following year (1797) he published Leland's *Deistical Writers*, which cost him £243 7s. 5d.; but it was successful, and paid him satisfactorily.

There being an invasion panic in 1798, Mr. Brown then published three editions of Bishop Watson's *Patriotic Address*, and next year was appointed Captain in the Light Infantry Volunteer Regiment, his commission being signed by the Duke of Portland; but his publishing went on briskly—Hamilton's *Course of Mathematics*, Riddoch's *Sermons*, 3 vols., 8vo, and Campbell's *Lectures*, 2 vols. (for the copyright of which he paid £100), were all brought out in two years, while he had meanwhile instituted a musical library to supply a needed want to the music-loving citizens.

So much had his old books accumulated that in 1801 he published a catalogue of 15,000 volumes, and his London correspondent and new-found relative, Alex. Chalmers, of the *Biographical Dictionary*, says of it that "the classification is just as good as any here. Your prices are upon the whole very moderate—far below the London ones." And he points out some great bargains in it, but says—"For your market it may be necessary to keep a moderate proportion to London prices."

When it is remembered that then there were no numbers to the houses or shops in the streets, we see in the olden time quite sufficient reason for the distinctive signs adopted by innkeepers and merchants, as trade marks are at the present day. Signs originated when people had not yet learnt to read. Then, pictures being a universal language "understood by all," a representation of the article sold was used to attract customers. The Ducal Palace in Venice with its carved pillars was the people's Bible for the time, being "sermons in stones." And for booksellers nothing could be more appropriate than the heads of those eminent

authors by whose brains booksellers made their bread. When, in 1785, Allan Ramsay removed from Niddrie's Wynd to the Luckenbooths, for his first sign of the Mercury he adopted as his new sign the head of Ben Jonson conjoined with that of Drummond of Hawthornden. Andrew Shirrefs might well have had Allan Ramsay's head painted as his sign, Burnett & Carlier had Burns, Gordon & Clark had Milton, Wm. Mortimer had Shakespeare, Samuel Maclean had Scott, and Mr. Brown had that of Homer. His shop was known as "Homer's Head" down to 1831, when, on the removal to a numbered shop in Union Street, this sign disappeared.¹ Other heads lingered longer, and were sometimes curiously emblematic of the class of the literature dealt in by the occupants. William Russell, of genial memory, fell heir to "Shakespeare's Head," and so his shop was the natural haunt of all the actors who visited the city. On his retirement he kindly made offer to BROWN & Co. of the stock and goodwill of this department, which was shown to be valuable; but it was not Homeric; not at all in their way, and was very gratefully declined, although offered quite gratuitously.

Those who laboriously dig into the files of the *Aberdeen Journal* about this period cannot fail to have their attention arrested by a small but spirited and well-cut sketch of the

¹ In 1582 the following signs were used in London:—The Angel, Bible (common), Bible and Crown, Bishop's Head, Black Boar, Black Boy, Blazing Star, Brazen Serpent, Crane, George, Green Dragon, Gun, Hedgehog, Helmet, Holy Ghost, Horace, King's Arms, Lamb, Mermaid, Red Dragon, Sun, Swan, Tiger's Head, White Greyhound, &c., &c.

In 1735 Lawton Gulliver, Bookseller, had Homer's Head and the motto:—

Venit hunc Librum Gulliverus
Cujus insigne est Homerus.

"Dodsley had Tully's head as sign;
Curll by the Fleet Ditch, nymph's caress'd;
Tonson, the Great—the slow to pay;
Lintot, of Folios, rubric pressed;
Osborne that stood in Johnson's way;
Dodsley, who sold 'The Odes of Gray';
Davies, that lives in Churchill's rhyme.
Miller and Knapton, where are they?
Where are the bookshops of old time?"

head of the old, blind, wandering Greek poet. It shines out there in the uniform dull-like columns as a very star, and points the way to Mr. Brown's own advertisements. And so, in the good old Scottish fashion, continued down to the middle of this century, by which the "Laird" was styled by the name of his estate, and would have considered it an insult not to be so addressed, Mr. Brown's name got conjoined with that of the father of literature. Could there possibly be a more honoured title? Surely no! and those who are not familiar with R. A. Willmot's charming lines in his honour, will thank us for inserting them :

HOMER.

O poet of the world ! each Muse
Has pitched her radiant tent before thee :
Crowning thy head with richest hues ;
Folding her brightest garment o'er thee.
Upon the blackening battle storm
The bow of thy soft fancy streams ;
And Cytherea's beauteous form
Upon the blood-stained armour beams.
Oft, when awhile from this sad life,
Our weary hearts would fain be free ;
Forgetful of each care and strife,
Sweet traveller ! we sail with thee
Into that blue unruffled sea,
Where Love and Beauty ever smile
On fair Calypso's sunny isle.
Led by thy hand, delightful guide,
Into enchanted homes we glide ;
And, floating over rivers old,
Sit 'neath the Hesperian Tree of Gold.



CHAPTER IV.

“Who will say the world is dying?
Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from heaven within us lying
Flash, and will flash to the last.”—*Charles Kingsley.*

“The time is ripe, and rotten ripe for change;
Then let it come; I have no dread of what
Is called for by the instinct of mankind;
Nor think I that God’s world will fall apart,
Because we tear a parchment more or less.”
James R. Lowell.

THE eighteenth century, the most potent and fruitful of any in history—which Dr. Arnold of Rugby said was “the seed bed of modern Europe,” was drawing to a close; very slowly according to the ideas and the feelings of those whose years were young and appeared long, but far too rapidly to the aged, and to whom the years seemed far too short and fleeting to satisfy them.

In popular language the century was dying, but certainly neither from old age nor decrepitude, for by an annually recurring yet eternal miracle the flowers bloomed as brightly and the birds sang their love songs as wantonly and carolled as joyously as they did in paradise—“the world’s unwithered countenance was still as bright as on creation’s day.

“No ray is dimmed, no atom worn;
My oldest force is good as new,
And the fresh rose on yonder thorn
Gives back the bending heavens in dew.”

In the departing century there was nothing analogous to the evening as the harbinger of night, or the autumn as the curfew of the passing times. The age was full, not only of buds of promise, but also of ripened seeds ready to burst into a new life, and clothe the earth with fresh garments.

The lengthening and declining daylight, the first song of birds and the coming of the swallow, the call of the cuckoo, the flowers of spring, the foliage and fruitage of bush and tree, the greenery of the earth, the hayfield, the corn bending

and then yellowing, the summer fruits, the reapers' song, the stooky Sunday and the joyous harvest home, the ploughing of the stubbly fields, and the first snow, are all parts of the great clockwork of nature chiming the quarters of the changing seasons and marking the progress of the passing year. But a century is an entirely artificial reckoning, a mere time measurement by us as ephemeral creatures, a fraction with infinity as the denominator. So far from showing signs of decay, the closing years of last century rather gave promise of the birth of a new and more vigorous life.

For every morning the newly risen sun looked down on more than a hundred thousand new and immortal souls born since the yesterday. Each one of these would have his earth-born struggles for mere animal existence, but this once secured, vast numbers would have heaven-born aspirations for a better, a higher, and a nobler life now and beyond that in which they lived. And so there were flashes of energy and light and leading then, not at all like those of the expiring taper, but more resembling the rosy tints of light which in the early morning, amid alpine scenery, kiss the snowy mountain-peaks before stealing down their sides and flooding with healthy sunshine and happy gladness, humble homes in lowly valleys. So was it also in wide spread plains, and even in grimy towns, where "upon the tap o' ilka lum the sun began to keek." Then—amid the echoes of the old songs, were heard new and startling key-notes of newer and richer melodies of the anticipated good times coming. Old ideas and forms of an antiquated, worn-out régime were disappearing in the new light, and young Expectation stood on tip-toe, to watch with eager gaze the dawn of a new and brighter era, which began in 1785.

Aspirations after a higher liberty and a greater freedom arose all over Scotland at this time, and got vent in the Convention of Royal Burghs. And the citizens of Aberdeen, like "children crying in the night," were not behind those of the other burghs in "crying for the light."

For generation after generation, by clan feuds, by border forays and in tented fields; in action, in deed and diplomacy, as the English found to their cost, the Scottish oatmeal made stalwart men, and the Shorter Catechism

made acute minds ; so it came to pass that, between these and by their help, Milton's knotty subjects of "fate, free-will, and foreknowledge," were easily and satisfactorily settled by every Scotchman for himself, notwithstanding the continual difficulty there was in getting other people to agree with him. Indeed it was this continual difficulty that produced and promoted the sharp, subtle, and acute minds of Scotchmen, and made them what they are. Even though conquered they could argue still : and they carried this out not only in the world of thought but in that of action ; in both they never acknowledged defeat, in consequence of their love of country and the joy of combat.

John Ewen and his like-minded citizens were haffled in their attempts to get municipal reform by the want of Home Rule, and by the stupid preference of the English for another diet than oatmeal and the Catechism, compiled as the Cockney thought, by that wonderful man *Shorter*, who was supposed to be related to some one *Knocks*, who figured largely in their national history. And certainly Knocks did so. It is related that Colonel Graham of Claverhouse, the scourge of the Covenanters, was desirous of being introduced to Lady Elphinstone, who had reached the advanced age of a hundred years. The noble matron, being a staunch Whig, was rather unwilling to receive Claver'se, as he was called, but at length consented. After the usual compliments the officer observed that having lived so long she must have seen many strange changes. "Hoot na, Sir," said Lady Elphinstone, "the warl' is jist to end wi' me as it began. Whan I was enterin' life there wis ane Knox deevin's a' wi' his *clavers*, an, noo, I'm gangin' oot there is ane Claver'se deevin's a' wi' his *Knocks*." Besides, the six champions of Scotland were ever understood to be—

Sir Moor, Sir Moss, Sir Mountain,
Sir Hunger, Sir Cold, Sir Dunt On,

the last being the successor of old Knocks of ancient lineage. That there could possibly be a longer or a "Larger" Catechism was to the Cockney both incredible and preposterous. Had the English been only properly fed and "catecheesed" like Scotchmen, there can be little doubt but that the Reform Bill of 1785 would have passed in forty weeks, instead of being deferred for forty years,

while all that time Scotchmen had to wander in the wilderness, sorrowfully saying with old Francis Quarles (1592-1644).—

Wilt ne'er be morning? Will that promised light
Ne'er break, and clear those clouds of night?
Sweet Phosphor, bring the day,
Whose conquering ray
May chase those fogs : sweet Phosphor bring the day.

But the watching of young Expectation for the dawn of the better day had to be continued till she was long past her teens, and even her younger sister Hope had threatened to become an old maid. The pitiful crying of the Burgh bairns gradually subsided into despairing moans, in consequence of the fearful demoniac-like atrocities accompanying the progress of the French Revolution. The Sun of Liberty did indeed rise fair, bright, and beautiful in France, attracting the eyes, fascinating the minds, charming the affections, and claiming and receiving the devotion of the best friends of Freedom in this and all other nations—

“ When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
And with an oath which smote air, earth, and sea,
Stamped her strong foot, and swore she would be free.”

But the fair vision speedily faded, becoming obscured by lurid clouds which seemed to emanate from the bottomless pit, and Paris became the scene of such a saturnalia of fiends that the onlooking world stood aghast and horrified. In this country the onward heavenward march of Freedom was arrested and thrown back for more than a generation. The long war had taken away all the romance, and there remained only the echoes of a great explosion and the shadow of a great horror. Many years of stern repression— weary years of gagging all aspirations for civil and religious liberty—miserable years of detestable misrule and cruel tyranny had yet to be endured. No wonder that Shelley wailingly sung—

One fled past—a maniac maid,
And her name was Hope, she said ;
But she looked more like Despair,
And she cried out on the air :—
‘ My Father Time is old and grey
With waiting for the better day.’

Yet even then some young and hopeful championess of Liberty would say to the timid and despairing crowd around her, "What?—

'Couldst thou not watch with me one hour? Behold!
Dawn skims the sky with flying feet of Gold.'

"Out of the scaldard of the night by God's hand drawn
Flashes the shining sword of light, and lo! the dawn."

When Selden the statesman, as reported by Fletcher of Saltoun, said "Give me the making of a nation's ballads and I care not who makes the laws," he must have forgot the *Shorter Catechism*. So much depends on the feeding of body and training of mind!

But such was the ferment among the citizens at this time, that an agitation for reform of some kind or other was necessary as an outlet for the ebullition; and, luckily, it was directed towards a very much needed improvement of the sanitary condition of the city. And the "light and leading" took the material, practical, and sensible form of more street lamps, an extension of the water-pipes, and a crusade in favour of cleanliness. "The toon had then but ten short streets," all of one little family circle, so closely packed together and the indwellers so "chummy" that they did not need to ask each other in the morning how they had rested overnight, for one *row* in the place roused the whole fraternity. "To ilka house there was a yaird" behind, and a midden in front. Outside stairs led to the upper floors of the houses, from the top of which slop-pails were emptied on the street, without even the warning cry of "Gardez-vous" being uttered. Castle Street was the only flat place in the city; for it then consisted of a series of narrow, crooked, and sloping streets, generally so steep in their declivities that, had they been paved, it might have been said that, "every stone was six inches lower than its neighbour,"—a state of matters which outrivalled "the pavement of the bottomless pit." But this steepness of streets helped its salubrity, for it drained the middens and kept the gutters from becoming stagnant, and these gutters were so big, so foul, and so broad that they formed ancient landmarks, and were recorded as the boundaries of

properties. The main sewer of the town was the open burn from the Loch, which, after receiving the drainage of the Gallowgate, was carried across the Upperkirkgate, and, after driving the Flour and Malt Mills, fell into the tide near the old Trinity Hall. Within the memory of many still alive, the harbour was at low tide a bed of filthy mud, reeking with pestilential miasma, and at high tide, a mass of floating garbage, the water surface glowing with all the colours of the rainbow, arising from the then waste coal-tar of the gas works, now such a source of wealth.

“Then Cloacina, goddess of the tide,
Whose sable streams beneath the city glide,
Indulged *no* modest flame; the town she roved,
But mortal scavenger she neither saw nor loved.”

At Gilcomston, in 1756, there was but a single farmhouse where now “five hunder weel-fill’t hooses stan’”; and the Denburn was then a good specimen of the lifeiest, bonniest thing on earth—the frequent and just theme of Ruskin’s high admiration—a clear, caller, sparkling Scottish burnie, fresh from the hills and from high heaven itself. For from its tiny fountain sources amongst the uplands on the everlasting hills to its ocean bed, ever rushing on and taking no rest night nor day, the Scottish burnie is a peculiarly fitting emblem of this human life of ours, from the cradle to the grave, from time to eternity. It has motion, and motion is life. It grows as it progresses, like human beings. Unlike the free wild denizens of nature, who fear and fly from us, the burnie offers us friendship, fellowship, and refreshment for both soul and body. Birds, beasts, and even men are but tenants, but the burnie seems a landed proprietor with an indefeasible title dating from the flood and therefore not to be disputed. We never call on it in vain, it is always at home, and makes us heartily welcome, telling us that

Men may come and men may go
But I go on for ever.

Babies dandled in the arms of fond mothers, crow with joyous delight in seeing its merry gambols. Instinctively and successfully they imitate the sound of its gurgling, for kind nature is the mother of us all, and has a universal

language far exceeding the range of Dr. Garner's monkey-language or the more elaborate Volaput.

Then the blithe youngsters of the braif toon roamed along its verdant banks, from its junction with the Dee, past the Doo-cot brae and the Corbie heugh, as far up as Carden's haugh; bird-nesting, flower-gathering, fishing for minnows or small trout, or picnicking on its banks; drank refreshing draughts from its three celebrated springs, of which "Callirhoe" or the Well of Spa was the most celebrated, but each having special virtues of its own, and when combined with each other and the fresh air, equal in virtue to a whole infirmary in the opinion of a great many citizens. Where? Ah where are the springs now?

By 1800, great changes had taken place. Gilcomston had grown into a village with a big church of its own, built by itself and for itself; and although both the Windmill Brae and the Hardgate were lined with houses, the Denburn was still considered beyond the walls, and the dividing line between town and country. Across it, the main south road, winding in Roman fashion over height and howe from the Bridge of Dee, was carried by the Bow Brig, a comparatively modern structure, and considered so "elegant" that it has been preserved in Union Terrace Gardens ever since. But, historically, the older structure was much more important. It formed one of the ports of the city so far back as the time when King William had his palace in the buildings which he gave to the monks of the "Holy Trinitie," and which was adjacent to the monastery of the Carmelite Friars, both in the immediate neighbourhood. Over the old bridge, Wallace, and Bruce, King James, and Queen Mary and other sovereigns entered the city in gallant pageantry, celebrated by William Dunbar. Over it streamed the armed citizens.

"When Cavalier and Covenanter,
Cromwell men and Gerry lairds,
Took up by turns the sticks to daunt her
An' her braif auld burgher gairds;"

Up to the close of last century, the Bow Brig was the main approach to the city, and near it, in the Green, the founder of the family of the Haddens, so long the magnates of the town, had his residence, in order that he might, at

the bridge, meet his customers, the country wives, who sold their woven stockings to him.

The old approaches to the city, laid out it seemed more by hap-hazard—as if to keep enemies out, rather than to let friends and merchandise in, were narrow, crooked, and steep; fit only for pack-horses, and as it was impossible to remedy their obvious defects, or fit them for wheel carriages, they had to be discarded altogether.

It is related of Lord Medwyn, who came on circuit here, before and after Union Bridge was built, that he said “he had come to Aberdeen when it was a city without an entrance, but that recently it was an entrance without a city.” Could he now revisit this sublunary scene, even as a ghost at a *Midnight Meetin,* with dear departed William Forsyth as the reporter, we might learn, in fitting terms, what he would now say of “the silver city by the sea;” for has not the reporter sung thus:—

Whaur flowed the tide by Tarnty Mill,
The iron house has noo his sta',
Frae Justice Port to Windmill hill
Wis wavin' green wi' yairdens a'.
The Woo'man hill was ae green knowe,
An' up the Denburn's bonny bank,
The playgreen lay in Gilcom's howe,
The scene of mony a merry prank.

But noo [he's ta'en] awa', awa',
And there is change and mair than change—

to the lasting loss of every lover of genius and good fellowship.

Failing, in the meantime, to reform the Town Council by act of Parliament, the long-headed citizens of that day wisely determined to try and reform themselves. And a proposal to get a Police Bill, and a regular assessment of the inhabitants for this, was therefore mooted, and gave vent and opportunity for keen discussion in private, and, what was much more important, in the public press; for then seems to have begun that public discussion of civic affairs which has gone on ever increasing since. “Freedom slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent.”

The proposed Bill was attacked and defended in prose and verse, and, as specimens of the latter, two acrostics are here given, in one of which the hand of Mr. Brown's

brother, William (the author of *Look before ye Loup*), may not unreasonably be suspected.

Proposing many comforts to supply,
On all hands wish'd and pray'd for. Here come I !
Led solely by my wishes to do good,
I ask no more but to be understood,
Canvassed with freedom, candidly surveyed,
Examined fairly, faults and merits weigh'd.

But I'm rejected, spurn'd, unheard, condemn'd,
Insulted, bark'd at, buffeted, and maim'd ;
Like a poor dog, judg'd mad because a stranger ;
Like him, from Ignorance, comes all my danger.

Aberdeen Journal, 6th June, 1791.

Next week the following appeared :—

Pack up your awls, ye black warl's wunner !
Or I'll come o'er your snout a lunner ;
Let who will dare to contradic' it,
I'll gar you march—or “ deil he licket : ”—
Come ye to lade's wi' mair new taxes,
Elastic as your conscience raxes ?

By George ! if ever ye be seen
In our guid toon o' Aberdeen,
Lown leuking Rogue ! I'll gie my aith
Like warlock, ye sall suffer death !

If all letters to the editor were as brief, pithy, and pointed as these, they would command attention; and always provided they were were written on one side of the paper, there would be fewer of them thrown into the waste basket, and it is just possible that, a hundred years after, some queer old antiquarian might take a fancy to republish them.

The Police Bill passed into an Act in 1795, and thus to Aberdeen belongs the credit of first introducing popular representation in civic management; and its consequences were far reaching. Like the Reform Bill, it was not an official, but a citizens' measure, and so democratic; and as it gave a fairly elected representative board, it worked well, and in its results it so approved itself, that the usual impatience of increased taxation was entirely stilled, and it was the origin of all the improvements which have made Aberdeen what it now is.

CHAPTER V.

Blyth Aberdeen, thou beriall of all tounis,
The lamp of bewtie, bountie and blythnes ;
Unto the heaven ascended thy renown is
Of vertew, wisdome, and of worthines ;
He noted is thy name of nobilnes
Be blyth and blissfull, Burgh of Aberdeen !

Dunbar, 1460-1520.

“Aberdeen, as it stands, may be said to be wholly a nineteenth century town. Up to the middle of last century the buildings were mostly of wood, a stone house being evidence of the wealth and rank of the owner.”

A. M. Munro.

WITH the possible exception of Newcastle, where, when it was improved, the improvements began where they were most needed, in the centre of the crowded town, no city in Britain was so entirely changed as Aberdeen was by the improvements carried out in it at the commencement of this century. In Edinburgh, when improvements began, it was a new town which was created, upon an unoccupied site, and all that had to be done was to abolish the North Loch by drainage, and join by Bridge or Mound the old town with the new, and as Professor Masson puts it “the new town was spilt over from the old.”

But in Aberdeen there were sweeping changes to be made, and an entire obliteration of some of the old landmarks ; radical changes beginning at the very centre, and extending away so far beyond the ancient limits that, in ecclesiastical language, the new territory was in “*in partibus infidelium.*”

We fail to realize the boldness of the conception of Union Street, unless we try to conceive or bear in mind the previous appearance of Aberdeen, and this, owing to the many and great changes in it, it is now somewhat difficult to do. In the old troublous times when might was right, when law mainly consisted in—

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That he should take who has the power,
And he should keep who can—

or, "Ilka man keeps his ain gear in his ain grip;" hills were natural fortresses intended to be crowned with cities, as so many hills in the eastern portion of France still are; the hills serve both as a look-out for, and a defence from, enemies.

Happy indeed is that country where multitudes of isolated farms dot the landscape; whose fields are unsullied by the tread of armed enemies, and its inhabitants sleep secure, undisturbed by the roar of cannon, and unharmed by the fiery breath and flame of war, with its slaughtered men and burning homesteads. No wonder although in eastern France and along the shores of Italy and Provence every village is on the walled hill-top, a miniature republic, a refuge in extremity; every villager *looking to the hills* for aid in time of danger.

Such was St. Catherine's hill for Aberdeen: its central defence, and the rallying point of the citizens. It was in the immediate proximity of the Town-house, and the *place* of the city; and protected the Quay-head, where "ilka boat and birlin lay." It was a steep, round, conical hill, with its summit fully twenty to thirty feet higher than Castle Street, from which it was separated by the Narrow Wynd and the Chaquer Raw, in which was the Mint, and that it was an important look-out is evident from a description of it in Forbes's *Account of Aberdeen*, written about 1715 (Spalding Club), where it is said "St. Katerns here offers to the beholders the *amusing* sight of the river Dee and its beautiful Bridge, the monument of a Bishop's piety." The Gallowhill on the North, the Castle Hill on the East, and St. Catherine's Hill on the South and West, were the sentinel posts of the city where the citizens kept watch and ward, by "scot and lot." Round its eastern and southern sides the Shipraw winded in ever-increasing steepness, with the "yairdens" of the burghers on its sides lying to the sun; and, as old historians tell us, was embowered in verdure. On the north it overlooked the Rotten Raw and the Round Table (now the site of the offices of the *Free Press*). On the north-west, hanging on its side, was the Netherkirkgate; while on the west, its boundary was Carnegie's Brae leading to Putachieside, named after the property of Lord Forbes, whose country seat was Putachie Castle, now styled Castle Forbes.

Carnegie's Brae is still in existence, but Putachieside is

now buried under Market Street. Those interested in old landmarks should explore the close at the back of the Café, the courts in the Shiprow, and the ground to the west of the Adelphi, and they will thus get a better idea of the old city, and the great change in this portion, consequent on the opening up of the new western approach.

It was a stroke of genius, and the precursor of railway cuttings, to think of obliterating St. Catherine's Hill; bridging over the wide chasm which intervened between it and the Denburn, and crossing it by a bridge which, except that over the Dee at Chester, was then the largest span of any bridge in the Kingdom. The Londoners, who profess to teach the world, had, and still have, the most absurd ideas of any place beyond the sound of Bow Bells, and especially if in Scotland; for in a *Gazetteer* published in this century, Aberdeén was described as a "small fishing village on the east coast of Scotland, the inhabitants of which live chiefly on fish and seaweed." While, that the Dee flows under Union Bridge, and that the inhabitants all wear kilts, are errors which seem persistent and ineradicable.

But what shall we say of thousands of our own citizens who walk along Union Street daily, without having the slightest idea that they are traversing an artificial road partly under, and in some parts again from 20 to 50 feet above the natural level of the ground? In the "teens" of this century, it was literally an entrance to the city, up in the air, striding over, and standing up high above the roofs of the neighbouring houses, and quite justifying Lord Medwyn's saying. The conception was decidedly ahead of the age, for even in the "thirties," the houses in Union Street were few and far between, and the blanks on the north side of the Green were filled up by a low brick wall. Over this wall, when Simon Grant, "the toon's officer," and the "Tak' a'" of the time, then considered a very host in himself, and quite equal to Mr. Wyness and a hundred modern policemen, was not in sight (which, however, did not ensure immunity, for—witchcraft being not quite extinct—it was believed that Simon had the remarkable faculty of being in two places at once), the errand boys (some of whom in after years actually became magistrates), partly owing to the principle of original sin, and partly arising from the natural desire to exercise their skill, often endeavoured to drop

stones down the chimneys of the houses in the Green, for they looked so temptingly and invitingly open below the level of the street, that any boy who could resist the temptation was considered more than mortal. It is a fortunate thing that forty years gives exemption, else as magistrates, some of these old boys would have felt it necessary to bring the young boy before himself as an old man, and give himself a serious admonition, or, if there was no sign of contrition, inflict a fine of 2/6 or twenty-four hours.

Travellers tell us wonderful stories of the catacombs of Rome, but how few dwellers in Bon-Accord are aware that under Union Street there are many huge vaults—some actually with roofs over them—the dark and dismal abodes of spirits of diverse qualities, under the supervision of the priests of the Excise, by whose permission only can they reascend into the regions of light. Meantime, kept in strict durance, they peacefully repose, in what, in the olden time, may once have been the site of some blithe and cheerful parlour, where bairnies, long since dead and gone, once romped and played; the cosy bedroom of some old world citizen of credit and renown, who, there, doffing his wig and donning a Kilmarnock, lay down and slept the sleep of the just: or it may have been a dining-room where—

The guests for whose presence a table was spread
May now enter as ghosts for they're every one dead.

So soon is merit forgotten, and so greatly is the precept of "honour to whom honour," violated now-a-days, that nine persons out of every ten give the credit of initiating these improvements to Provost James Hadden, who was four times elected Provost, and served for nine years as such. But the nine persons are wrong, for although he worked ably and energetically in carrying them out, it is to the fine taste and discriminating foresight of Provost Thomas Leys of Glasgoforest that we are mainly indebted for their conception and commencement,—although, dying in 1809, he did not live to see their completion.

Fifty years ago a tradition was current that the first idea of the improvement of the town was limited to cutting down St. Catherine's Hill, and making a straight street down from Castle Street to the Green, as the Denburn and the high ground to the west of it presented "insurmountable"

difficulties it was then thought. But on consulting Mr. Abercromby, the Edinburgh architect, he pointed out that the street would run into a *cul de sac*, from which there was no outlet, and no means of entrance into the fine building ground lying direct to the west. Taking advantage of the suggestions of a woolcomber in Provost Ley's employment, whose rough drafts were submitted to him, Mr. Abercrombie planned Union Street with a bridge of several arches over the Denburn, the piers of which were afterwards pulled down, and a single arch adopted. A writer in the *Aberdeen Herald* in 1866 says that the ground westwards was occupied by patches of cornfields and waste ground covered with whins and broom. The only grumbler against the plan was a Mr. Beggrie, the proprietor of a strip of ground stretching from Little Chapel Street to Langstane Place. He seems to have reclaimed his ground, and formed it into a garden, which then was the general resort of the citizens in summer for curds and cream, and strawberries; while every Saturday for the small charge of twopence, boys were allowed to eat any quantity of gooseberries they could gorge, but no pouching was allowed, and it was the general trysting place for budding sweethearts.

In the Bill which passed as an Act, 4th April, 1800, it was provided that Union Street should be sixty feet wide, with fifty feet on each side for building areas. But on the Bill being taken into consideration, some one on the Parliamentary Committee remarked that an additional width of ten feet would make it a very splendid street. It is said the remark was made by Dundas himself, and when the provision in the Bill of only "sixty feet in width" was pointed out, he in his despotic way pooh-pooed it, and said it should be disregarded. (The Council Records contain no reference to it, but all the feu-charters are correct as to the increased width). On this, it is said, that an express was instantly sent off by the Aberdeen Committee, ordering the deviation pegs, marking the line of the new street, to be shifted *in the night-time* ten feet wider, which was done. And so it comes to pass that although the Act specifies sixty feet, yet Union Street is seventy feet in width, save at Union Place (now obliterated), where it was carried through John Cadenhead's garden ground. Potatoes were not then, as now, a field produce, and John's garden crop having

very likely been over manured, were blown upon by Dr. Kidd, who made a very practical application of them from the pulpit; comparing them to the hypocrite as "fair without, but rotten at the heart," which he, having been confronted with some of John's legal relations, had to retract and apologise for afterwards. So even before the Act passed, his garden ground was feued, and the houses on it were originally built as summer residences for the citizens, the two on the east of Rose Street being considered as model houses! Very luckily, the restrictions on the feus were sufficient to protect the amenity of the street from its being narrowed more than it is at this point.

The wide gulf between St. Catherine's hill and the Doo'cot brae having been bridged over, and the promised land of the period been reached, there resulted what might be termed a boom in the building trade. As a rule, booms generally result in a reaction, and in this case the boom resulted in the temporary bankruptcy of the city some years after, in 1817. Meantime, everything went on swimmingly. The steep brae of the churchyard, Aidie's Wynd, a continuation of the Back Wynd, and Belmont Street, were each filled up to the level of Union Street. St. Nicholas Street was opened, and in doing so, two earthen jars, each containing an immense quantity of silver coins, were discovered, buried, as was supposed, some four hundred years previously.

Beyond the Bridge, the proprietors of the ground were all busy planning new streets; and unhampered by the restrictions of the Town Council as to the style of buildings, their ground was rapidly feued and built on; more rapidly, indeed, than Union Street was. Many reflections have been made on the unwisdom of the dealings of the Council regarding their alienation of their property in the Stocket, for it is so easy to be wise now-a-days, and long after the event. Charity should induce caution in judgment, and should lead us to imagine that their heads were as long and—fed by good oatmeal—their brains were almost, if not altogether, as big as ours. The ground was very poor, it was not of that kind that if you tickled it with a hoe you could expect it to laugh with a harvest—nay, "it girmed a' winter, and grat a' summer," and was so covered with stones, that

If only you'd seen it before it was feued,
The reasons would seem both abundant and good.

The bankruptcy of the city was not entirely a misfortune—possibly it might have been averted by a sale of the feus without restrictions, in which case Union Street might have been ruined, as a specimen of a noble street, by the erection of mean and ignoble buildings. But the creditors of the city had faith, and knowing well that both time and the building boom were in their favour, the restrictions were maintained, and in six years the creditors were all repaid—leaving an immense reversion of unbuilt on feus for the benefit of the common good. The only two houses built in the west in 1806 were the mansion-house of John Milne of Crimmonmogate (now occupied by the Northern Club), with its then wonderful monolith pillars, and that on the west side of Diamond Street, long occupied by Miss Brebner of Learney, and now by the Royal Bank.

The site of the Northern Assurance Office was at that time a stubble field, in which the Dove cot (dookit) stood; the steep bank was all waste, and in it the horses of the “bonnet-lairds” of Deeside were tethered, when they came in with articles of home manufacture to the Timmer Market. Gordon Street, and Huntly Street now occupy the place of old rope walks.

Fashion—that fickle jade—forsook her old quarters and patronised a new locality for the residences of her votaries in each decade of the century. In primeval times our ancestors, the Picts, dwelt in artificial underground caves to protect themselves from enemies of their own species, from wild beasts or wild weather. In the process of Evolution, our buildings are now a test of our civilization.

In the earlier decades, the county families had their town residences alongside those of the local grandees, in the Shiprow and other places like it, in which one can still find houses with carved stone entrances, monograms, and traces of coats-of-arms, and rooms in them with fine, richly carved panels, chimney pieces, and ceilings, now strangely out of place with their present surroundings and occupants. And the older the family was the more its members seemed to cling to these old residences; for as Ruskin says, or means to say, “Is not a house a sacred thing?” . . . “Why,” he asks, “should not our houses be as interesting things to

angels, as bullfinches nests are to us?" Ay, why not indeed?

In the old days of sturt and strife, houses were built with as much care as castles, "They dreamt not of a perishable home who thus could build." But as it is with nests, so it is with houses; when the summer is past and gone, when the wild blasts of winter lay bare and open the nests of the birds, they become to us something like the old houses, so rich in their by-gone history, in the Shiprow or the Gallowgate. What tragedies and comedies have been acted in them!

Gradually, however, the prosperous merchants of the town, attracted by fresh air, open space, and cleanliness, migrated westwards, and houses of all grades, and to suit all purses, were run up in new streets, squares, and terraces, of which there were no fewer than thirty-seven in ten years! John Cadenhead must have been a far-seeing man, although his model houses are now mere curiosities. He had already feued much of his ground, and it is said that some of the houses on the south side of Union Place were built as country lodgings to front Justice Mill Lane, and thus we only see their hinder parts. And so, although the houses on the west side of the Guestrow had gardens, and a good out look behind, Union Place outrivalled them, and was soon occupied by a row of houses which fitted into the line of Union Street, and so were untouched by the Act.

In its ultimate results the opening up of Union Street was one of the most profitable investments ever made by the city, quite justifying the bold policy of the promoters in every way. But it proved the death blow to the gentility of the older streets. Within twenty years both the Shiprow and the Gallowgate lost their proud position as the principal approaches to the city; and many of their houses became ever more and more squalid as the proprietors removed or died out, till, before being condemned, they had become like mere "styes for human swine."

The modern and fashionable Marischal Street, and the still more fashionable Carmelite Street—in which some of the best county families had their residences—were quite eclipsed by Union Terrace, in which the feuars have largely benefited by unearned increments, as, by the spirited action of the Town Council, it promises to be ever more and more a centre of attraction to all eyes—quite irrespective of the

cost ; for some things are worth paying for, especially when art can beautify nature.

After 1830 the county families and gentry forsook Carmelite Street, in consequence of the dung stance of the city being placed at the Poynerook.

Then Golden Square, with a Silver Street on each side—"an apple of gold in a basket of silver"—became the masher of the period and the residence of the élite ; to be followed in turn by Crown Street, Bon-Accord Square and Terrace, until in succession they were all eclipsed by the magnificent suburbs which arose in the west under the brilliant light and leading of Sir Alexander Anderson. Than these suburbs, there is really nothing finer anywhere, and all strangers willingly admit this ; but some of our citizens, with perceptive eyes half blinded by too much familiarity, do not see it. They have paced the suburbs a hundred times without observation, without thought, and therefore, have never really seen them. To cure this, let each of them, fancying themselves strangers, step out to the suburbs and look around them with a stranger's eyes, and as seeing Aberdeen for the first time, and then, wherever they have travelled, if they do not get a new revelation, they are blind indeed. It is a thousand times more likely that they will come round to the general opinion of the citizens that Aberdeen is the hub of the universe, near which the garden of Eden was placed, and that it is not to be wondered at although all men who attain eminence are anxious to claim connection with it. Children drink in this idea with their mother's milk, and not being contradicted in the *Shorter Catechism*, it is believed in from the earliest times, and is ingrained in their hearts.

That ever since the Union, Scotland is the capital of England and Aberdeen the capital of Scotland—if not taught in the Board Schools—is believed by all true bairns of Bon-Accord, and most foreigners, especially the French, and is a proof of the great advantage which England secured to herself by the Treaty of Union.

So, also, that Aberdeen is the first of Scottish towns, is a mere truism, for Aberbrothick being obsolete, this was settled in the earliest times by the Gazetteers, and later on by that leal son of Bon-Accord, our own native born talented artist, James Cassie, who, at a dinner of Royal

Academicians unanswerably asked in regard to its men and scenery, "Tak' awa' Aberdeen and twal' miles roon' it and faur are ye'?" That twal' miles has since then greatly affected the civilization of the world. It threatens to embrace the universe and to boss creation, and had only its circumference been doubled it would have done so.

And then for the belief that the garden of Eden was in its immediate neighbourhood, there are so many testimonies, so cumulative and convincing to Aberdonians who do not require surgical operations to put things into their minds, that it may be considered as settled. For, Paradise must have been placed on a primitive geological formation, and of all places Aberdeen best supplies this requisite. It is confirmed by ancient and modern authorities. Ptolemy places it in Ultima Thule, then supposed to be near Monymusk, and sure enough there it is still. That Gaelic was the language spoken is confidently affirmed. Even more certain is it, that the Urquhart clan trace their unbroken genealogical pedigree from Adam, which they could hardly do unless he had been a neighbour. Then, the Grants in the vicinity maintain that they are specially mentioned in "Genesis," although, by a very simple and easily accounted for error, the highly improbable word "Giants" has been substituted by some sleepy transcriber, stupid comp., or wicked P.D. And, when the plentiful supply of fine timber on Donside is considered, their claim to have had a boat of their own at the flood is surely possible, then probable, and so feasible. For Professor Aytoun assures us that "Fhairshon had a son who married Noah's daughter, and helped to assuage the flood;" and John Dempster, 1490-1557, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* maintains that the Maccabees were an old Highland clan. Should some incredulous persons still doubt—which is always dangerous—they should remember the treatment of Galileo. Should they demand "a grain of salt" before accepting this, then it is furnished by a perfectly unbiassed witness, the last, the learned, and the most sensible of all the pre-reformation writers—John Mayor or Mair. He was the teacher of Robert Hamilton, the martyr, of John Knox and George Buchanan, and must have sown in their minds principles far in advance of those prevalent in his time—1469-1550. His *De Gestis Scotorum*, or "Greater Britain," has been

recently translated and reprinted, and in it he states that Aberdeen was the original seat of the Scottish monarchy. And does not Cosmo Innes say : “Long before Edinburgh had acquired the precedence of a capital or even yet the first place among the Four Burghs of Southern Scotland—while Glasgow was yet an insignificant town dependent on its bishop—Aberdeen had taken its place as a great and independent Royal Burgh, and a port of extensive foreign trade.”

And so, in far-back times, long before Dunfermline, Perth, Stirling, or even that upstart Edinburgh, were taken into royal favour, ungratefully returning this by barbarous treatment, Aberdeen—with a population of not more than 3,000, who mostly dwelt in wooden booths or clay-built hovels with thatched roofs, and whose palatial residences were only distinguishable by their stone walls and red-tiled roofing—was the residence of the monarch, and its citizens were accustomed to shine in the splendours of a court, to bask in the smiles of a sovereign, and to blossom blithesomely in the Royal radiance. Is it any wonder that men desire to be connected with “Aberdeen Awa’”? or that William Forsyth wrote :

My Silver City by the Sea,
 Thy white foot rests on golden sands ;
 A radiant robe encircles thee
 Of woody hills and garden lands.
 I'll lift my cap and sing thy praise
 By silent Don and crystal Dee :
 Oh, bravely gentle all thy days,
 Fair City by the Sea !
 Bonaille,* O Bonaille !
 My Silver City by the Sea.

I'll love thee till my tongue be mute,
 For all thy fame of ancient years,
 Thy tender heart and resolute,
 Thy tale of glory and of tears ;
 The might that from thy bosom springs
 To free thy sons where'er they be,
 And for a thousand noble things,
 Brave City by the Sea !
 Bonaille, O Bonaille !
 My Silver City by the Sea.

* From the French *Bon Allie*.

Fair city of the rivers twain,
No child of idle dalliance thou ;
The silvery borders of thy train
Come from the rugged mountain's brow.
And well I wot thy best of wealth
The wind of God brings fairly free,
Thy brave bright eyes and ruddy health,
Fair City by the Sea !
Bonaillie, O Bonaillie !
My Silver City by the Sea.

Really, the only reason why Aberdeen was "cuist aff" from being the capital of Scotland was not its cold climate, nor even its sterile soil, for these produced its strong men, mentally and physically. Has not the most eminent physicians certified to its health-giving properties and recommended it as the residence of our most Gracious Sovereign ! and has not their wise recommendation been entirely justified ! The district was always a favourite one with all our sensible monarchs, and their visits frequent and prolonged, so much so that our magistrates and citizens were often hard pressed to find them fitting sustenance. True, so long as the game lasted in the forest of the Stocket, and the hunting monarchs killed it, they could live well and provide the citizens besides. But if that failed, so miserably small was the agricultural produce that even kings and queens, being only human, had to leave the place in consequence of "skearsitie of viveris," notwithstanding the plentifulness of salmon, considered as only fit food for menials.



CHAPTER VI.

“ Some brag o’ this, some brag o’ that,
The Cockney craws fu’ saucy,
At bouncing, few can rival Pat,
The Yankee crowns the causey.
But I’ve a boast that beats them a’;
I’m gratefu’ air’ and late for’t,
Gae hide your heads, baith grate an’ sma’,
For I’m a Scot, thank Fate for’t.”

BY the close of the century Mr. Brown’s confidence in himself, increased by his fifteen years’ experience in business had secured success, and enabled him to firmly plant his feet up two or three rungs of the social ladder. The Scotchman’s four points of breeding being Patriotism, Principle, Pluck and Push, “Forwards,” the celebrated motto of Marshal Blucher, had long been familiar to young Scotchmen ; for “Haud forrit” was given to the brothers Chambers as their rule in life by their mother, and the Scottish mottoes of “Birse yont,” and “Thou shalt want ere I want,” were well known. Like Longfellow’s aspiring hero, but with less bravado, their course was always “Onwards and Upwards,” and so was Mr. Brown’s ; and cannie Aberdonian that he was, instead of attempting to climb the mountain with a huge unwieldy banner in his hand, he adopted the quiet prudent course of securing a wide business connection, a good social position, and the respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens which had already won for him (in 1796) the presidentship of the St. Andrew’s Society, which comprised the élite of the city. This office he held frequently, and from his social qualities always with much acceptance. He did not seek honours : honours sought him.

As a host or a chairman Mr. Brown was a very despot, and never left his position while he had a single subject ; made speeches and jokes which suited the occasion admirably, and gave birth to immense laughter ; proposed toasts, incomprehensible in their meaning, but multifarious in their character and number, the chief merit being that there was

always a dram at the end of each, and no heel-taps permitted. Punctuality, however, was not one of his cardinal virtues at any period of his life. Homer sometimes nods, and he was the trial of a dinner party. His presence being eagerly desired he would be waited for until patience being exhausted and the viands growing cold, the dinner would be begun without him. During the second course he would burst into the room, exclaiming, "Now did you ever see me in time before?" which elicited shouts of laughter, and it was impossible to be angry with him.

In many of his characteristics and in his position in society Mr. Brown resembled the bookseller Creech of Edinburgh, but he treated his guests more generously. At one of Creech's entertainments he was shrewdly suspected by his guests to be "haining" some choice old Madeira, which it was known he possessed, and pushing some poor Cape wine on them. Harry Erskine was present, and when, notwithstanding all the broad hints and plain suggestions of the guests as to their desire for an introduction to the old Madeira, Creech remaining obdurate, Harry said, "Well, well! if we cannot get as far as *Madeira* let us at least *double the Cape*." Mr. Brown always gave his best, mentally or spiritually.

As commander of the "Bookstall" he had hitherto sailed his craft in comparatively tranquil waters, but there were then ahead some rocks and shoals in the political and social conditions of the day, which had better be noticed here.

According to current history, George III. was then King of England. But as Professor Masson, in a brilliant essay, recently reprinted, shows, the virtual King of Scotland from 1783 to 1806, was Henry Dundas, known afterwards as first Viscount Melville, just as Archibald, Earl of Islay, was the virtual king during the first half of the century.

During the troublous and disastrous times at the close of Lord North's administration, 1770-82, which ended in the resignation of the Government, the younger Pitt had begun to show his amazing powers, so rivalling his father that Burke said of him, "It is not a chip of the old block, it is the old block itself." Then Dundas, so able and versatile, that Sheridan skilfully retorted on a speech of his, that "he was indebted to his memory for his jests, and to his

imagination for his facts," began to think it was necessary to hedge. Forseeing the approaching downfall of his party and making *siccar* of his own safety, he joined the Opposition and was warmly received, for as Macaulay says, though he had not eloquence, he had sense, knowledge, readiness and boldness. He became the colleague of Pitt and his right hand man.

That Britain was governed under a representative system previous to 1832 is the merest delusion. The representation was either that of caste and selfishness, or of dead bones and inert matter, and not that of healthy, life-giving energy and industry. A crumbling ruin with a single proprietor sent two Members to Parliament, while populous places and thriving towns were left out in the cold. More than three hundred members for England and Wales were returned by private patronage. One hundred and fifty-four persons returned three hundred and seven members. Privileges had been so favoured that the representation of the boroughs was worse than it was in the fifteenth century. Parliament was composed of delegates sent by large land-owners. Ninety members were returned by forty-six places with less than fifty electors in each. Seventy were returned by places like Old Sarum with scarcely any electors at all, the only one in Gatton being Lord Monson, who sent two members to *represent one person*. Seats were sold at fancy prices to retired Indian Nabobs, and bribery and corruption were practised wholesale. The fact was that those unrepresented "were in reality stronger than all the forces of selfish privilege and senseless prejudice of caste and class."

Then as in one hand Dundas held the power of coercion by despotic civil and military law, so, in the other, he had the whole Government patronage of Scotland. Thus equipped, he engaged not only to keep the country quiet, but to bring all its influence to the support of the now Tory Government, for with such mighty strides does opinion march that the Liberalism of one century becomes the Toryism of the next. It was much easier to deal with the electors then, than now; when one, or either of the two divisions of Aberdeen has a larger number of voters than what then existed in the whole of Scotland; its forty-five members, thirty for the counties and fifteen for the burghs being then elected by about two thousand voters,

and they were so easily managed that Dundas said he could keep them in his pocket.

“Popular representation was unknown, and election was a farce.” Clustering a number of unconnected places, each with diverse interests together, was certainly not the beau ideal of a good constitution, but was rather an astute scheme to nullify the influence of each place. The burgh member for Montrose represented Brechin, Inverbervie, Arbroath, and Aberdeen, each burgh having by its Town Council a single vote, and was represented by one-fifth of a Member of Parliament, and the group was known as the Montrose burghs. Kintore, with only four resident Councillors, and with a revenue of £40 scots, had equal rights of representation with the city of Aberdeen with its population of thirty thousand.

The prizes of office in Church and State, the bench and bar, the army and navy, at home or abroad, in churches or schools—even the humblest post in the excise, or the janitor in a public building—were all reserved for Tories. Repression of opinion was carried to its utmost limit, and there resulted the appearance of almost entire political stagnation—but not of thought. As the religious life of the period ran mostly underground, so did the profession of what we would term the most moderate Liberalism. Although with greater liberality to men of letters than Pitt showed to his supporters, Dundas had made Burns an *exciseman*, with seventy pounds a year, yet exclusion from office, favour and patronage, for too free expression of opinion was the least punishment, as our national poet found to his cost. Spies in the pay of Government were employed to evoke, and note it, trials for sedition awaited it, and sentences of fines, imprisonment, or transportation resulted from it. The times of the Pilgrim Fathers, the sailing of the Mayflower, and the expatriation for conscience sake of Christians from their native soil seemed to have come again. And yet, even yet, the Covenanting spirit running in the blood, Scotchmen would not have been what they were and are, without an opposition. This had a few representatives in the higher classes, who were idolised by the lower classes as much as Dundas and those in office were hated, but it was largely supported by all Dissenters, whose firmly held religious opinions subjected them, not only to disfavour,

but to obloquy and persecution. Naturally this tended to make them Radicals of an advanced type, and also, and unfortunately, it tended to foster amongst them not a little bigotry and intolerance, for which society was really to blame more than they were, seeing they were more sinned against than sinning.

Owing to the exclusiveness of the upper classes, and their continued opposition to any amelioration of the condition of the masses, the times had indeed become perilous, when, as Mrs. Oliphant relates, Thomas Chalmers—so celebrated in after days as a second John Knox—could thus express himself: "The country bears with it every symptom of decay, a languishing trade, an oppressed tenantry, a rapacious gentry. . . I heave, with a secret aspiration of contempt for the unprincipled deceit, the mean hypocrisy of our dignified superiors. . . They are not only a disgrace to rank, but a disgrace to humanity. It would be well to abolish that putrid system of interest which threatens to extinguish all the ardours of a generous and patriotic sentiment, to adopt a more just conduct to inferiors."

If Chalmers, dwelling so near the centre of Scottish civilization, could speak thus, what would he have said had he known the state of matters in the distant outlying counties, where Dissenters, in religion, or from the political opinion of the Laird were tabooed, and were not allowed to apply for farms, or even employment, in the district! No wonder that persecution of this kind, so mean, undignified, unmanly and bigoted should have produced alienation in democratic Presbyterians, endowed with an equal education in their parish schools with their superiors in rank.

The *odium theologicum* was at the time a virulent epidemic, and the potent healing remedy of toleration had not yet been discovered. Dissenting chapels had to be built in lanes or closes, or if in a public street the entrance was from the back, that members might not be insulted or hustled and molested on their way to worship.

In the midst of "the dead sea of Moderatism" around them, the deep spiritual convictions of the Aberdeenshire Seceders made them, in the opinion of their easy-going neighbours, a most intractable race, always regulating their conduct by something which they called "conscience" and principle. Here is an illustration :

Robert Morgan, a small farmer, was an extremely regular attender at Craigdam; although he had some nine or ten miles to travel to it. He was a very plain man, well advanced in years, and used to ride to the kirk with a tether turned up on the saddle behind him, so that during the service his beast might get a bite and a rest on the waste land that then lay around the kirk—the considerate man that he was. Riding thus one Sabbath he was overtaken by a smart young gentleman farmer, on a fine pony and at a brisk trot, on his way to the parish church of Old Meldrum. Drawing up a little he saluted Robert—"Ye'll be for the kirk, I suppose? ye've a far wye to gang, man!" "Aye, a gey bit." "But ye've a chapel gey near you"—meaning the Episcopal chapel at Meiklefolia—"is nae the minister there a good preacher?" "I dinna ken, Sir, I never heard him." "Od! that's queer, man, and you sae near him, I should think he micht do wi' you—he pleases a' the gentry." "That's nae ony better a sign o' him!" "Ow, what! do you think nane o' the gentry will get to heaven?" "Na! na! it's no said that nane o' them will get, but it is said that '*not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble will get.*'"

The democratic principles of the Seceders were not political—they were religious, and were derived from their acquaintance with the Bible, and they believed that "a man's a man for a' that" long before Burns uttered it. In perilous times their loyalty to Government—vainly endeavoured to be aspersed by the Duke of Argyle at the time of the Porteous Riot in 1736—was clearly proved and admitted, and from that day to this, in all dark and trying periods, as at this time of Henry Dundas's reign, they were the firm friends of all measures which helped on civil and religious liberty, and the promoters of these could confidently depend on them. Their principles might run underground, but from them flowed the fountains of liberty.

In those days any attempt at free speech, any talk of public reformation, anything said which might be construed as tending to bring the King and Parliament into contempt, laid the speaker open to a charge of high treason. And in 1795 the Seditious Meetings Bill, prohibiting any assemblage of more than fifty persons, save properly called meetings of Counties or Burghs, was passed in the House of Commons

by 266 to 51, not without strong opposition in the principal towns of Scotland.

Whoever dares to attack strong institutions does so with a halter round his neck. So few will ever be found to denounce abuses, to advocate alterations, or attempt innovations but men of more spirit than prudence, of more sincerity than caution, of warm, eager and impetuous tempers. Consequently as Dr. Paley says, "If we are to wait for improvement till the cool, the calm, the discreet part of mankind begin it, till Church authorities solicit, till councils, governors or ministers of state propose it, we may be sure that without the interposition of Him with whom nothing is impossible, we may remain as we are till the renovation of all things."

As Professor Masson says, "It was a country without political life, without public meetings, without newspapers, without hustings; could any enduring existence be led in such a set of conditions, could any good come out of it?" And yet, as he says, it was a very jolly time, for lairds, "moderate" ministers, provosts, baillies, and generally for people in power. Certainly it produced quite a remarkable crop of eminent men, and memorably good stories. Then, men dressed in a little brief authority, rushed in where angels would now fear to tread. A product of the time, our Aberdeen Baillie Duthie, was in office, when a porter whom he had employed was found fault with by him; and in reply, the porter gave the Baillie a good bit of his mind, called him no end of uncomplimentary terms, and as Tennyson would phrase it "pelted him with opprobrious epithets." Next day on his way to the Court, the Baillie espied the porter on the Plainstones in Castle Street, and telling Simon Grant, his officer, to arrest him, in a few minutes the astonished porter found himself in the dock, facing the irate Baillie, who thus addressed him. "Noo't I've got you here, my mannie, wi'd ye jist say to me enoo' fat ye said yesterday? an' my certy! bit I'se sort ye!" Here history is unfortunately silent as to the reply of the porter. It is likely that he was discreet, and that the Baillie had the best of it in the circumstances, and had his innings for the time.

That porter was a true type of the Aberdonian character,

finding out long before Carlyle said, that "if speech was silvern, silence was golden; deep as eternity, while speech was shallow as time," and garrulous old fellow though he was, adding "one might erect a statue to silence." If so, this porter might have served as the Aberdonian granite model. John Wesley said of Aberdonians, "they were swift to hear, slow to speak, not slow to wrath." Dr. Masson in 1864, says, "they are a population of Saturday Reviewers in a crude state." Dr. Stark compares the native character to "a burning mountain covered with snow," and others have agreed that they are "beggars to think, but take good care not to squander their thoughts."

Prudent man! this porter did not then throw away his pearls, knowing full well that if in opposition to the powers that be it was dangerous, and knowing well also that there was a time for everything under the sun. The good old Scotch saying:—

"Sen vord is thrall and thoct is free,
Keip veill thye tonge I consel the,"

was acted on by the porter. But self-contradictory although it seems, not only for people in power, but for the general community, it appears to have been "a jolly time." In the dark days of slavery nothing so pleased the planters as to hear the sounds of mirth and revelry in the huts of their slaves. So long as this continued they believed themselves safe, and to promote it they provided a liberal allowance of rum. And as all men on the face of the earth are of one blood, just so in Scotland,—if Henry Dundas the virtual king, was a despot, and his tyrannical despotism made Edinburgh a Whig city and Scotland a Radical country, his prime minister was Whisky-toddy, and for banishing thought, and drowning care, was there ever his equal? If there were no public meetings allowed in the city, there were plenty of private ones, where the prime minister was present and freely accessible. County Club Assemblies; Elections, where immense assemblies were treated to good cheer, and would not disperse until they were thoroughly soaked; Synod and Presbytery dinners; Bachelor, Benedict and Regimental balls for the select, and for the rank and file of the citizens any amount of sociality at the taverns.

There were nine Mason Lodges whose secret word for

convivial meetings was well known to be "*Fork out!*" There were many opulent Friendly Societies:—the Narrow Wynd, Shiprow, Shipmasters, Wigmakers, Dyers, Independent Friends, True Blue Gardeners, and others. The Gardeners had an annual procession through the town dressed in proper insignia, and to the great delight of juveniles had an Adam and Eve as natural as life studies. They processed to the Aulton, were honourably received by the convener and corporations who "drank a glass with them," and as the papers of 1787 say, "they returned to dine and spend the evening with decent mirth and hilarity." In this far off distant time the picture looks pleasant; for the glamour of distance lends enchantment to the view, and this sort of thing was encouraged because it kept down thought on more serious subjects. But as population increased the shoe pinched more and more. The advance of Education demanded Reform, and that rudely disturbed the existing order of things. No sooner was inquiry made than rottenness was detected, and then this conviviality was put a stop to by the Government Inspector when the management of these societies was looked into.

There was the most antiquated Guildry with its celebrated Wine Fund, somewhat mythical and shadowy, but now solidly represented by the lands of Skene and others; and the "Incorporated Trades" with its sevenfold proverbial hospitality, neither shadowy nor mythical, but tangible and widely experienced, each trade having convivial meetings of its own, and also in union with the others at an annual assemblage of all the notables in Aberdeen. The funds being admirably managed, its accumulated wealth enabled it with a free hand to eclipse all Dean Ramsay's stories of Scottish hospitality. It had a public-house of its own; it brewed potent ale for the citizens; its very snacks of "bread and cheese" at committee meetings had strange and staggering effects; and if at convivial meetings it did not provide an attendant to unloose the neckties of those who fell under the table, it did better, for as advancing years brought increasing wisdom, it provided comfortable lairs for its guests on their final decease; killing them with kindness, burying them with profit, and with tenderest care, and for a small consideration, now undertaking to keep their memories evergreen.

There was the Society of Advocates, and of Writers, each with "recherché" dinners, and the Medical Society, which discussed more than dry bones:—The Philosophical Society, originally instated in 1758 as the "Wise Club," following the example of the clerics met in the "Lemon Tree," and with the "prime minister" and Professor Blackie both present, their dry and abstruse discussions became both naturally and spiritually luminous and brilliant after supper; the ancient Pynours, (*vulgo* the Shore Porters, traditionally reported to have discharged the cargo from Noah's Ark), who by imbibing their appropriately named malt liquor at proper times, and rising early in the morning became "healthy, wealthy, and wise." All classes being represented, besides all these was there not a demoniac Society, which was designated the *Hell-Fire Club?* Verily, there was!

And it would be unpardonable to omit the Town Council, whose membership was choice and select, while its stock of wines, etc., under the charge of John Home was large and comprehensive. Has he not been represented as singing thus:—

"In guid times auld, when days were cauld,
 Wi' sleet, an' sna', an' a' that,
 The Council board was aye weel stored
 Wi' something nice, an' a' that.
 An' a' that, an' a' that,
 Wi' sherry, port, an' a that:
 Aft Baillies spak' wi' draps o' that
 Like Solomons, an' a' that."

To Aberdeen, nay to the world at large, the loss of these drops of wisdom so bottled up,—these lights of knowledge and learning so carefully shrouded under the Council bushel is simply inconceivable. One consolation remains, that it is very questionable whether the wisdom could have been drawn by wild horses, steam pumps, or even modern reporters, who by means of pen and pencil now draw everything, imaginative or real. Wherever the post of danger was, that is, of course, wherever knives and forks were being plied, and liquor of a fiery nature was flowing, there the Magistrates, under whose wings safety was secured, were bound to be present. Society required it, patriotism and devotion to civic duty enjoined it, and so in the spirit of martyrs they willingly sacrificed themselves for the interests of the community.

Upon every business of the slightest importance the city purse was available, and was freely drawn upon for conviviality; a stingy Treasurer was, if possible, worse than a Dissenter: and to the economists and Trades' Councillors of that day, life must have been one continual purgatory, hardly worth living.

Last century Town Councils managed to mix private enjoyments with public duties very much more than would now be considered proper. When the Magistrates and Town Council of Edinburgh were planning the new town, they met for the consideration of the scheme in the Star and Garter tavern, and there the Rev. Dr. Webster met them at dinner, in order to give them the benefit of his extensive knowledge and great powers of calculation; and it may also be added, his great ability for stowing away strong liquor in his capacious corporation, he being able to carry the burden discreetly, even after all his companions were under the table, and quite helpless. He was a likeable, and even a loveable man, and so greatly venerated by his flock that they were blind to this failing, because fortunately he was "peaceable in his drink." One night, having extra calculations to make, he indulged even more freely than usual, and thus meeting with more than extra difficulties in his endeavours to find his way home, a friend met him, and said, "Ah! doctor, doctor, what would the Whigs say if they saw you in this state?" "Deed, sir, they wudna' believe their ain een," was the reply. Surely this was a striking testimony to the charity—which thinketh no evil.

Truly as Sir George Trevelyan writes:—

"We must revere our sires who were a mighty race of men,
For every glass of port we drink they nothing thought of ten;
They lived above the foulest drains, they breathed the foulest air,
They had their yearly twinge of gout, and nothing seemed to care."

The list of societies given is only a sample, there were many others ranging through all ranks, and allowing all classes to form themselves into congenial coteries; undisturbed by Forbes Mackenzie, they met in the inns at all seasons and hours. A similar state of things exists in Germany at present, where meetings of all kinds, literary and scientific, political and musical, religious and benevolent, announced from the press and pulpit, are held in beer

saloons, and where the consumption of Lager beer is something almost fabulous ; so much so, that one of their authors has characterised his countrymen as "beer barrels in the morning, and barrels of beer at night." If, as ambassadors tell us, some of the most important treaties in the world have been floated by champagne, it is no wonder that drink was the accompaniment of births, marriages, and funerals, of every business transaction, every rise in life, and almost every gathering. On the founding of any building, and the completion of every work, drink money was always looked for, over and above the regular payment. It was the fruitful source of many mad pranks, of outrageous conduct, of constant brawls, of much domestic misery, and great loss of reputation and life.

The boom of these Societies, of ancient existence, culminated about this time, and the inevitable reaction began by the formation of the Temperance Society. It had hard uphill work for many years, and but for the indomitable energy of its promoters, aided by the newly awakened intelligence caused by discussions on the Reform Bill, it would have sunk under the ridicule which it excited at first. Generation after generation had indulged in strong drink ; all classes had encouraged smuggling, and habits were formed which by heredity still injuriously affect society.

As an illustration of the hospitable manners and customs of the time, we find it stated in "*Robert Gordon: His Hospital*," that the Rev. Dr. Thom succeeded Dr. Cruden as parish minister of Nigg. Dr. Cruden was very hospitable and liberally dispensed drams in inclement weather. This was stopt by Dr. Thom, and a fisher-wife said of him, "Aye, aye, maister Tam's a fine preacher, Betty ; nae doot, nae doot, 'oman ! but Dr. Cruden's dram, tho' it was sma', wis aye sure, my lass !"

And now, these rocks and shoals having been put down on the chart, we note that in 1801 the office of Distributor of Stamps for Aberdeen and Kincardine Shires became vacant, and as apart from its emoluments it would bring customers, Mr. Brown became one of the candidates for the appointment. Seeing how patronage was then administered, it will not be wondered at although patrons made

the very utmost of the appointments they conferred, and that the terms were somewhat strange and unsatisfactory. The previous holder, Mr. Auldjo, who kept the Stamp Office in his house in the Upperkirkgate, and whose son was the author of "*The Ascent of Mont Blanc*"—had received the appointment, subject to an annual payment of £180 to Provost Duncan, his predecessor. And the very hard bargain was now attempted to be driven by Ferguson of Pitfour, the county M. P., that Mr. Brown should receive only five-twelfths of the income, the remainder to be divided between the nominees of the patron, a Mr. and Mrs. Durno, and Mr. and Mrs. Auldjo, and their assignees. Mr. Brown having represented that the large annuity for four lives was unduly burdensome, but that the introduction of assignees was simply intolerable—this last was departed from, and he was appointed, giving a cautionary bond of £3000 for his intromissions, signed by Dr. William Dyce, James Chalmers, the Printer, and James Ferguson of Kinnmundy, his brother-in-law. But on the first settlement of accounts, when it was proposed to disallow his office expenses, and to take from him the seven-twelfths of the gross profits (which amounted to about £430), he very properly resented and resisted this. His idea of the value of the appointment was a shrewd and thoroughly commercial one; he was willing to pay £160 per annum for the office, or resign it on receipt of £120 per annum. In this dispute the much respected Mr. Irvine of Drum was chosen arbitrator with full powers, and to Mr. Brown's glad relief, it was settled that after deduction of £80 per annum for office expenses, the Durno's were to receive £32, and the Auldjo's £24 per annum, thus entirely discarding the absurd proportionate payment of unearned increments to these parties, and making the appointment one which could bear examination a little better! So much did the use of stamps increase in Aberdeen, that in twenty years after it was more than four times its then amount.

William Farquhar, who had charge of the stamp department for about thirty years, was said to have been an original character. His rude, but effective method of checking the sale was by keeping each description of stamps in a separate drawer, and as they were sold, putting in the cash received for them—the drawer thus checked itself.

It was in August, 1801, that Forbes Frost, then a boy of twelve, the son of a gardener at Dudwick in Buchan, entered as an apprentice. He rose afterwards to be a partner, and for many years prior to his death in 1845, was the practical steersman of the "Book-stall."

It has been already mentioned that the development of a stationery business was sadly hindered by all account books having to be procured from Edinburgh, or the paper sent there to be ruled to the desired pattern. Mr. Brown was already a bookbinder; he was desirous to manufacture account books, and he aspired to be a papermaker also. So, along with Mr. Chalmers, this last business was started at the Craiglug, in 1804, but by the action of the tidal water the manufacture proving unsuccessful, the buildings were sold in 1807 to the Devanha Brewery Co. The business was carried on under the firm of Brown, Chalmers & Co. (and the late Charles Chalmers, of Monkshill, served as an apprentice, but forsook it for the more congenial, and, to him, lucrative legal profession). The engines and apparatus were purchased by the then proprietor of Culter Mills (a Lewis Smith, who died in 1819), while the premises were purchased by William Black, of the Gilcomston Brewery, who originated the Devanha one.

Like a true wife, who has her husband's interest at heart, the thrifty, prudent, yet energetic Mrs. Brown came to the rescue. She purchased a ruling machine from Benjamin Fleet, of London, for £35, and her receipt bears that this "includes instructing her in *the art of ruling.*" (Parenthetically, and simply to save the reader from interjecting it, was it not dog-cheap at the price? For how many women, wives, and mothers would gladly pay for more than this to acquire this practical and dearly loved power?) Being the first machine of the kind north of Edinburgh, its working was kept as secret as possible, and certainly, it was far more so kept than most secrets entrusted to females. It was placed in an attic, under lock and key, and the strictest surveillance kept over its working, lest any one should see it; and there, assisted by Margaret Edwards, her domestic servant, whose wages were £5 per annum; at early morn, and dewy eve, Mrs. Brown, for years, kept the ruling lines straight in Aberdeen. All honour to her! long before her husband was known in the gates, or sat amongst the magistrates as

their chief, she, adorned in a meek and quiet spirit, through good works, ruled well in every department committed to her, and by example taught others. Is it any wonder that her husband praised her, and that her children for generations still call her blessed! In all the relations of life she was respected and honoured as a noble woman, a faithful helpmeet, and a godly mother, with quiet, yet firm traits of religious principle, and a Bunyan-like piety, possibly the inheritance from a female ancestor, Mrs. Jean Chalmers, who lived a hundred years previously. Her pious BRIEF ACCOUNT *how the Lord was pleased to let me see my lost estate in Adam, and some of the motions and strivings of His spirit upon the heart of a stubborn and rebellious sinner, and that from my youth until now* [1710], has been lovingly preserved and privately printed by one of her descendants. And it was well worth printing. Apparently it has been printed *verb. et lit.*: for the whole sixteen pages, 8vo, form one continuous paragraph without a single break! Since the publication of Bunyan's autobiography there have been few such introspective, heart-searching confessions given to the world.

Considering—that Jean married her cousin-german, the Rev. James Chalmers, of Dyke, who in 1726 was forcibly and notoriously intruded by the Town Council as an Aberdeen minister, in spite of the opposition of the Synod, and even of the Assembly, because it was the first clear case of a breach of the Treaty of Union and a wanton invasion of the rights of the Church as by law established—it is refreshing to think that in the darkest and murkiest times, the streams of divine grace may run underground; and that the seed to serve Him never fail, and are nourished by unseen influences.

It is difficult to realise now the interest which this bold procedure on the part of Mrs. Brown excited in the then small community, and specially amongst the other booksellers. But so long as it was considered necessary the secret was well kept, and the business so prospered that another larger and finer machine had soon to be procured, which cost £50, and extra assistants, including her son William, had to be trained. Then an errand boy, James

Brownie, was taught, and so it continued until other machines having been introduced, and Brownie having the misfortune to lose his leg, the flourishing business was ultimately handed over to him, and for many years he was the principal ruler to the "trade." Latterly he became a slave to opium eating, keeping a lump always beside him, and continually nibbling away at it as if it had been liquorice, and paying, in days and nights of unmitigated misery, the unutterable fearful penalties which this vice exacts from its votaries.

Before he became an entire wreck, bodily and mentally, he had engaged as an assistant a boy named James Emslie, who had sometimes to act as a keeper at night, when Brownie had taken an extra dose, which seemed to act on him as a stimulant, and not a narcotic, and fearful nights they were. To this boy, Mr. Frost formed a strong attachment, and got him apprenticed to D. Chalmers & Co. as a printer, stipulating that he should always be the messenger between the printers and the "Book-Stall." On the expiry of his apprenticeship Emslie went to London, soon got into the employment of the Bank of England, where he speedily rose to be the head of their stationery and printing department, every Note having to pass under his inspection, and this year (1892), he has retired with the respect of all the officials, and with a valuable pension in return for his long and faithful service. Of course, he attributes his success in life, first, to his having been born in Aberdeen; next, to oatmeal and the Shorter Catechism; and last, but not least, to his connection with "*Brown's Aberdeen Book-Stall.*"

As has been already said, the clubs in Aberdeen were numerous, and traces of them are frequently met with. In these days of a cheap, daily, almost hourly press, the clubs have died of pure inanition. Had the modern reporter been in existence then, what a flood of light would have been thrown on the social life of the period! Here is an unconsidered trifle which points out the characteristics of some men of the time, and all well known.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MOGUL CLUB.

AN ADDRESS TO BAILLIE LITTLEJOHN.

To be said or sung at their first full meeting in Widow Anderson's.

Tune—"Away with Melancholy."

Sir Baillie, Sir Baillie, I'll tell ye, I'll tell ye,
That your head to the ancients belongs ;
Father Care you have scared,
Chained Old Time by the beard—
May you long have your jests and your songs,
Sir Baillie.

Bank Sandy, Bank Sandy, so quiet and handy,
Why yours is a mystified plan ;
Yet wonders are wrought,
And would you take thought,
You might still be a marrying man,
Bank Sandy.

Friend Homer, Friend Homer, I mean no misnomer,
Do you know?—I don't know if 'tis slander—
But they say you declare,
Look confounded and stare,
Pop puns, and dash *double entendre*,
Friend Homer.

Jolly James, Jolly James, when the dreamer of dreams
Calls his worm-eaten scarecrows to battle,
Let *Soup Maigre* alone,
We'll soon bring him to bone,
Mighty Mars ! how we'll carve his lean cattle,
Jolly James.

Brother Mill, Brother Mill, what ! a devotee still ;
O how few have the grace to repent !
To St. Andrew and John,
Your devotions are known,
And in time you'll be crowned for a saint,
Brother Mill.

Rambling Willie, Rambling Willie, you're a curious billie,
Had the poet the skill to define you ;
Both good humoured and trusty—
Yet if once you get crusty,
Ev'n old Dickie himself wont divine you,
Rambling Willie.

Dr. Sage, Dr. Sage, thou bright gem of the age!
 Sent by Jove this dark orb to enlighten ;
 Dare we venture to gaze ?
 So effulgent your rays,
 Ten to one our dull wits you would frighten,

Dr. Sage.

Daft Lyall, Daft Lyall, when you entered on tryal,
 To pass muster you'd no cause to doubt ;
 You're as truly a brother
 As one pea to another ;
 But I pray you remember the Gout,

Daft Lyall.

According to the Rev. James Hall in his *Travels in Scotland*, Lon. 1807, 320, this is how some Scotchmen conducted themselves: "Though the Aberdonians be remarkably hospitable at their own houses, they still keep up the fashion of periodical clubs; and some of them meet together like the common tradesmen of London, at a public-house every night. I was amused with a droll anecdote of two of these social men: Baillie Burnett and Baillie Littlejohn. These two, who were dear friends, met every night in the week at a tavern, from which they seldom stirred till they could not get home without a contrivance. What first failed Baillie Littlejohn was his tongue, what failed first in Baillie Burnett was his legs. Baillie Littlejohn, therefore, about two or three in the morning, would take Baillie Burnett on his back, who if it was necessary, as it sometimes was, could inquire at a watchman, or any one, the way home."



CHAPTER VII.

“Great ark of our freedom ! the Press we adore—
Our glory and pride are in thee,
A voice thou hast wafted to earth’s farthest shore—
The shout of the brave and the free !
The slave’s galling fetters are burst by thy might,
The empire of reason is thine,
And nations rejoice in the glorious light
Which flows from a fountain divine.”

DAVID MELVILL, whose shop was at the “end of the Broadgate,” and who died in 1658, was the first distinctive bookseller in the city, although a “stationarius” to sell the books required was one of the usual officials at all universities. But our David had a wider public than the students, and must have been an enterprising man, for many of the earliest publications were printed specially for him, and at his expense. At his death, his spirit and enterprise seems to have ceased for about a hundred years afterwards.

Edward Raban, our first printer (1622 to 1650), had his first printing shop “above the meill mercat,” on the north side of the Castlegate. If we may judge from the number of books printed by him, and considering that he had only one man as an assistant, he must have been extremely industrious. On Melvill’s death, his “bueth” or shop was taken by Raban, as a convenient place for the sale of Almanacs, or “Prognostications,” which he originated in 1623, and which became so famous that 50,000 copies were sold all over the Kingdom : and so popular did they become, that they were pirated and sold as Aberdeen Almanacs by printers in Edinburgh and Glasgow, up to 1684, when the pirated copies were interdicted by an act of the Privy Council of Scotland.

But Raban composed and printed his *Prognostications* with brains ; (the first one appeared in 1623, the same year in which Shakespeare’s Plays were first published)—and so did his successors. And when the Southern pirates found

the hope of their gains was lost by piracy, the pirates in Edinburgh acquired from the proprietors, by purchase, a license to reprint the *Aberdeen Almanack, verb et lit.*, which was continued with mutual profit to both parties for upwards of twenty years,—during all which time Aberdeen was verily the capital of Scotland and thus of a considerable territory far beyond the original twal' miles.

For from it issued the decrees which regulated the weather, and the events of the year, as determined by the editor, composers, and printer's devils of the *Aberdeen Prognostications*. They advised when farmers should sow and when they should reap, when men should take certain medicines (query, had they a commission on this?) and when they should be bled; in short, if a man regulated his conduct as directed, he was safe from peril and sure of prosperity for a whole year, and all at the small charge of one penny Scots!

On Raban's arrival in Aberdeen, he dropt his distinctive sign of the "A.B.C.," used by him in Edinburgh and also in St. Andrews, for the more pretentious one of "The Townes Armes," which was long continued by his successors; and *à la Scottice*, he took the quaint title of the *Laird of Letters*, being both an author as well as a printer.

The succession of Townes Printers was as follows:—

1622—1650 Edward Raban, *The Psalter, &c., &c.*

1650—1661 James Brown, mostly small books.

1662—1666 John Forbes, sen., *The Cantus, &c.*

1668—1704 John Forbes (son), two editions of the same.

1704—1710 Margaret Cuthboord (widow of the last).

1710—1736 James Nicol (who married her daughter).

From the commencement of the art of printing in Aberdeen, 1622 down to 1736, about four hundred and seventy-six specimens of the work of these six printers have been found and chronicled, of which Raban contributes 208, Brown 40, Forbes (*Senior*), 18, Forbes (*Junior*), 109, Cuthboord 20, and Nicol 81, and it is not unlikely that others will yet come to light.

1736—1764 James Chalmers, founder of the *Journal*.

1764—1810 James Chalmers, Jun., the enlarged *Almanack* in 1771.

1810—1854 David Chalmers, son.

1854—1876 James and John Chalmers, sons of the last, when the business was transferred to a company.

For a long time these printers, while quite ready to print books at the author's risk, were often the proprietors and publishers of the books they printed, and all seem to have sold many of the productions of their press direct to chapmen, and to the public, without the intervention of booksellers. They seem to have enjoyed a sort of practical monopoly of producing and disposing of books, which was broken in upon by Robert Farquhar, who died 1753, "quondam Bibliopola," aged 61, and is buried in St. Nicholas Churchyard, and who was succeeded in business by a nephew, Robert, some of whose family rose to distinction in the Navy; also by Francis Douglas about 1748, who, with a William Murray, a literary druggist, set up a printing and publishing house in 1750.

In such a bookish place as Aberdeen, the seat of two universities, there must have been, and there were, many individuals who made at least part of their living by the sale of books; and on the title-pages of numerous books published last century, we find a good many names of parties who were not professed booksellers, were "merchants," but yet had books specially printed for them, and at whose shops they were sold. Nothing is known of John Scroggs, Broadgate, 1759; George Fowler and Alex. Cheyne, 1764; George Johnstone, printer, and John Fotheringham, merchant, 1769; J. Menzye, 1770; or W. Coutts, 1775; but simply that certain volumes were printed for, or sold by them. It is likely that they were of the nature of cometary bodies or irregular stars, attracted out of their usual course by religious or philanthropic influences, who had thus wandered into the constellation of booksellers and disappeared again into the region of dark oblivion.

Wm. Clark, ironmonger, Castle Street, 1816; and Jas. Clark, clothier, Broad Street, 1833, were well known and much respected agents for Bible or Tract Societies.

But there was one highly respectable firm which began before Francis Douglas, 1748-69,¹ or A. Thomson, Broadgate, 1752; or J. Boyle, head of the Broadgate, opposite Marischal College, 1760-1806;² or "the cripple votary of Parnassus," the "little decrepit body with some abilities,"

¹The author of *Rural Love*, 1759; the printer of Beattie's *Poems*, 1761, and the writer of *A Description of the East Coast of Scotland*, 1782.

²Who published an edition of the poets, in 24mo, and failed in business in 1806.

as Burns called Andrew Sheriffs¹ (1780)—which began even before Mr. Brown was born, and continued well into this century, leaving very few landmarks in their career, and from which much more literary work might have been expected, namely, Alexander Angus & Sons. True, their name is conjoined with others, on books issued about the end of the century, but there is little sign of any ventures in publication of their own, save *Scougal's Reflections*, 1765, and a very ill printed and worse edited first issue of Spalding's *Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland*, 1624-1645—which attracted attention thirty years afterwards. The founder, Alexander (b. 1721, d. 1802), a son of the minister of Kinellar, author of "*An Explanation of the Shorter Catechism, by Question and Answer*, 1770, began life as a bookseller about 1774, and thus was one of the earliest booksellers, as apart from printers. He had a numerous family, most of whom died young, but the sons, John and Andrew, were bred to the father's business, and the firm continued to exist until the death of John in 1828, when the last survivor, Andrew, gave up business, and died two years after at his villa of Angusfield, near Rubislaw Quarries. He had bought this property before 1784. From a volume entitled "Present State of Husbandry in Scotland," Edinburgh, 1784, we quote:—

I called upon Mr. Angus, late bookseller in Aberdeen; for men of all ranks here are struck with the enthusiasm of farming; and in no place of the known world is such enthusiasm more necessary than about the town of Aberdeen. This gentleman obtained in a feu, some miles from the town, about forty acres of the same stony muir, and pays a very high feu-duty, no less than £25 Sterling. I met him in the fields attending his labourers carrying off stones. The largest stones were carried off in a slip, drawn by four stout oxen, much larger than what are commonly bred in this country. This improver is not only full of enterprise, but skilful in conducting his operations in the best manner. As trenching with spade and mattock is slow and expensive, Mr. Angus turned his thoughts upon doing it with the plough. He began with clearing the ground from every large stone upon the surface and under it, which work alone cost him £10 Sterling per acre. He then set to work a strong plough drawn by six capital oxen, and took so deep a furrow as to be equal to a trenching.

So plentiful were the stones, that more than a hundred

¹ The author and publisher of *Jamie and Bess*, and also a volume of his own poems. (See p. 12.)

years after, the walls of the garden are eight feet wide, and now the ground is fruitful.

This long continuance of eighty-six years in business is extremely uneventful. The partners seem to have been content to pursue the even tenor of their way, undistinguished by enterprise in their business, or by entering into public life or civic work of any kind. Douglas, and Boyle, and Sheriffs also, all bulked largely in our local annals, but not so Angus & Sons, so that one is thankful for some human notice of their personality, like this in a letter of Baillie John Burnett, of Elrick, to a friend in 1791, where he says :—

“Your friend, Jackie Angus, is now the greatest Beau in town ; he has got the showiest shop in town—a large new door, and two of the very largest windows in the City.”

(Thanks, Baillie, for this slight glimmer in the gloom !) The windows would be about 6 feet by $4\frac{1}{2}$, with twelve panes of glass, and the shop was situated in the Narrow Wynd, on the site of which the town-house now stands. Here the booksellers did mostly congregate, and it might have been considered a local Paternoster Row, for in addition to that of Angus & Sons, it contained the shops of Mr. Chalmers, Mrs. Burnett, and Mr. Stevenson. In the same block of buildings, but with a window directly facing the door of the Town-house, and entrance from Huxter Row was the shop of the Misses Thompson, daughters and successors of A. Thompson bookseller, which was the grand emporium of books for the young in the early years of the century.

Angus's shop was long a well-known lounge of the better class citizens, where the local news was discussed and gossip circulated. There were wits, wags, and satirists amongst their customers, one of whom became notorious for the tricks he played on the citizens, for in 1813, there was said to have been picked up on the floor of the shop a mysteriously dropt manuscript, yclept, “*THE BOOK OF THE TIMES : OR THE WICKED OF THE CITY* pointed out, and of those whom the wicked tormented.” This yielded a vast fund of amusement to those who were privileged to peruse it, and copies were taken of it, but it was never published, for if it had, it might have produced an abundant crop of law suits, many of the citizens being treated in no lenient spirit. This peculiar form of satire—if it did not originate in, has been very prevalent

in Aberdeen—as witness the “Guessing Glass,” “Squib,” “Pirate,” “Mirror,” “Shaver,” the “Chameleon,” and the



productions of James Bruce. And oatmeal being a heat producer, and the source of that “wut” and humour for which the Scotch are celebrated, this degenerate and dangerous form

of it may have originated in an undue indulgence in oatmeal, unqualified by the excellent corrective of the Shorter Catechism. Let it be noticed that this wicked brochure appeared four years previous to a similiar one, the idea of which was thus borrowed from us, in the celebrated "Chaldee Manuscript," which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine in 1817, and, setting all the Edinburgh citizens by the ears, it had to be suppressed.

Meantime, Mr. Brown was not allowing the grass to grow under his feet. If he was pushing business, it went ahead as fast as he could well follow it. That it was remunerative, is evident by his numerous investments; in house property (in Castle Street and Broadford), in a Tontine and other companies, in a Manganese Quarry at Persley, which though soon exhausted, yielded a profit of £450 to each of the four partners. Among other ventures, was the purchase of shares in the London Shipping Company, which paid well. And as the communication with London has become so changed within living memory, it may be worth while briefly to notice how it was then conducted. A voyage to London was so serious an affair then, that most prudent Scotchmen made their wills before they set out. Even a voyage to Edinburgh was made the subject of a small volume in 1825, by Alex. Connon, merchant in King Street, a cannie and worthy Aberdonian, with "moral reflections" thereon. And little wonder, for, with an excess of honesty unknown and incomprehensible at present, the handbills announcing the sailing of the London smacks were issued without the slightest attempt at gilding the philosophic pill. They were enough to deter all but the resolute and determined. Instead of representing a vessel in full sail, gliding along over a smooth and unruffled sea, with her flags flying in a fair wind, they had a picture of a smack beating up against a head wind, in a stiff gale, with the waves breaking over her prow, the spray drenching her fore and aft, and formidable rocks looming right ahead; and this—before McIntosh had invented his waterproofs. The sight of it was enough to make one sea sick, and to induce those who had to make the voyage to call in a lawyer before sailing. No doubt, the main dependence of the Company for profits was on goods, but the many knowing ones in a Scottish and maritime city like Aberdeen, knew that the smacks were well built, well manned, and well found,

that the table was unequalled, that the whisky was cheap ($2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per gill), that the only dangerous part of the voyage was that between the Quay-head at Tarnty Kirk and the Girdleness; that once past that, if a storm arose, the beggars ashore were more to be pitied than they were, that if it was impossible to proceed, they could run in to any of the coast ports and lie till it blew over, living sumptuously every day; and the fare being three guineas, the longer the voyage was the better for them. The sea-dogs that they were, knowing nothing of the *mal de mer*, they took their summer holidays in this way, enjoying congenial society, before trips to Norway were invented. In a short voyage the Company scored a success, but if it lasted three weeks, the consolation which the manager gave to the directors was that the profits on the whisky consumed, largely mitigated, if it did not entirely cover, the loss on the provisions.

And now, having twisted this thrum into the thread of the narrative, we notice that on the death of Mr. Burnett, who had a circulating library, Mr. Brown entered into a partnership with his widow for working her library, and it being conjoined with his, the "United Public Library" numbered 52,000 volumes. Removed to a shop on the west side of Broad Street, it was placed under the charge of young Forbes Frost, who then got the privilege of selling stationery in it, and he cultivated this branch of business with profit to himself and satisfaction to his customers; indeed, rather more so than was quite agreeable to his employer, who began to fear a future rival in business.

However, this preference of him over one who had then been about twenty years in Mr. Brown's service, was deeply felt by David Wyllie. In his beautiful current hand, and in a model manner, he sent a most respectful remonstrance to Mr. Brown, but without avail. Hence the origin of a very thinly concealed hostility between these two assistants, which continued as long as they lived, and which, as both afterwards rose to honourable position, might, in their descendants have developed into rival civic factions—like the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Rome, or the Montagues and Capulets of Verona, without a Romeo and Juliet to dignify and ennoble it. Or it might have turned into a clannish feud between

the "great Frosts of the north" and their Wyllie rivals. For although Aberdeen had outgrown the village size, it had retained many of its village propensities, and so, much to the amusement of, and partly instigated by onlookers, the quarrel became a pretty little comedy, in which inuendos were used as stilettos, sarcastic remarks as daggers, and the deadliest weapon was that in common use at the period—a good round oath.

"Ah me! these terrible tongues of ours!
 We're not half afraid of their mighty powers!
 Do we ever trouble our heads at all
 Where the jest may strike or the hint may fall?
 The latest chirp of that "little bird,"
 That spicy story "you must have heard"—
 We jerk them away in our gossip rash,
 And somebody's glass of course goes smash."

The pity was that when both the principals had gone into the land of deep forgetfulness, the small and petty rivalry had not been buried with them, and the rejoicing is that it was much too late in our civilised era to permit of the quarrel developing into a blood feud, or a Sicilian vendetta; and although ill words were hurled at each other there was not heard the clash of the claymore between the rival clans.

In 1812, Mr. Brown's business was in full swing, requiring a numerous staff of assistants, and keeping the printing press busy; and demands being made that he should enter the Town Council and give the city the benefit of his services, his eldest son, William, was entered as an apprentice to the business, and regularly indentured.

As a clansman under the sign of the classic Homer, he determined to honour his chieftain, to please the professors and to benefit the students—not forgetting himself, by publishing a useful, and as he hoped, a popular edition of the immortal *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with the Greek and Latin text on alternate pages. To this he was mainly incited by the presence in Aberdeen of Ewan Maclachlan, the teacher of Old Aberdeen Grammar School, a young genius whose linguistic abilities and classical attainments rivalled those of any of the professors of the time; and he gladly undertook the office of Editor. A new fount of Greek type was ordered, but that was easier to procure than compositors to set it up.

At last, one man made himself competent to put the letters together mechanically, without any knowledge of the language; and it is said, that as the result of the years spent by him in this dry and uncongenial task, he ended his days in the Lunatic Asylum.

But as even Homer sometimes nods, so in this matter did Mr. Brown. A man he was "of cheerful yesterdays and confident to-morrows;" keen withal, and sharply shrewd, which was the secret of much success, yet being only mortal he failed to foresee the mighty changes and discoveries which came fast crowding into the coming years. Stereotyping being then unknown,—having faith in his patron classic, he printed thousands of copies, and filled his warehouses with huge bundles of them in sheets. But the text was full of crabbed contractions, bred out of the brains of labour—saving monkish scribes; the edition was superseded by others, and in the course of years was fairly swept out of the field by the cheap German editions which flooded the country forty years ago. The only consolation these bales afforded to one of Mr. Brown's degenerate successors, was that they were valued as waste, and the paper being good and genuine, the sheets did well for wrapping-up purposes, and in some cases positively induced a study of Greek, and galvanized a dead language into temporary life.

It is a proof of Mr. Brown's enterprise, that he was the first Aberdeen bookseller who bought copyrights: buying from Mr. Ross, organist of St. Paul's, his Musical Instruction Books, Exercises and Songs; and numerous School Books from teachers in the town—Mr. Watt, Mr. Welsh, Dr. Melvin, and others. He had secured the copyright of Principal Campbell's *Lectures*, of which two editions were issued, and the publication of which led to various replies and rejoinders being printed by local authors, and thus giving him the healthy exercise of a good run on a book, than which, to a bookseller, there is nothing more exhilarating. And a still larger venture was the issue of Campbell's *Translations of the Gospels*, in four volumes, 8vo, which had a large sale and came to a second edition.

Of Principal Campbell's merits it is superfluous to write. Of him the saying has come true that "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, and in his own house," for he was held in far more honour elsewhere than in

Aberdeen. Dr. Somerville says of him, "There was not any member of the General Assembly who was listened to with more attention, or who as a speaker was more successful in producing conviction. The closeness, the force, the condensed precision of his reasoning, exceed the power of description. Not a single superfluous word was used, no weak or doubtful argument introduced. Like a mathematical demonstration every topic produced accumulation of proof, and prepared his audience for the more complete assent to the conclusion drawn from it. His person and manner indicated such simplicity of character, such indifference to personal consequence or the interests of party, that it was impossible to deny him as much credit for the purity of his heart as for the transcendent excellence of his understanding."

In 1779 he published an address *On Popery*, and spoke out plainly and boldly for toleration in an intolerant age; saying, "Let Popery be as bad as ye will,—call it Beelzebub if you please. It is not by Beelzebub that I am for casting out Beelzebub, but by the Spirit of God . . . In the most unlovely spirit of popery, and with the unhallowed arms of popery ye would fight against popery." Sentiments like these were strange at the time, and required a brave man to utter them and a bold clear-minded man to defend them.

To the great delight of Congregationalists he held what was considered very low views as to the constitution of the Christian Church, affirming that it was a merely human and voluntary association, suggested by expediency and convenience, and ministers had no official character except so long as they held charges.

Clear and distinct as was his advocacy, not only of toleration, but of religious liberty, being joined in this by Principal Robertson and others, upon whom the lessons of history had not been lost, Campbell was equally firm in maintaining the rights of the Revolution Establishment in which it was his fortune to find himself. If the Divine right of kings to reign was a dearly cherished tenet of one Church, the Divine right of the present establishment to extensive support, power, privilege, and honour, was as dearly cherished by—in a worldly point of view, the more fortunate Church in which he was placed.

The publication of Campbell's *Ecclesiastical Lectures* by A. Brown & Co. was, as Dean Walker says, "a heavy blow

and a sore discouragement, and fell like a bomb-shell on the Scottish Episcopalians" of the period. For Campbell took his arguments from the common primitive and apostolic sources, and drew his weapons from their armoury. Up to the time of Constantine these seemed to show a process of evolution in the Church, in the adhesion first of the individual soul, and it might be that of his family—then of their junction in a congregation, then of their connection with a presbytery with a temporary chairman or moderator, then this became a diocese with a permanent bishop, and next with a primate claiming extensive jurisdiction. And in process of time he developed into a Pope reigning over the States of the Church, claiming universal rule, crowned with the triple coronet indicative of the Trinity, and now surmounted by Infallibility. Arguing from these premises, Campbell affirmed that the Scottish Bishops consecrated after the revolution "were solemnly made the depositaries of *no deposit*, commanded to be diligent in doing *no work*, vigilant in the oversight of *no flock*, assiduous in teaching and governing *no people*, and presiding in *no church*." Surely this was a poor idea of a spiritual church!

If his works are now dead, they lived and were widely influential then, when he was considered equal to Paley, and higher than Dr. Chalmers even long after. As the ever deepening clouds of oblivion gather over the departed, some luminous points shine through the gloom, and will help to keep him in the ranks of our eminent men: such as—he was a first-rate specimen of a moderate minister; as such, and as the successor of the evangelical John Bisset, he was, by his moderatism, the involuntary originator of the Seceders and the Voluntaries in Aberdeen; by his controversy on miracles with Hume he elevated debate into a fair and candid discussion for truth, and not a mere wrangle and combat for victory; he had the courage of his convictions, and could stand firmly in opposition to all his associates, for when they were all rabid against the proposal to repeal the persecuting statutes against the Roman Catholics, he was for the repeal of the acts and for toleration, even although the fickle mob smashed his windows for this, just as they smashed the windows of Mr. Bisset some forty years previously, because he was against a Popish Government.

Principal Campbell—or Prinkipal Campbell—as he was styled by his students, as a Scoto-logical and therefore a necessary consequence of his insistence on the hard Greek pronunciation of the letter c—was married to Grace Farquharson of the Whitehouse family, who, if somewhat hasty, was a good wife to him. She was an active superintendent of household affairs, “cumbered with much serving,” and on one occasion, preparing for a social party in their house, 49 Schoolhill, she collided with her husband, who was little of stature and meek in temper. She broke out with, “Oot o’ the wye, ye bodie! ye’re aye i’ the road in a steer.” “Well, Gracie,” said he, “if I were out of the way, maybe there would na be sae muckle steer.” This reminds us of the worthy Bishop William Skinner, who was of like meek temper, while Mrs. Skinner was not equally so, nor likewise. Entering the “Book-Stall” one day the couple came into collision with each other, and Mrs. Skinner exclaimed—“Deil speed ye, Bishop! ye’ve trampit on my taes!” “I’m very sorry, my dear,” said he, “.but surely you might have wished me a better wish, even though I did.”

With our now cultivated taste and our refined manners, the apparently harsh speech and the uncouth terms of the lady’s language would be considered improper. But it was not always so. Such was the common speech—known at present as “kailyaird literature”—of the Scotch, whose national motto is *Nemo me impune lacessit*. And did not Oliver Goldsmith write, “where will you find a language so prettily become a pretty mouth, as the broad Scotch?”

Ay! where? No doubt the matter spoken by the speaker to the hearer is of importance in the judgment, but apart from this, Ruskin characterizes the “braid Scots, as the sweetest, subtlest, richest, and most musical of all the living dialects of Europe.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“The finding of your *Ableman*, and getting him invested with the *symbols of ability*, with dignity, worship, (*worth-ship*), royalty, kingdom, or whatever we call it, is the business, well or ill accomplished, of all social procedure whatsoever in this world.”

SO says Carlyle—and amongst other symbols was the provostship of a city—the mode in which the community therein marked their choice of an *Ableman*, and so honoured him. In this “northern city cold,” before the year 1469, the choice was made by the whole citizens, in a head-court, and was freely expressed. After that period, some difficulty in getting representatives having been experienced, it was re-enacted by the Scots Parliament in 1474 that the old Town Council should elect the new one, and that the old and new should elect the magistrates; and the ancient primitive and democratic method of popular election, which had existed from prehistoric times, thus came to a close.

In 1591, Letters from James VI. under the Privy Seal were granted ordaining members of the Town Council to be elected yearly—but “to continue in office till their decease, or till found guilty of any fault or crime.” Vide Aberdeen Charter xxxvi.

In course of time, by inherent corruption, and the force of circumstances, the new rule became the fruitful source of manifold abuses, and by the ever-increasing complaints of the citizens of want of representation, of want of control, and of want of power to call their rulers to account in any way, it became evident that locally the business was ill accomplished—failure being the harvest of ignorance, as mismanagement is the father of misfortune. In Aberdeen, at the close of last century, it was intensified by the patent fact that the representation on the Police Board, in which the election was by the ratepayers, worked smoothly, and gave entire satisfaction to the citizens. Lord Cockburn in his *Memorials* claims for Edinburgh the first example of popular election, but he must have been ignorant of the

earlier example of Aberdeen, where it was the first popular choice of rate-imposers for a period of well nigh three hundred years.

How the power of self-election had operated in former days may be seen in the fact that during the sixteenth century four members of the family of Menzies ruled over the city for the long period of eighty-three years, and that almost continuously; and that from 1426 to 1634 the provost's chair was occupied no fewer than twenty-eight times by members of that family, and but for the Reform Bill of 1832 it seemed probable that a similar state of matters would again have occurred. For in the early years of this century, entrance into the Town Council was either the easiest or the most difficult thing possible—all depended on the entrants having friends already within it. Brains and ability in outsiders were sometimes desirable—under proper control—but otherwise they simply served as temporary stop-gaps. The poor man, who, by his wisdom, might be able to save a city, had very little chance indeed of doing so, if he was not connected with, or dependent on, the ruling family for the time.

In the Burgh Reform Report, procured by the persistence of the local member, Joseph Hume, aided by Lord Archibald Hamilton, and presented to the House of Commons in 1819, it is stated that—

“The old council elect their successors, by which means, it is not only possible, but it almost invariably happens, that by alternate elections of each other, the same party maintains possession of the council, to the entire exclusion of the rest of the burgesses. And although by the sett, fifteen out of nineteen members composing the council must retire annually, it appears by the return of members of council for the last twenty years, and by the evidence of the town clerk, that during said period Provost Hadden has been fifteen times in council; his partner Provost Brebner ten times; his brother Mr. Gavin Hadden ten times, etc., and that the majority of the council have been the same individuals during that time, and chiefly either relations or connections in business with Provost Hadden, who has been considered as the leader of the town council for the last twenty years—and this whether he was in or out of the council at the time.”

This paragraph conveys only a faint idea of the predominating influence which Provost Hadden exercised, and continued to exercise, for full forty years, from his entrance

to the Council in 1792, until the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832.

Besides those mentioned, here is a list of some other relations and connections in office from 1798 to 1819, with the number of years in which they served, and kept their seats warm for family successors:—his son Alexander, four years; his son James, three; his partner, Provost Leys, ten; his cousin Mr. Johnstone, ten; his relatives, Provost Jas. Young, nine; John Young, ten; Provost More, six; and Alexander More, six. The future services of these last two being lost for half the time by its having been proved before the Court of Session that along with John Rae, merchant, they two had combined to keep down the biddings at the roup of the shore dues in 1810. And this united family party had devoted adherents and supporters in the persons of Provost Fraser, for eleven years out of the twenty; Baillies Galen, eleven; Garden, ten; Lumsden, nine; McCombie, nine; and we must add our then Baillie Brown, seven years.

In 1783 a conference of Scottish Burgh delegates agitated for reform, and approached Dundas, who at once refused his aid, although and possibly because Henry Erskine with Sheridan and the opposition were active supporters. In 1792, awakened and desirous of stilling the rising storm, a Bill was brought in to regulate the mode of accounting for revenues in Burghs, but owing to riots and the fear engendered by the French Revolution, the Bill was withdrawn.

It is one of the difficulties of our time that we cannot transport ourselves into the old times and look upon the old government and the proposed changes as the old folks then did. John Ewen and the other Aberdeen Reformers were fifty years ahead of their day. As the law stood in 1785, and down to this time, 1819, the self-elected Magistrates were not only entitled to spend the public money in any way they thought proper without being obliged to account for it, but they were also entitled to contract debts, for which the Burgesses were personally liable. A Bill to remedy this was proposed in 1787, but never became an Act—it was considered as revolutionary as the sheep controlling the shepherd. In 1815, Wine and Entertainments cost £382 11s 1d., and from 1799 to 1818 these, along with travelling expenses, cost £6123 16s. Three bottle men were common. Statesmen like Pitt and Dundas thought no more of two bottles

of strong port than of two dishes of tea, and men who could tuck six bottles under their belt were to be met with. Take A. C. Hunter's account to Constable of what he allows to have been "a most dreadful day at Brechin Castle" in 1804. "It was one of the most awful ever known in that house. What think you of seven of us drinking thirty-one bottles of red champagne, besides Burgundy, &c., &c. Nine bottles were drunk after Maule had foundered, and of this Murray the London publisher had his share."

Up to 1810, things seemed to have gone smoothly enough in their Council management. The expense of the opening up of the new streets, which had purposely been kept in a separate account, had very far exceeded the estimates, and no statement of the expenditure had ever been submitted to the Council or the public, but only to a Select Committee, while there was an annual deficiency of upwards of £5000, and which was ever threatening to increase. This cloud on the horizon was a source of trouble to, amongst others, the shrewd Baillie Galen, who as an accountant was familiar with figures and money transactions. The city rulers might be able men, but they were not the only able men in the community. Members of Council once admitted soon acquired the lust of appropriation and the desire for secrecy. They said :

"What bus'ness has the vulgar rabble,
To ken what's done at Council table,
Or whether they keep books ava?
Or books be free from stain or flaw?
What signifies the debt's increasing?
It's no' on individuals pressing;
The wheels are aye kept tight and greasy,
And Councillors ride soft and easy."

The representative system, to be the safeguard of society, required popular election to unite all classes and interests, but instead of that, society had drifted into something like the old feudal system with its divisions into distinct classes—the governors and the governed, and the aim of the governors was to maintain their power by sharing it with their own relations or dependents, and by all means to keep the outside public in entire ignorance of their transactions.

In 1811, the stern pressure of financial reasons,—that ever

accompanying Nemesis which dogs the steps of rash unthoughtfulness,—broke in upon the family party with all the disagreeableness of a thunderclap at a pic-nic. And then, but only then, it was felt advisable to open the door of the Council chamber a little wider, in order to admit some new blood other than connections; and thus try to divide the growing and dangerous responsibility connected with the continual and increasing demand for, and outlay of money, and those “accommodation bills” which, vulture-like, actually began to make their appearance in the financing of a Town Council about this time.

Amongst the outsiders, there was one young fellow who, although only twenty-three years of age, had already made his mark in the city by his acknowledged uncommon smartness and ability. Of distinguished personal appearance, as his portrait in the Trades’ Hall shows, he was “ane o’ the wale o’ the toon,” and so might well be chosen by the Council. He was well connected—the son of a wealthy wine merchant—of a good family, resident for centuries in the district—one of whose ancestors had as Provost uplifted the banner of the city, and held it up in 1715 for the Pretender. And notwithstanding the change of dynasty, this banner having still inscribed on it the words “Toryism,” “Family Ascendancy,” and “Use and Wont,” curiously was yet upheld in Aberdeen. And so, for various reasons, his youth not being considered objectionable (for was not Pitt made Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four), and his antecedents being proper, Sandy Bannerman—the future Sir Alexander—was chosen as a Councillor in 1811 in the usual close manner. And he accepted the office, in ignorance that even then the city Treasurer had to borrow something like £4000 to pay the annual interest of the ever-increasing debt. In 1819, he said that had he known this and did not oppose it, he deserved to have his back whipped. Meantime he became one of the clique, his talents, success, and popularity, having fairly dazed his enemies and half-crazed his intimate friends.

But Sandy was by no means one of these sycophants who were content to obey the Provost’s call: the teachings of a century, containing in it two rebellions, a French Revolution with an unheard of and entirely new flag, which influenced so many young men in this country, had not been without effect on him. He had brains of his own, he could think

for himself, and was not content to run quietly in harness which galled him. He might have parodied the speech of Burke to Lord North in 1774, and said:—"I know the map of Aberdeen as well as the Provost; and I know that the path I take is not the road to preferment." In electing him the Council found they had caught a Tartar. He brought with him an entirely new atmosphere into the Council chamber. He was guilty of insubordination, of kicking over the traces, of speaking outside in Angus's shop of Council proceedings, of criticising his compeers, and actually of speaking for, and voting with—if not leading the minority—and thus after one year's service he, Jonah-like, was thrown overboard and not re-elected.

It was the most unwise step the party in power could possibly have adopted, if they wished to retain their ascendancy. His position in society, his intelligence, his ready pen both in prose and verse, his free speech, his courage and talents in debate, had marked him as the popular leader of the Whig opposition to the Tory Council. Had they retained him—poacher on their preserves though they considered him to be—perchance there was a possibility of turning him by blandishment and cajolery into a first-rate gamekeeper. But they had had enough of him, and he was discarded with marked contumely. When old age commences a lasting struggle with a fresh and vigorous youth with talents on his side, "every schoolboy" knows who will be the conqueror.

For twenty years after he kept them in boiling water as to their harbour management, which he got transferred to a new Board. In 1819 he stewed them in a Committee of the House of Commons regarding the concealing of debts, the over-assessments of taxes, the fabrication of minutes, and issuing accommodation bills, and gave the officials such a sweat as they had never before experienced in this world. And the war between him and the Council being *à l'outrance*, aided by Joseph Hume, and the young democracy, he so roasted the office-holders that, when the Reform Bill passed, the magnates of the city sunk into obscurity, and he became the idol of the period, and the popular first M.P. for the city. Of Sandy Bannerman it might have been said, as Mirabeau said of Robespierre, "that man will go far—he believes every word he says." If Pitt was considered the

greatest citizen in England, Bannerman was most surely believed to be the greatest citizen in Aberdeen.

But his popularity was no recommendation to him in the eyes of the civic rulers—quite the contrary. Their sentiments regarding him are depicted in *John Homes' Lament* :

There's yon teem, hungry looking brat,
That clashed an' sclaved an' a' that,
Fan he was here the ither year, a Councillor an' a' that—
An' a' that, an' a' that, oor bits an' sups an' a' that,
He raised a sough wi' Johnny Booth,
They'll baith get h—l an' a' that.

Such are the revenges which Time in its whirlgigs brings about; and the moral it teaches is—let Youth venerate Age, and let Age respect Youth. Not only was the honour of Knighthood conferred on him in 1851, but what is a thousand times more interesting to readers of the “Book-Stall,” he has been immortalized by Thomas Carlyle as “Herr Towgood”—the winner in marriage of the fair Margaret Gordon, the “Blumine” in *Sartor Resartus*. Little did the writer and some of the urchins, who managed to get one of the white and blue ribbon rosettes, she freely scattered from her window in Marischal Street on the day of her husband's nomination—think or know that they had then seen Carlyle's first Divinity, and like the knights in the tournaments of old, had worn her favours in the jousts. Fair in looks, handsome in person, and accomplished in manner, she did credit to Carlyle's good taste; and her last letter to him, so evidently appreciative of his genius, and yet so full of simple strong common sense, shows a highly cultured and reflective mind. A foster-child, she certainly deserved to be a fostered wife—and she was so :

“So proud a thing it was for him to wear Love's golden chain,
With which it is best freedom to be bound.”

Here is Blumine's Farewell Letter to Carlyle :—

“Cultivate the milder dispositions of the heart, subdue the mere extravagant visions of the brain. Genius will render you great—may virtue render you beloved. Remove the awful distance between you and other men by kind and gentle manners. Deal gently with their inferiority, and be convinced they will respect you as much and like you more.

Why conceal the real goodness that flows in your heart? I have ventured this counsel from anxiety for your future welfare, and I would enforce it with all the earnestness of the most sincere friendship. Let your light shine before men, and think them not unworthy the trouble. This exercise will prove its own reward. It must be a pleasing thing to live in the affections of others. Again adieu. Pardon the freedom I have used, and when you think of me, be it as a kind sister to whom your happiness will always yield delight and your griefs sorrow. Yours with esteem and regard. M."

Well spoken, and wisely advised by this young and sisterly Divinity! No doubt her sharp eyes had seen traits of character in Carlyle which largely unfitted him for domestic happiness. Had he been bound to her by "love's golden chain" it is very questionable if he would have called men—"mostly fools."



Aberdeen Awa'.



ALEXANDER BROWN,

PROVOST OF ABERDEEN, 1822-3 AND 1826-7.

From a Miniature by A. Robertson, about 1823.

PRESSED to accept the vacant chair, Mr. Brown entered the Council in 1812, and the election being in September, the reader will notice that each year's service comprised three months of one, and nine months of the succeeding years mentioned. It is a proof of the estimation in which Mr. Brown was held, that he was at once elected fourth Baillie, and served two years, and being a good business man there is no doubt that he was the means of introducing a new system of book-keeping, for that year a chamberlain was appointed and the books were kept by double entry. In 1814 his own business required all his attention, but in 1815 he was re-appointed to the same office, and in 1816 was made second Baillie, and was thus in office when the city was declared bankrupt in February, 1817. In 1818, as Dean of Guild, he continued to give his valuable help in the then critical state of the financial affairs. In 1819 he declined office, but his son William, as Master of Mortifications, kept him well posted up in the state of affairs, and then, as afterwards, when he was in the Council, was largely guided by him regarding the measures proposed. Mr. Brown was first Baillie in 1820, and '21, and as such, along with Provost Gavin Hadden and the other magistrates, went to Edinburgh and represented in great state, with handsome equipages, and well dressed attendants in their official liveries, the dignity of the city. In bag-wigs, court dresses, and swords, the magistrates attended the Levee of King George IV., on the 17th of August, 1822, being introduced at Holyrood by Lord Aberdeen—the Aberdeen Address being severely criticised, and not without reason, in the local papers. And as this expensive visit to Edinburgh did not produce any expected honours or profit, and has thus been allowed to fall into oblivion, we insert an account of it by Robert Mudie in his *Modern Athens*, 1825, which shows a very intimate acquaintance with the city:—

“The pride of the North had been more than usually on the *qui vive*. The Provost had been attitudinizing before the mirror for a week, and getting his pronunciation translated into English by Mr. Megget, of the Academy, for at least a fortnight; the town clerk had been drudging at steps with Mr. Corbyn for a month; and the learned Mr. Innes had been applied to, to cast the nativity of the city; and

from the horoscope—Saturn in conjunction with Mars, and Venus lady of the ascendant, it was sagely inferred by the united wisdom of King's and Mareschal that the Provost 'wad get a great mickle purse o' siller for the gweed o' the ceety, forby a trifle to himsel,' and if not a duke the town clerk would be a goose at any rate, if both eschewed during their sojourn that hankering after the sex which was portended by the lady Venus being in the middle house. Those polite and philosophic preparations having been made, the state coach, with two cats (the emblems of Bon-Accord) the size of a couple of yearling lambs, gilt w. th Dutch fulzie, and spotted with coffin black, 'all for the sparin' o' the cost,' rattled along the bridge of Dee at the tails of six hardy shelties from the Cabrach, "which could mak' a shift to live upo' thistles, or fool strae, or onything they could pyke up at a dykeside.'

"Still, however, this mighty magisterial meteor streamed across Drumthwackit, along the Howe o' the Mearns, and adown Strathmore, like an aurora borealis, flashing from the pole to the zenith flickering and crackling and smelling of brimstone, while its tail drew the third part of the wilie natives of the city, the other two-thirds took their way in barks and steam-boats, because it was 'cheaper by the tae half.'" . . . "No honours or titles being vouchsafed to the representatives of the loyal Scottish by the powers that were, their disappointment was extreme. . . . Aberdeen blasted the eyes of his own cats and vowed that he would vote for Joseph Heem, 'out o' pyure retrabeeshon.' Aberdeen tarried not the wheels of *her* chariot until *she* [*sic*] had reached *her* own Castle Street, when the answer *she* made to the many enquiries as to what *she* had gotten was, 'It wadna mak ony body very fat!'"

In Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Chap., XII., in the account of the visit of George IV. to Edinburgh, there is an amusing story of the sharp criticism of an Aberdeen Magistrate on the Highland dress of a London Alderman, who in this respect thought he would be all right if he only copied his Majesty as closely as possible. Lockhart says, "A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen tortured Sir William Curtis, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by

suggesting that, after all, his costume was not perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisements say, 'regardless of expense,' exclaimed that he must be mistaken—begged he would explain his criticism—and as he spoke, threw a glance of admiration on a skeandhu, which, like a true warrior and hunter of deer, he wore, stuck into one of his garters. "Ou ay! ou ay!" quoth the Aberdonian; "the knife's a' right, mon; but faar's your speen?"

Who was the Baillie? has been asked. Now the only other Baillies present were James Milne, John Young, and Alexander Stewart. The first two do not answer the description,—they were neither little nor sharp. Stewart was indeed a little dapple milliner, and so might have had some slight knowledge of Highland accoutrements, but he had not the cheek to speak so to a Knight, and was by no means accounted sharp, but rather otherwise. The description can only apply to Baillie Brown, who always spoke out frankly and fearlessly to great and small, and when he shot his barbed arrows, they stuck, and were remembered and greatly enjoyed by all those into whom they were pitched, for they were devoid of malice, and by all those who heard of the pitching.

As one of his nearest neighbours,—one whose shop and house almost fronted Mr. Brown's, in "the elegant Queen Street," was Mr. Scott, the fashionable cabinetmaker and upholsterer of his day—the furnisher and decorator of Haddo House, and the correspondent of Lord Aberdeen and many other county magnates. In the *Herald*, 10th December, 1870, it is said:—

"He was an influential member of the Burgher Secession body, and when (in 1802) their first church was built in St. Nicholas Lane, made a presentation to the congregation of a costly and beautiful mahogany pulpit, the like of which was not to be seen in any of our churches, Established or Dissenting, at that time. When this handsome gift was finished, Mr. Scott brought his neighbour, Mr. Alexander Brown . . . to see and admire the workmanship. Mr. Brown, who was a droll wag, gravely inspected the elegant rostrum so exquisitely carved and polished, and quietly remarked, "Weel, weel, Mr. Scott, its a braw pulpit—a bonny piece of wood and fine wark; but tak' ye care that you dinna get a timmer minister to fill it!"

Mr. Scott and his family were highly intellectual,—were potential factors in the literary society of Aberdeen at the time, and were powerfully influential in the formation of the character of the young preachers in the Secession Church who visited the city. They were astonished and electrified by the intelligence, the wit, and the sly, yet gentle sarcasm of the young ladies who laughed them out of their antiquated bigotry, and made many a preacher more human and humane.

Mr. Scott's son, John, who commenced the publication of the *London Magazine* in 1820, was killed in a duel arising out of a literary quarrel with Lockhart in 1821.

The next two years, 1822 and '23, Mr. Brown filled the Civic Chair, and was largely instrumental in procuring the satisfactory arrangement with the city creditors. In 1823, as official chairman of Robert Gordon's Hospital he had the merit of getting new and more sensible Bye-laws and Regulations adopted, by which the absurd monastic character of the institution was in some degree removed—female servants, surreptitiously employed since 1801, being now sanctioned.

In 1824, he was a simple councillor, in 1825, was second Baillie, and in 1826 and '27, filled again the civic chair. As Provost, he laid the foundation-stone of the new bridge of Don. In a local print of the time, the following account appears:—

“The ceremony took place on Thursday, 3rd May, 1827, at three o'clock, and it is stated that prior to that hour large crowds lined both the north and south banks of the Don, and that the ‘band of the Aberdeenshire Militia took their stand on a gangway across part of the river, and played a few airs.’ Into the cavity of the stone were put (1) a hermetically sealed vase containing the coins of the Kingdom, newspapers, Aberdeen Almanack, &c.; and (2) two brass plates, upon one of which was engraved a statement in Latin respecting the circumstances of the erection of the bridge, while upon the other was engraved a list of the members of Council, office-bearers, &c. On the stone being lowered the Lord Provost delivered a short speech, congratulating the citizens upon the new access to be formed to the north, stating that the old bridge would for ever be retained as an ‘ornament,’

and carefully reminding his hearers that the new bridge would, on account of the wealth of Sir Alexander Hay's benefaction, cost them nothing! Then the band played "God Save the King," a salute was fired from the Preventive Coastguard Station at Donmouth, and the proceedings were ended by the Provost giving the contractor, the late Mr. Gibb of Willowbank, "something" wherewith his men were to refresh themselves after the labours of the day."

"In the course of the ceremony, Carnegie, of whom so many good and so many convivial stories are told, read an English translation of the Latin text of the statement on the brass, and as it is interesting I may reproduce it:—"By the blessing of God, the best and greatest, in the sixth year of the reign of George the Fourth, the father of his country, an Act of the British Parliament having been passed while Gavin Hadden, Esquire, was Provost for the second time, after a period of two years this bridge, an object very much desired, was begun to be built, the whole expense being supplied from an annual fund little exceeding two pounds sterling, given and bequeathed A.D. 1605 by Sir Alexander Hay, baronet, clerk of the Scottish Parliament and Council, for the purpose of repairing the neighbouring bridge, built in a most pleasant situation, by authority of Robert the Bruce, the ever invincible King of Scotland, which fund was successfully accumulated by the strictest fidelity of the Magistrates of Aberdeen and the Town Council: Alexander Brown, Esquire, Provost of Aberdeen for the second time, laid the first stone of it on the 3rd day of May, 1827, in presence of the Magistrates and Council."

The beautiful old bridge, built about 1320, had a well-known weird prophecy connected with it:—

Brig o' Balgownie, wight is thy wa'
Wi' a wife's ae son, an' a mare's ae foal
Doon sall ye fa'.

But it had bad accesses, and was considered entirely unsuitable for modern traffic. Yet its original slender endowment having been carefully managed, out of its accumulated funds the cost of the new bridge was defrayed. Thus the citizens have one bridge suitable for the requirements of the times, and another as a specimen of antiquity, placed in so romantic a position, that, in itself and with its

picturesque surroundings, it is a showplace; has been celebrated by Lord Byron, and attempted to be immortalised by all budding artists who aspire to fame, at least as enduring as the bridge—if not longer.



Retiring from the Provostship in 1827, he was elected a councillor in 1828, and then, he—the son of a Seceder minister, who in his rural charge was “passing rich with forty pounds a year,” but was supplemented by the free gifts of his flock, enabling him to bring up a family, and still leave a good estate—was mainly instrumental in originating, and carrying out a simple act of justice to the city clergy, as to their number, their status, and their emoluments. Aberdeen had for a long time been ecclesiastically one parish, but it was divided into two preaching churches, and as the population increased, each of these had been made collegiate charges, and to supplement their incomes the incumbents held plural offices either in the University or in Greyfriars Church, which had bequests of its own—so also had Footdee, to supply it with a separate catechist or preacher. In 1795 the city clergy raised an action for an increase of their stipends from £120 to something more

reasonable and decent. But they failed, for their action was raised, not before the hearts and consciences of the members of the Christian church, where they would have succeeded, but before the cold, hard, dry, matter-of-fact Law Courts—where Christian principle, or New Testament precepts being unrecorded—it was held that as by the charters of James VI., Charles I., and George II., which granted the teinds, parsonage, and vicarage of the parish for the express relief of the inhabitants; and that as there were no unexhausted teinds to fall back upon, the pursuers had no case. But while the Council as a corporation stood out for the legal rights of Cæsar, the members as Christians succumbed to reason, and so the stipends of the clergy were afterwards raised voluntarily to £200 each.

In 1819, Joseph Hume and Sandy Bannerman, assisted by the most eminent counsel, had directed their eagle glances and their microscopic researches into the transactions of the Council during bygone years, and these, although defensible and defended, looked somewhat suspicious. These old Use and Wont transactions, magnified in importance, and made the worst of by the Reformers of the period, having been brought into the light of day, the prudent men of the Council thought it high time that this question of the action of their predecessors should be minutely examined, and finally settled; all the more so as an ominous small cloud, called Reform, was looming larger and ever larger on the horizon. After lengthened consultation with all parties, and specially with the Rev. Dr. Thomson, of Footdee, who in 1787 was elected preacher and catechist—one of the shrewdest and most worldly-wise men of his day, who was deeply concerned, and who specially safeguarded his own interests in the settlement, for he bargained with the Council that if he seated the church he was to be allowed to draw the seat rents during his life. He then took good care only to provide seats for those who paid for them! seats being added as required. With this process kept in retentis, and all parties agreeing to take the risks of non-compliance with certain statutory enactments regarding the formation of new parishes, which involved much trouble and expense, and which was agreed to be ignored by all parties; an agreement, sanctioned and

approved of by all the city clergy, and by both the presbytery and synod, was come to.

Certainly it was so generous that but for its containing a settlement of all past disputes, it would never have been looked at, or agreed to; even as it was, it was considered by many as extravagantly and lavishly generous. and if submitted to the rate-payers and parishioners, as by law it ought to have been, it would have been strenuously opposed. Aberdeen, instead as hitherto of forming one parish with two preaching churches, was now to be divided into six—the East, West, North, South, Greyfriars, and St. Clements, each with a church and clergyman; and the new churches cost the city about £30,000. And instead of only having to pay in stipends £800 per annum as previously, the sum now agreed upon in future was to be no less than £1650 a year. The negotiations, begun while Provost Brown was chief, were long and protracted, and all parties being “ripley and well advised,” it was with peculiar satisfaction that by a decret of the Court of Teinds of 5th March, 1828, Provost Brown got this matter, according to the best legal knowledge of the time, fairly and finally settled; and thereupon he received the warmest congratulations from all the interested parties on his success in inducing the Council to be so generous.

That this settlement was acknowledged as generous, and was by all parties intended to be final, is very plainly and clearly seen and acknowledged by a clause in the Decreet, finding and declaring—

“That the stipends and other provisions aforesaid shall be in full to the ministers of the said respective parishes, and their successors in office, of everything they are respectively entitled to, *by law or otherwise*, in name of modified stipends, teinds, teind duties, annuities, or annual rents, arising from *mortifications or lands, tenements or money, or for manses, glebes, or any other account, as ministers of the said charges*—without prejudice, nevertheless, to them, or either of them, or their successors at any time hereafter, claiming and pursuing for such augmentation of stipend as the law does or may entitle them to.”

But notwithstanding this last clause, in order that the finality of the arrangement then made be secured, the very next clause goes on to say that—

“But in the event of any of them obtaining thereby such augmentation of stipend, or of their whole stipend in consequence thereof,

exceeding the stipend before specified, then the obligation incumbent on the pursuers and their successors in office for payment of the stipends before mentioned shall cease, and these stipends shall be no longer payable to the minister or ministers obtaining such augmentation, or to their successors claiming or taking the benefit of such augmentation so acquired."

The old Provost continued to serve in 1829 and '30, and again in 1832, the last year of the old régime, these last year's services being more nominal than real, arising from ill health and the necessary amputation of his leg. But even then there is abundant evidence, that when absent from Aberdeen, he was largely consulted on city affairs by the Provost and the officials. During the twenty-one years from 1812 to 1832, he was in office for seventeen of these years, and more than any one else, his name was conjoined with that of Provost James Hadden as a ruler in the city, and an opposer of the Reform Bill. For did not an old rhyme run thus:—

For twenty lang years in oor braif toon,
Its affairs were maistly ruled by A. Broon ;
Or ane o' the Haddens wore the croon,
And when Gavin gaed up, then Jamie cam' doon.

The period embraced within these years was a stormy and troublous time for the magistrates and councillors, and still more so for the paid officials. The system of book-keeping in all the departments had, like the old exchequer tally system, been of the simplest and easiest which was possible, and only one member of Council, Baillie Galen, was said to be capable of understanding it. No full accounts were ever exhibited—only abstracts of the skeleton order with dry bones and no flesh. For by a decision of the Court of Session in 1787, it was decided that Town Councils in Royal Burghs were not responsible for the expenditure of their revenues. Of this John Home, the keeper of the Town-house, is represented as singing:—

"They're crackin' noo, o' statements true,
O' reading 'counts, and a' that,
It's naething like oor auld abstracts,
By whilk we happit a' that,—
For a' that, an' a' that,
The toon's accounts, an' a' that,
Our Baillies keepit, wi' themsel's,
For paper, pens, an' a' that."

Even the minutes of meetings were not read, and only years afterward did some members find out that by them they were represented as sanctioning transactions at meetings at which they were not even present.

And while in 1809 these abstracts represented the debts of the city as under £7000, it was well known to some, and must have been suspected by many, that it was nearer £170,000, and not until 1817 was the full debt of £250,000 shown. This arose from the accounts of the Improvements being kept in a separate scroll. Had this measure been as speedily profitable as was expected, the profits would have gone to swell the funds of the "Common Good," and not to reduce the rates, but as it threatened to turn out unprofitable (at least for the time) the transactions were only recorded in the books some seventeen years after, in such a way as to endeavour to fix the liability upon the whole of the citizens.

In 1818, Joseph Hume, the radical reformer and economist, very much against the wishes of the Council, became their parliamentary representative, and through him, and by means of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, obtained almost by miracle, and bitterly regretted having been granted by the Tory government, an exhaustive *exposé* of Aberdeen management was made known, and locally published in 1819, and the debate, with a list of the minority, and the resolutions of the Burgesses on the subject, was published by John Booth, Junr., and the Report and Evidence by G. Clark, Broad Street. The Augean stable got a very thorough cleansing out at this time, so much so, that when by the Reform Bill an entirely new set of men were installed in office, and great revelation of abuses were eagerly expected to be made, it was found after minute and careful examination, that public matters had been managed with strict honour and integrity, and that complaints of wrong done, or injury suffered, even in the long past, had all been redressed and satisfactorily settled for all time to come.

The old patriarchal government by a family compact was found wanting. As admitted even by the Council themselves (19th September, 1817), it tended "to foster a system of secrecy and concealment, under which the most upright and best intentioned magistrates may not be able to acquire that thorough knowledge" which was requisite. Here is

Lord Cockburn's picture of the Edinburgh Town Council, a pattern to all others in Scotland :—

“ Omnipotent, corrupt, impenetrable. Nothing was beyond its grasp : no variety of opinion disturbed its unanimity, for the pleasure of Dundas was the safe rule for every one of them. Reporters, the fruit of free discussion did not exist ; and although they had existed would not have dared to disclose the proceedings. Silent, powerful, mysterious and irresponsible, they might have been sitting at Venice.”

Provost James Hadden was so conscious of the purity of his motives and action, that he came forward as a candidate for the representation of the city, in opposition to Mr. Bannerman ; and even in the new and altered state, actually ventured to seek re-election afterwards as a simple councillor of the third ward, neither of which he would certainly have done had he had anything to conceal ; and on his retirement into private life he rose gradually higher and higher in public estimation during the last fourteen years of his life, until his death in 1845.

But the whole government of the country had long been of the Augean-stable order, and required a Hercules to cleanse it. The Reform Bill was the greatest innovation on the government of the country since the Revolution, and dealt very trenchantly indeed with private property. When the supreme power in a country issues its laws the subjects must submit. The time is not so long past when the mere expression of objection to the proceedings was considered high treason, and was punished as such. Proprietors of pocket boroughs worth from four to five thousand pounds each, if capitalised, as was done in Ireland at the Union—where each seat was valued at £7500—and in England the snug little franchise of Old Gatton brought the sum of £75,000, they were worth seven times more, certainly had very strong reasons to oppose the wholesale confiscation of their property which it sanctioned and enforced ; and yet after it was in operation as Lord Cockburn—who drew up the Scottish Bill, says :—

“ In spite of all the defects of the plan, what a boon it is to Scotland . . . I doubt if there be any period of our past history, at which it was more worth while to have lived than during the first announcement of the late revival of the Constitution, the deep anxiety attending its

progress, the almost universal joy at its triumph, the excitement of its being first carried into practice, and the gradual familiarizing of the people to the quiet exercise of their new got rights."

As an example of an English election, take that of Westminster in 1784, when Lord Hood; Hon. C. Fox, and Sir C. Wray were the candidates. The poll lasted forty days, and every nerve was strained to secure the return of Fox. The then queen of fashion, Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire, with other ladies of rank, openly undertook to canvass for Fox, visited the streets and alleys, trying the effect of their charms, their wiles and blandished flattery, to secure votes. Even the Prince of Wales drove through the district wearing the colours of Fox; while the Countess of Salisbury and other Tory ladies sought to counteract the new influence of female interference.

At the hustings in Covent Garden, hour after hour, and day after day, the orators strove to out-argue the mob and out-bawl each other. Every public-house and gin-shop was an outpost of the contenders, the walls were covered with placards and the newspapers filled with lampoons. Troops of infuriated partisans, decked with party ribbons and flushed with beer and gin, paraded the streets and fought with fury, in which severe injuries were inflicted and loss of life occurred.

The old farcical elections, up to 1833, in which the representatives represented only themselves, and the merest fraction of their constituents were in Aberdeen invariably scenes of tumult and riot, in which law and order were openly defied by the mob. As already noticed, a passing wave of Reform, instigated by Pitt, agitated Scotland, and so much so in Aberdeen, that in 1786 Skene in the Fife interest barely succeeded against the Tory Pitfour, who was probably as well hated as any man in the Shire. But when Pitfour succeeded in 1790—holding his seat as the Father of the House of Commons until his death—the Aberdeen mob, at the election in 1806, took the opportunity of testifying their abhorrence of him and his Tory principles by burning him in effigy, and in reality the house of "Salmon Meg," the keeper of a notorious brothel at the west end of the Netherkirkgate, because it was supposed to

be supported by the Tories of the time. A local skit records that :—

“ A mob wi’ tar barrel cam’ down to her door
And played her the tune of Lochaber no more. . . .
But haste ye back, Maggie, the election is o’er,
Ye needna dread ill, when ye hae a Pitfour.”

Compare this with the steady, mechanical, clock-like operation of the election of 1892, in which the result—but for the blunders of enumerators—comes out with all the certainty of the striking of the hour; the listening world then quietly moving on as before.



GEORGE JAMESONE'S HOUSE, SCHOOLHILL
(*The Scottish Vandyke, 1586-1644*).

CHAPTER IX.

“If we in Scotland,” says ‘Ian Maclaren,’ “had had in the past more of that simple element that we called fun, my impression is that we had been a sweeter and a happier people.”

O'er draughts of wine the beau would own his love,
O'er draughts of wine the cit his bargain drove,
O'er draughts of wine the writer penned the will,
And legal wisdom counselled o'er a gill.

Sir Alex. Boswell, 1775-1822.

LIKE Henry Fielding in his *Tom Jones*, we assure those readers who have borne with us so far, that if the narrative was dull there was a profound purpose in presenting it so. Now patience will receive its proper reward.

Taking an example also from Thackeray, who, in his serial issue of *Vanity Fair*, apologised for the humdrum and small beer character of one of the numbers, but for the reader's comfort and expectancy, intimated that “there were some terrific chapters coming,”—we gladly break the thread of our narrative—(if there is one?)—to present one of these “terrific” chapters; which character may be confidently given to it, because it is not original, but entirely extracted. And yet in a snow-storm, as the fast falling snow-flakes hide all things and soon obliterate each other, so in the literary world, because “of the making of good books there is no end,” a good book, and still more a good article, is so soon overwhelmed and buried by others that to ninety-nine Aberdonian readers out of a hundred, it may be confidently affirmed that this chapter regarding their own city and its citizens will be entirely new. On its appearance sixty-six years ago in the pages of the *New Monthly Magazine* it attracted much notice here, and little wonder. For a time it was the talk of the town, and the delight even of little boys of the period; and now the present writer could only procure a sight of it from another city, in which it seemed to be so much more appreciated than here, as to ensure its careful preservation. The article carries in it all the marks of

having been written by Pryse Lockhart Gordon, an Aberdeenshire man whose brother, Abercrombie L. Gordon, long filled the position of minister of Greyfriars Church, and was much and deservedly respected. Pryse was in the army, and as companion to a nobleman, Lord Montgomery, travelled much, kept his eyes and ears open, and his pen going. While resident in Aberdeen, he published in London, *Personal Memoirs of Men and Manners at Home and Abroad, 1780 to 1830,* 8vo, 2 vols., and was the writer of other volumes and magazine articles. While resident at Brussels in 1815, he met Sir Walter Scott, and accompanied him over the field of Waterloo.

At that time Scott had supped at Gordon's house, and had been specially interested and attracted by the eldest son, George Huntly Gordon, a youth who had been destined for the ministry in the Church of Scotland, but whose early deafness was feared by him to be an insuperable barrier to an appointment. Scott's attachment towards the lad seems to have been instinctive,—a case of love at first sight, but it was permanent, and became almost parental, with kindly offers of pecuniary assistance, rarely taken advantage of by the young man.

How Sir Walter cheered and encouraged him, how braced up by this he continued his studies, and was in due time licensed to preach by the Aberdeen Presbytery;—how the Provincial Synod, even although he was of Scotia's gentler blood, pronounced his deafness an insuperable obstacle to his obtaining an incumbency, how the case was referred to the General Assembly,—how, by the eloquence of Jeffrey, whose good offices had been secured by Scott, the decision of the Synod was over-ruled—how notwithstanding this supreme law decision on the subject the conscience of young Gordon was rather quickened than dulled,—how with honourable firmness he declined to take advantage of the decision,—how falling into pecuniary difficulties he fairly broke down, declaring that he really could not write out the necessary exercises,—how Scott, the kind soul, wrote two sermons for him, which he was quite sure would pass muster in Aberdeen Awa,'—how again Gordon's tender conscience prevented him from passing these off as his own, and he then got permission from Sir Walter to publish them, getting from Colburn the publisher £200 for them, is not all this recorded in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Chap. lxxv.

And then as kindness to oneself breeds kindness to others in every grateful recipient, entailing on him the duty of passing it on to others and transmitting to posterity the heaven-born beneficent plant, it is pleasant to note that Pryse Gordon was not found wanting in his duty to others in this respect. Recognising marks of talent in a lad who was then an apprentice with James Forbes, a house-painter in the Netherkirkgate, he took him as a protégé, gave him pictures to copy, and introducing him to Lord Panmure he was sent to London, and in after years became celebrated as the most famous colourist of his day, and was known as John Philip "of Spain," from his Spanish pictures.

Pryse Gordon was a constant visitor at the Book-Stall, where he was always welcome, and where his conversation was listened to by old and young with interested attention. His talk was brinful of information, and had all the raciness of the sermons delivered by Dr. Chalmers, as characterised by an old female attender who patronised his church, because, as she said, "in the pulpit he was baith edifyin' an' divertin."

Under the title of "The Land of Cakes" he describes his country and its people, not sparing the lash where he thinks it necessary. He says those in the north are prone to lower others, in order to make themselves seem superior, and this largely accounts for the strong prejudice against Aberdonians [which no longer exists]. They are industrious and independant, well to do in general; kindly to each other in casualties; happy and hospitable; religious in a joyous way, and the landed proprietors are largely resident, and are like the people. Under the heading of

"ABERDEEN AWA,"

he illustrates the dialect by taking the following as his motto—

"And how did you contrive to communicate the pronunciation when you taught the English language at Newcastle?"

"I lait it a' doon ba rool, ye see, an' re-ed it ba exampal."

"In the case of o o?"

"I taul them for a constant rule that twa o'os soon'it ay the voual u; for instance, g, o, o, d, *gweed*."

Aberdeen, he says, is more metropolitan, and has been longer so than any other city in Scotland. The modern Athens is but a thing of yesterday to it. Dumfries, a kind

of south-west metropolis is weakened by gossiping, and full of old maids. Kelso is soaked in small beer. Glasgow wants taste. Inverness wants everything but pride. Aberdeen has everything within itself, and teaches, cures, and kills its people without any outward assistance. It is not advisable to believe all that is said about the antiquity of the city "as that Abaris the Scythian [500 B.C.] left its Grammar School to attend the lectures of Pythagoras; that Mrs. Tacitus drank tea with the Provost's wife; that her husband lecturing in the Town-hall first taught the citizens that shrewd philosophy for which they have ever since been remarkable; that his work *De Moribus Germanorum*, is really an account of Aberdeenshire; or that his father-in-law, Agricola, got a touch of the "fiddle" by incautiously sleeping in sheets that had been once used by the Town Clerk. . . . Thus in Aberdeen we have the work of ages all concentrated and deposited on the banks of its two rivers . . . The place is not without literati, and itself is the standard subject. Within the last twenty years there have been three distinct histories of the city, and one of these [Kennedy's *Annals*, 2 vols, 4to, A. Brown & Co.,] is both physically and metaphysically a very ponderous tome—a fair load for a body of ordinary strength, and more than enough for most minds.

"The author of this book is one of the Dons of the city; and if not the very brightest of wits in himself, has yet been made a little conspicuous by those spirits of whom there is a pretty regular succession in Aberdeen, and who carry their practical waggeries farther than would be either safe or seemly in most other places. I have mentioned, however, that the delight of the whole district is fun; and if the people can but get it, they care not at whose expense.

"The personage in question is a very respectable member—I believe the Dean—of the Faculty of Advocates, that is, of Attorneys practising before all the courts of the place; but he has some peculiarities. In matters of profane learning, he is a Binitarian: and the two idols of his adoration are black-letter, and his own understanding, and the cause is probably the same as to both. The wags used to be aware of this amiable weakness, and play him tricks.

"Once when the Assize was at Aberdeen, Jeffrey, the late editor of the Edinburgh Review, attended professionally. He, and some of the Aberdonian wags, when taking their wine

after the labours of the day, got a piece of old parchment, which they greased and smoked, to make it look still older; while it was hot they scrawled it over with a burnt stick, in marks as little like any known characters as could be, and having dried and folded it, and rubbed the folds upon the hearth till it was worn through in some places, they gave it another smoking and wrapping it up with the greatest care sent it to the black-letter man, with a long eulogium on his powers, an intimation that it had foiled all the antiquaries in the south, and that he alone could prevent the precious relic from being lost to the world. As this came with the compliments of the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, an answer was immediately sent back, full of gratitude for the honour, and of assurance that that very night the labour of decyphering it should be begun. To work he set, and spent the whole night without being able to decypher one word; so he wrote in the morning, returning the relic, and adding, that, though the interpretation was beyond his powers, it was invaluable—certainly of a date anterior to any of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The messenger carried it back to him, with a polite note, stating, that as he knew more about it than any one else, no one could be so worthy of the possession—it was therefore his, to have and to hold in all time coming. Never was man so delighted; the donor, the gift, the circumstances under which he possessed it—all were rather too much for mortal man. The house could not contain him, and he sallied out proclaiming his great fame and fortune. But though the propagation was speedy, and the congratulations warm, the period of both was brief, for his tormentors were on the watch, and followed him so closely, that before he had carried the tidings to the last friend all the others were in possession of the real case.

“It is on these practical jokes, which it must be admitted have a little wickedness mingled with their waggery, that the chief peculiarity of the Aberdonians consists. They are played off upon parties who are nearly on a level with the wags in rank, but they are keenly relished by the whole community. There is one other, which was practised on the same gentleman by the same characters, which it may not be improper to mention.

“The shore immediately to the south of Aberdeen is wild and precipitous, advantageous for fishing, and the

high rocks thronged with sea-fowl, though the land is barren in the extreme. Shooting these fowl is an amusement with the Aberdonians, who, upon these occasions, usually have a fish dinner at the village of Skaterow, a place almost destitute of vegetation. Two of the wags, after a suitable eulogium on the sporting powers of the historian, prevailed on him to accompany them there. One rode a fine spirited horse, and the other went into a post-chaise with the historian, whose vanity he worked about the shooting, and also the figure that he would make on the horse, which the owner kept caracoling before the post-chaise. They reached the place, and with some difficulty got, at low water, to a spot where they said the sport would be most successful. To the historian it was remarkably so; for though he was so near sighted that he could hardly have seen an elephant at the top of the rock, every time that he fired the birds fell around him like thunder, and splashed him with their fall; so that for one that the others got, he had at least fifty. The fact was that they had employed two men for a week, and had at least a cart load of dead birds on the top of the rocks, of which a man threw down an armful every time that the historian fired. He was delighted, and kept firing away, hardly perceiving that the point on which he stood was completely surrounded, and beginning to be covered by the tide, and his associates were shouting from the beach that the horn had blown twice, and the dinner would be spoiled; at the same time a big stone had been put into the boat, which had filled and was under water. The historian now shouted for deliverance, and a stout fisherman and a boy were instantly in the water. The latter took the fowling-piece and was soon on *terra firma*, but the other had to hoist the sportsman on his shoulder. When they came to the deepest place the fisherman roared that his leg had been bitten by a shark, plunged his charge into the water, completely to the bottom, and as that charge thought into the very maw of the sea monster. He roared, but there was instant relief, and all dripping as he was he was borne to the inn by the fishermen. Arriving there, the dinner was on the table, and the historian must take the chair; but change of clothes was necessary, and male attire was not to be had. No matter; they were all friends; and the chairman took his place equipped in a red flannel petti-

coat, linsey-wolsey bed-gown and mob-cap; the last had become necessary from the loss of his hat and wig in the sea, and the care of his friends that his head should not suffer.

"The Aberdonians say that one may 'gyang far'er an' fare waur' than by getting a dinner at Skaterow, and I can certify the fact. An *Ichthyophagus* can nowhere fare better, either as to fish, or something to make it swim; and as there was abundance of the sauce that he liked best, the historian was now in his glory, nathless the oddity of his costume. But *surgit amari aliquid*—who can control the fates? A messenger well known to the chairman burst into the room:—'For heaven's sake, gentlemen, the next house is on fire, the engines are out of order, and the Dean's library will be in flames!' and with that he mounted his smoking steed and vanished in the direction of the city. There was not a moment to be lost—'My kingdom for a horse!' He was on the back of one in an instant—the post-chaise was at his heels; and 'helter skelter' to save the library. The historian was no horseman, though from the morning's lecture he fancied that he was. The stirrups had been shortened—his feet had been pushed into them up to the ankles—his body was recumbent, and his hands delved alternately under the saddle and into the mane. His heels kicked out, the red flannel petticoat fluttered, the steed pranced, the post boy smacked his whip, the two wags sat holding their sides, the country people shouted 'Gweed——!' and the town, as the cavalcade scoured along, was crowded with people who received it with peals of laughter. When the historian reached his domicile, he found that the alarm had been raised, and not the fire; and the demonstrations of anger and threats of vengeance by his two associates knew no bounds.

"Notwithstanding the number and the uneasiness of these disasters, and the fact that they had fallen exclusively upon the historian, the wags had the wit not only to get themselves exculpated from all concern in the alarm of fire, the only part of the matter that was not wholly accidental; and they did not leave him till they had worked him up to the necessity of challenging to mortal combat an individual upon whom they laid the blame. That he might be successful in that, one of his friends undertook to give him lessons

in pistol shooting, and that no time might be lost, the practice was commenced on the very next morning. But that practice changed the relative position of the parties, the pupil became so certain a shot that at the usual *duello* distance he could hit a wafer for any number of times running; and so the wags were constrained to desist, lest he should turn against them in earnest that power which they had communicated to him in sport."

* * * *The remainder of this article will be given in the next chapter.*

But while on the subject of duelling, which, though of modern origin, dating only from the fourteenth century, was defended by our moralist, Dr. Johnson, who forcibly argued, that if public war by soldiers, who had no cause of personal quarrel, was consistent with morality and the Christian religion, then private war was equally so; yet it was beginning to be strongly objected to by the enlightened conscience of modern days, and duelling has now been altogether put down, at least in Britain. Still at this transition period, Sandy Bannerman and his waggish friends paltered with it, and made it the means of their enjoyment of not a little fun, to the goddess of which they were devotees.

He and his comrades had got hold of a ninny—a devoted admirer of an Aberdeen belle, who had quite a host of admirers and suitors for her hand. At one of their convivial meetings, he and another rival had quarrelled over their respective positions in the good graces of the lady. And eked on by his companions, a challenge was given him by his rival, which he had no help but to accept. As was usual—

Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawin',
They set a combat them between,
To fecht it in the dawin'.

So very early one morning he found himself standing in the Old Town Links with his antagonist facing him—both with pistols in hand. These pistols had been loaded with *extreme care*—the antagonists were placed in due position, and a doctor was present. The signal was given, the pistols were discharged—deponent will not swear as to the *bullets*, but to the horror of the green innocent, whose

Christian name must have been. "Verdant," he saw his adversary throw up his arms wildly, falling to the ground, and uttering a loud groan, while the blood was streaming from his breast.

Ah, reader! in circumstances like these what avails it to you that Codes of Honour sanction your proceedings? Good oatmeal may have roused the old Adam within you, but the stern Calvinistic precepts of the *Shorter Catechism* running through every vein of your body proclaims you a murderer!

Horror-struck, and with unutterable anguish, his whole past life flashing through his brain, and the gallows, or at least banishment, looming before him, our hero almost fainted. But his seconds were equal to the occasion, and had been as carefully drilled as though they had belonged to the modern Ambulance Corps. They, after he had received the dying forgiveness of his rival, instantly hurried him away. By their advice he took the very first coach to the south, and in due time (which means a good deal longer time than at present), he found himself snug and securely hid in Montrose, which in those days was farther away from Aberdeen than London is at present. Here he lay for some days *perdu* to friends and acquaintances until the period, during which the conspirators wished his absence had elapsed, when to his glad and joyful relief, word was sent him that his antagonist had made a most marvellous recovery, that he was actually stepping about again, and was soon to be married to a certain lady, who, in admiration of his bravery, and in sincere sympathy for his sufferings on her behalf, had accepted the offer of his devoted heart, and his brave hand.

It transpired afterwards, that the successful suitor had fastened a pudding filled with blood round his waist, and at the proper time had ripped it up, with the desired result, and with undoubted success.

That the most "Christian nation" in Europe should still practice duelling is a satire on civilization which shows it is only skin deep. Unsuccessfully attempted to be repressed in England in 1713, it is to the immortal honour of a foreigner, Prince Albert, that in his adopted country, where there was an Established Church, with its Bishops sitting in the highest court of law, he, untrammelled by the rigid code of honour in

his own country, should have redeemed us from a savage and barbarous custom in 1844. In that year and through his instrumentality, the Articles of War were amended, so that in future it was to be suitable to the character of honourable men to apologize and offer redress for wrong or insult committed, and equally so for the party aggravated to accept frankly and cordially explanation and apologies for the same.

Surely something of the tiger lingers in human blood, for even amongst cannie Aberdonians with their city motto of *Bon-Accord*, and living under parochial training and catechising, yet their stimulating diet of oatmeal proved provocative of combativeness, and showed that it had not entirely eliminated original sin from their system. Their diet giving stamina to their muscles, and "wut" to their brains, had made them all look rather kindly on duelling as an ultimate and infallible resort. And following the fashion of their forefathers, who were adepts at the practice, they tried to shorten the agony of revenge by resorting to the practice of duelling, as then sanctioned. Old local history is brimful of what would now be termed brutal murders, inexpressibly horrible to modern sentiment, which however, now began to exercise its sure, but silent and effective, influence.

The witty and humorous Thomas Gordon, Professor of *Humanity in King's College*, and Regent after, described by Burns as "good-natured and jolly-looking"—and is not his designation of *Humanity* Professor delicious?—after a wholesome dish of porritch was so stimulated to exercise the "wut" thus engendered that he mortally offended his brother professor of Greek, John Leslie, and was challenged by him to mortal conflict. As the acceptor of the challenge, Gordon had of course the choice of weapons. And surely nothing could more show the humanitarian effect of his diet and his teaching than the choice of these. Other diets would have engendered deadly animosity—would have aimed at the death of the adversary by all ordinary or extraordinary means, if only agreed to by both antagonists. But Gordon's choice of weapons was humanitarian, for "Any of the Greek tragedians that you may choose," and, said he, "if ye dinna beat me in the knowledge of the author, I'll tak' the tawse to your hurdies!" Of course Gordon meant this trial to come off before a competent court. The shrewd

cannie Aberdonian was well sure that he knew Greek better than the professor of it. Leslie declined the challenge, for the result of it would have been worse than death; it would have been degradation, and in a heathen age that was worse! On the statute book of the time the death penalty was attached to a hundred now comparatively minor offences, while some hideous crimes were not considered criminal, if only they were duels between gentlemen, as if they alone were privileged, free from the requirements of the Decalogue and the eleventh commandment.

Gordon only got his fitting sphere as Professor of Greek in 1796, after he had held College offices for upwards of sixty years. But alas! it was too late—he died next year without ever having the opportunity of showing his peculiarly distinctive abilities.

When such an example as this was set by the professors, what could have been more natural than that the young bantam student-cocks should follow suit! And to a quarrel between two of these, Ogilvie and Grant, book-hunters are indebted for the publication of a now very scarce tract, entitled *The Ogilviad, a heroic poem, with its answers: being a dispute between two gentlemen at King's College, Aberdeen, 1789*, in which these two pelt each other with opprobrious epithets, which enriching and expanding the language, fell far more harmlessly upon them than leaden bullets.

To the local bibliopole and bibliophile another delightful example occurs in the case of the controversy between Hugh Leslie of Powis, and the professors of King's College—he being the son of one of them, and inconveniently conversant with their proceedings. To the general public it is *caviare*, and not relished, but as an example of Aberdonian pluck. *Letters to Roderick Macleod*, and his, *Hot-pressed Doctor's Outwitted, or Who's Afraid*, 1807, with its farcical cuts in print, and its fierce cuts in prose, always brings a high price at Book Sales. Hugh Leslie was much too sensible to bring his quarrel to the test of a duel with any of the professors. But most certainly he carries the art of vituperation to its fullest extent and it is simply marvellous how in these old days of privilege he was allowed to escape the clutches of the law, or the pistols of the Professors.

It may be, and likely was, that all parties were deterred from this last arbitrement by the lamentable result of the

duel then recently fought between Lieutenant Booth and Ensign Livingstone, 26th June, 1805, in which the first met his death. Livingstone while much intoxicated, swaggered up Broad Street on the King's Birthday, the long celebrated June 4th, when the mob, for want of power to restrain them had almost unlimited license. Irritated by their behaviour towards him he drew his sword and attempted to stab a boy of sixteen, but was prevented. The boy's uncle, Lieutenant Booth, called him to account for this, and it ended in a duel in which Booth was shot and died some months afterwards. His brother John did all he could to vindicate his memory in a pamphlet published in 1807, but all in vain, he could not get his brother restored to life, nor could he get any redress for his loss.

But the revengeful thirst of compensation for insults and injuries then supposed to be beyond the reach of the law was hard to kill, and challenges to mortal combat were difficult to stop.

For is it not on record that the Laird of Culrossie fought a duel with an Englishman, who while in a Scotch hotel finding fault with the butter, ordered it to be removed and to be supplied with better! The waiter having replied that there was no better anywhere for it was from Aberdeen! the Englishman, in unmeasured language, denounced Scotch butter in general, and Aberdeen butter in particular. This was too much for the patriotic Culrossie who instantly broke out with "That's nae true, Sir! for Aberdeen butter is as gweed butter as ever gaed doon your throat!" So of course a duel immediately ensued, and in the combat with small swords Culrossie was worsted; yet after thanking his adversary for his life he added, "Noo for a' its gane, I'll say that better butter ne'er gaed doon the throat o' a Southron!" If he could no longer wield his sword, he could at least wag his tongue!

If this has to be taken *cum grano*, yet within living memory much excitement arose in quiet Presbyterian Aberdeen in consequence of two separate challenges, *a outrance*, being given to citizens. The first, so recent as 1836, was that by John Lumsden Sheriffs, Advocate, to Alexander Russel of Aden, whose town residence was the North Lodge, now known as a charitable institution.

There had been some business transactions between

them, and Sheriffs had been Russel's agent as to a loan of £1000 and a consequent bond over his property. Tradition, embodied in print, has it that at a dinner party at Aden, where Mr. Sheriffs' brother was one of the guests, Russel had expressed some doubts as to the entire probity of his agent in the transaction. The expressions used were injudiciously conveyed to Sheriffs by Robert Shand, Advocate, one of the guests. This led to a correspondence, ending in Russel declining any farther explanations. Piqued and exasperated Sheriffs took counsel with a friend, Alexander Gordon, a brother Advocate—admitted in 1814 and therefore not a novice—and a town councillor at the time.

It is a proverbial saying in Aberdeen that "a' gangs weel when the Gordons hae the guidin o't," arising likely from another saying that "God generally favours the strongest battalions"—but there is no rule without exceptions. In one of these vivid lightning-like flashes of Crockett's, which reveal character at a glance, he says, "to fight first, and ask why? or wherefore? after, is the Gordon all over." Certainly it was this Gordon, for he seems to have been a fire-eater, and though an advocate was much more anxious for the exaction of the debt of honour than to get payment of the debt at law; confessing afterwards that he gave little heed to the correspondence of the parties, but concentrated his attention on the insult. He at once proposed pistols and an interview at twelve paces. They posted to Aden and found that Russel was dining at Pitfour. They waited for his return when, wonderful to relate, even after dinner in these jolly old times, Russel actually declined to see them. Returning to town boiling with anger and mutually nursing their wrath, they got Russel posted in the Athenæum News-room, greatly to the astonishment of the citizens, for by this it was intended to send Russel to Coventry. But instead of that it sent him to the Court of Session. There Gordon got a snubbing and a drubbing from the Dean of Faculty; Russel came off victorious on all the points of the case; and Sheriffs had above £1500 to pay in current coin for his proceedings, and must have felt it to be hard times, when he would have preferred to settle with base lead.

The next, sometime in the thirties of this century, was the challenge given by James Adam, the portly editor of

the *Aberdeen Herald*, to worthy and equally portly David Chalmers, the editor of the *Journal*, and the news of the challenge fell like a bomb-shell on the ears of the citizens. Bailie Chalmers was a respected elder of the West Kirk, and one of the most peaceful, unquarrelsome, and unwarlike of our citizens. The feeling in the town was that the challenge was simply a new and clever form of advertising the *Herald*. In the case of the proposed combat, the chances of a random shot were tolerably equal, for though Adam was some three inches taller, Chalmers was about the same broader, without his adversary's height. Some wags who frequented the "Book-Stall" were quite eager that this fight should be allowed to come off, but with this proviso, that copies of the respective papers should be cut out, of the exact size and shape, length and breadth of the respective editors, and that they should each fire at his opponent's paper. If an advertisement column was hit it was to be considered only a flesh wound, but if the bullet struck the leading article, the editor of that paper was to consider himself *hors de combat*. There was an immense deal of good, common, Aberdonian sense in this proposal, and had duelling been continued it might have been worth while taking out a patent for it. But the authorities were wide-awake; to protect the person of even an *ex*-Baillie—let alone all other considerations, for of course that was the first one—they invoked the aid of all the Acts of Parliament at their disposal—the challenger was bound over to keep the peace, and the duel was prevented. Some cuts and thrusts with that formidable weapon—the grey goose quill—were afterwards made between the two, but happening to meet at that greatest, wisest, most beneficent and most charitable institution in the city—the annual dinner of the Incorporated Trades, and seated near to each other, the good cheer around them, their hearts so unbound then, that a *rapprochement* took place; they became "good billies" ever after; and so we ne'er shall look upon the like again.

It is little wonder although William Forsyth, a late editor of the *Journal*, should be so eloquent, as he always was, in praise of a good dinner and a glass of wine; "it southers a' thing," he used to say, "and is the greatest power in civilization, beating the army a' to sticks." He was a Captain in the Artillery Corps, but in the writer's opinion he

would most willingly have met an invading army, not with cannon balls or grape shot, but with shells in the form of slop basins for the sea sick soldiers, and treating them afterwards to a good dinner with etceteras after it, would have sent them home again as enthusiastic admirers of the *entente cordiale*. And yet he was by no means a Quaker, far from it; but he had a warm heart to beasts, birds, and unfortunates, and would have dealt with them as such, and killed them with kindness.

Ever since our mother Eve tempted her husband with a delicious apple, her most astute daughters have learnt how to get their own way by gratifying the palate, satisfying the appetite, and filling the stomachs of their husbands. And the wily Jacob took a lesson from them. More than two thousand years ago, before Christianity revealed its benign influence and taught men to feed their enemies, the fabulist Æsop taught the potential power of gentleness to a heathen world. Yet the world has been slow to learn the lesson. All through the ages the stern hard Judaic law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was strictly enforced, and to the civilized Roman as well as to the savage barbarian, revenge was a sacred duty.

Only in comparatively modern times, in our highly civilized and Christian country, has a different policy begun to prevail. Robbie Burns gives his prescription thus:—

When neibors anger at a plea,
And just as wud as wud could be—
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee
To taste the barrel.

Even the Earl of Shaftesbury publicly said, "the drinking a glass of wine with a fellow man is one of the wisest institutions which appears to have been framed for promoting good feeling, and is framed on the highest system of policy." So much for precept, now for proof. Lord Cockburn relates that in September, 1840, Lords Cullen and Herman, then on the West Circuit, being of different politics then met at supper for the first time in several years. They were cold at first; at last good cheer soldered them, and by two in the morning (Bell and Cockburn alone being present) they were embracing and vowing eternal

friendship, toasting each other's wives, and giving the two young men imitations of the old lawyers.

And yet one more example. Fifty years after, when the disastrous colliers' strike occurred, when utter ruin, like a black funereal pall, came creeping over the already murky sky, wives lamenting, and bairnies moaning with hunger, Government appointed a Commission to confer with the miners. With able and informed men composing the commission it met, and the discussion commenced. As it proceeded it grew first warm, then fierce and acrimonious, until it reached a crisis which meant starvation to the colliers and their families, and a dire disaster to the commerce and prosperity of the country, which would have seriously affected all classes. Then with great tact and admirable policy Lord Rosebery stopt the discussion, and invited all present to partake of a splendid luncheon he had provided—a most unexpected and agreeable interlude. After this the discussion was resumed, and the wheels of the debating machine having been properly, plentifully, and agreeably lubricated the friction ceased, and all went merry as marriage bells; the demons of Discord and Strife were expelled, and the angels of Peace, Concord, and Prosperity reigned in their stead. The quarrel was ended, the strife ceased, and millions were made happy by a banquet to a few.



CHAPTER X.

“ When Noah first planted the Vine,
The Devil contrived to be there,
For he saw very well that the finding of wine,
Was a very important affair ;
Mankind had been sober before,
But had not been remarkably good,
And the cold blooded crew had deserved all the more
To be deluged and drenched by the flood.”

Lord Neaves, 1800-76.

GORDON continues his article thus :—
“ But they [that is, these Aberdonian wags] were not without others on whom they could exercise their powers. There was an official man with a body and mind singularly out of proportion to each other, who had been chief conscience-keeper to the Corporation, as himself once said before a Committee of the House of Commons ‘ Ay, sin his father dee-ed ’ who was well adapted to their purpose. He was remarkable for good nature and credulity ; and though he was secure in a decent living, and perhaps felt the sting of a practical joke less than any other man, one feels some compunction at the thought that so very harmless a personage should have been officially placed in Aberdeen. But placed there he is, in a public office, and therefore the cabinet of curiosities would not be complete without him.”

There is here, probably a shrewd estimate of the private character of William Carnegie, who was appointed Town Clerk in 1793, and continued in office until his death in May, 1840, but it conveys a most unjust impression of him as a public official ; in which capacity it is impossible to examine his books or to read his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1819, without being satisfied that he was an exceedingly able public servant ; that he had a private conscience which sometimes came into conflict with the public conscience enjoined upon him by the Council. His lot in life was at an unfortunate period, inasmuch, as—brought up and trained in an old world school

--he had to unlearn all his old notions, and to face an entirely new system, where secrecy and concealment were condemned, and openness and publicity were demanded. In his careful dress, his stately demeanour, his powdered hair, which, like Provost Henry he wore to the last as a protest against democratic notions he was

A fine old Scottish gentleman
All of the olden time.

“As the stories that have been repeated to me of tricks played to this official person would fill a volume, I shall content myself with mentioning one. As no Corporation stands charged with the sin of too determinedly muzzling the mouths of its official steers, they are in general very fond of conviviality; and it is far from being uncommon, that they whose conversation rates the lowest in quality, are the most desirous to make up the difference in quantity. The wags in question knew this was the case with the man who got office ‘when his father died,’ and thus they invited him to an evening party at one of the hotels, when they encouraged him to become thirsty with speech, and to quench that with wine. In the end he was overpowered, and sank into the embrace of the leaden god. They had previously turned the conversarion to the place of final retribution, with the horrors of which they had deeply impressed his mind. When they found that he was fairly asleep, they stretched him out on the table, covered him with a white cloth, arranged the room and candles in the way which is customary when death has ensued; at the same time they placed the glasses in such a manner that by the least motion these should fall with a crash and awaken him, and they set open the windows. They then left him to his fate, and went into another apartment to await the issue.

“At the silent hour when the sweet music of snoring from the nightingale of his noise had suddenly ceased, there was a tremendous crash of the glasses, at which they hastened to the scene, and found that it had awakened the sleeper, but had not produced all the effect they had expected, as they found him thus soliloquising with himself:—‘Well, that I’m deed is a clear case; a leevin’ man was never laid out this gate; but I’m very thankful that it’s nae waar. I’m deed,

but I'm nae damned, that's certain; this canna be hell, it's sae awfu' caul'!"

Attorneys have always been considered fair game for jokers, and our wags must surely have had a saying of Sam Foote's in mind when this trick was played. A simple country English farmer who had just buried a rich relation, an attorney, complained to Foote of the expense, and was told by him that in London they never buried attorneys. "What! how then do you manage?" "Oh! we just lay him out in a room, lock the door, after opening the windows, and in the morning there is not a trace of him." "Indeed," said the farmer, "Why? what becomes of him?" "Well" said Foote "we cannot exactly tell; all we know is that there's a strong smell of brimstone in the room the next morning."

"But perhaps the most singular instance of credulity on the one hand, and waggery on the other, was that of 'Bailie Nicholas Jarvie'; because that took place under circumstances that might, one would think, have rendered it impossible. Scott's novel of *Rob Roy* had been published for at least a year and a half. [It had appeared in 1818, and A. Brown & Co. paid 30/- for the carriage of their first supply by mail]. It had been very generally read in Scotland, and it is not easy to suppose that it had not been heard of in Aberdeen, or that in so short a time it would have been forgotten; and even though that had been the case, the drama founded upon it had been acted almost nightly in the city for a whole season. Taking all this into consideration, it is not easy to imagine how the greatest ignoramus in the world could be deceived respecting the Bailie; yet I am assured that such was the case with an official gentleman connected with the Aberdeen Corporation, and connected with it solely on account of his presumed wisdom and learning.

"That official personage was appointed to go to Glasgow, *ex officio*, which he regarded as an event in his life, and he was at great pains in promulgating it. During several days previous he was found constantly in the streets and public places, where he accosted all that he knew, informed them of his impending journey, and asked their commands for Glasgow; and every evening he paraded the Athenæum or

public reading room, announcing the great exploit that was before him. Late on the eve of his departure, two gentlemen accosted him in the room, congratulating him on his journey, and on the great height to which the character of Aberdeen would be raised by his appearance in the city of the West : but they added that the people of Glasgow would be afraid to ' come out,' if he had not a personal introduction to some official person, regretting at the same time that they were not sufficiently acquainted in Glasgow to supply what he wanted. At that moment a third joined them as if by accident, ' Ha !' said the other two, ' you are just the man we wanted, you know Mr. Jarvie of Glasgow !'—' What, Nicholas Jarvie the Bailie of the Salt Market ? most intimately ! many a happy hour have I spent in his company ; the Bailie is a glorious fellow.'—' Will you give our friend a letter to him ?'—' With the utmost pleasure ; as I am sure I cannot confer a greater favour on my friend Mr. Jarvie.' The letter was instantly written, couched in the most familiar terms, with high encomiums on the bearer, who was told that he might make Mr. Jarvie's his first place of call, and his house during his sojourn, as in Glasgow, that was accounted far more respectable than lodging at an inn.

" The official personage was delighted, and kept the letter a secret, in order that he might turn the Bailie's hospitality the more to his own account on his return. Meanwhile the conspirators despatched an express to Glasgow, to prepare for the reception of their dupe ; and in the morning that personage took coach for Glasgow, blessing himself all the way on account of his introduction to a ' Glasgow magistrate,' which in his sense of the words, did not mean ' a fresh herring ' [alluding to the long established perquisite of a Glasgow Bailie having the right of a herring from each boat landing herrings at the Broomielaw.]

" From the high hopes of the traveller the journey seemed more than usually long, though he deferred all his calls upon his official brethren in the intermediate towns till his return, when he would be able to repeat to them all the attentions that he had received from Bailie Jarvie. But how much soever expectation may lengthen time, it does not make it last for ever ; and so the stranger in Glasgow at last bowed to the statue of William in the Trongate, and the jolting ceased at the Tontine.

“ ‘Now for Bailie Jarvie,’ he thought with himself, asking the way to the Salt Market, and if the Bailie lived there. He did, but the informant did not know the number; anybody would point out the house. A porter absolutely anticipated the stranger’s wish by shouldering the portmanteau and following. The description had been accurately given, and the Glasgow agents had found their man. The porter did not know the Bailie’s house, but that caused no suspicion. The Salt Market is the Petticoat Lane of Glasgow, with something to boot, and the stranger and his porter trudged three-flight high upon every common stair in it, where the former ran the gauntlet after a most annoying fashion; but no Bailie Jarvie could be found; and they were marching back to the starting post, when a stranger bowed most politely to our traveller. ‘I hae been looking for Bailie Jarvie, but he’s nae in a’ the Saat Market.’—‘Sold his house there two years ago, and lives out of town; but I saw him in the public coffee-room this moment, and I know that he is there still reading the papers; anybody will point him out.’

“Now though there was no real Bailie Jarvie in Glasgow, the name had no sooner become celebrated than the wags of that town applied it to one of the Bailies there, who gave them very little thanks for their trouble; and was so very wroth that he would neither read the novel, nor attend the play. He was reading the paper when the stranger entered asking for ‘Bailie Jarvie.’ There was no need of pointing him out, for the sound no sooner reached his ears than he started up to inflict punishment on the party by whom, as he supposed, he had been wantonly insulted; but the size and respectful deportment of the stranger, and above all, his northern accent, as he stood bowing and presenting his letter, suspended the ire of the magistrate; and the appearance of the three gentlemen, who had aided him in seeking the Bailie, and who now introduced the two to each other by their respective names and offices, completely removed it. The result was an adjournment to the Black Bull, where the official man found in the substantial hospitality of Glasgow, that the introduction was not wholly a loss. Upon the traveller’s return to Aberdeen, those who had played the first act of the farce tried to laugh at him; but his reply was, ‘let those laugh that win; and when I go back to Glasgow I shall be glad to have a letter to another

Bailie Jarvie. You were right, the Bailie is a 'glorious fellow.'"

"I must confess," says the writer, "that it is rather melancholy to be obliged thus to record the intellectual state of a city which carries on a very extensive and successful trade . . . and contains a great deal of wealth; . . . it mortifies even me to be obliged to record anecdotes like these as the only means of showing that there are in the city any talents except trading ones." He warns readers not to judge of the character of the people superficially for "the talents which in Aberdeen lead to those practices can find no more useful channel there, or we may rest assured they would run into it." Which came quite true in the case of Sir Alexander Bannerman, when he got the opportunity of showing his abilities.

Such is a resumé, with copious extracts from this article, so interesting to Aberdonians, as showing the manners of the upper class in Aberdeen in the early years of the century, that for fifty years back it has been the dream and the desire of the writer to reproduce it for preservation in some form or other.

The vivid picture presented by the article of the doings of young Aberdeen at the beginning of the century may appear incredible to the present staid and sober generation—for as compared with the past it is both of these—but some few, alas! getting fewer every month now, can yet recollect the excitement and the laughter produced by seeing, or hearing of Sandy Bannerman's latest escapade, which brilliantly lightened up the dulness, and pleasantly rippled the surface of the stagnant times, to all save those who were the victims. But, truly, who were not so? In the spring of 1822, a severe storm had buried the whole country in such deep snow-drifts that no London mail had arrived for nearly a fortnight. Think of it! Then *ennui* reigned supreme, for gossip was exhausted, and the latest scandal had lost its salt and had become nauseous by repetition. Time hung heavy on the hands and minds of the citizens, and they were ready to welcome anything to talk about. So, in order to beguile the time, Sandy and some boon companions, after supper in the New Inn

prolonged their sitting until the small hours were well past, when, getting post-horses, they quietly rode out to the Bridge of Dee, as far as the drifts allowed them, and then came riding back, lustily blowing post-horns all the way, as an intended intimation of the arrival of the long expected mail. The ruse was successful, and the excitement was tremendous; and as the noisy cavalcade passed along Union Street, in the wild waste of the dark morning, every sleeper was aroused, and every window opened by eager expectants of news, who, after hastily dressing, hurried down to the Post Office, then in the Cross, to get their letters and the latest news; but only to be told, to their mortification, that no mail had come, but that Sandy Bannerman had arrived. That was quite enough—all knew then that they had been “sold,” and were the victims of his latest joke, and were inclined to say, as Sir Walter Scott said to the authoress of *Mystifications*, “Awa, awa! the deil’s o’er grit wi’ you!”

As Leslie Stephen characterizes Walter Savage Landor as having for nearly ninety years been a typical English public school boy, so of Sandy Bannerman it might be said that he was a typical Scotch school boy, a “loon” full of humour, fond of tricks, ready to trip up his teacher at night by putting string across the pavement, capable of placing pointed tacks on his chair, or lighted squibs and crackers in his coat tail pockets. He had “as much fun in him as if he had no sense, and as much sense as if he had been the dullest of mortals.”

But if he was the chief ringleader in many a mad trick, invariably playing first fiddle in the frolics in which he and his companions indulged; in the license which they seemed to enjoy in defiance of the representatives of law and order, the town’s officers, Clapperton “with his cleek,” Simon Grant, and young Charlie Dawson, they were not without imitators.

When an election of a member of parliament took place, when the races were held, or a county club dinner or ball came off, or any event which brought into town the Duke of Gordon with his lively Duchess, the shooting Earl of Kintore, Lords Panmure, Kennedy, and other landed proprietors, unlimited high jinks were indulged in during their stay; then night was abolished, or made hideous with

their noisy revels, in which license was allowed its full swing.

“Allowed,” well, the phrase may pass but the license was taken by force, and any attempt to prevent it, or even to bridle it, would have resulted in a riot. Magistrates, backed up by special constables, might bravely face a meal mob of poor, vulgar persons with empty stomachs which had impaired their physique: but to attempt to check the mad frolics of these full-fed titled dare-devils, who acted in mere wantonness, was to be guilty of rebellion against rank and caste.

The then Lord Kintore was wild, eccentric, and dangerous, for he always carried firearms and recklessly used them. One Sunday, while in the parish church, a little bird pursued by a hawk had sought the shelter of the sacred precincts, when, to the alarm of the congregation, who instantly fled, his lordship fired several shots at it. Passing the stackyard of the Kintore Arms, and seeing a fine specimen of a breeding sow stretched at full length, taking her inglorious ease and indulging in the *dolce far niente*, he fired and killed her, remarking when the bill was presented to him, that “before losing such a magnificent chance of a fine shot he would have paid her cost twice over.”

Driving in his carriage to Aberdeen one day he called at the parish school and desired Mr. Ross, the teacher, to speak with him for a minute. On his entrance into the carriage, bareheaded, his lordship carried him off—leaving the rejoicing and admiring scholars to their own devices and to the freedom of their own will for the day. It was a token of friendliness to the teacher, who enjoyed his holiday, and so did his scholars. This was a specimen of his good nature, but sometimes his apparent friendliness took an awfully grim turn.

He once invited a pompous Aberdeen official to dine with him at Keith-hall, which invitation greatly elated the invited, and as he thought “highly honoured” guest, and it was proudly proclaimed by him to his acquaintances. On his arrival and entering the room, where the dinner was already set, he found to his surprise that he was the only guest. The Earl then locked the door, produced a loaded pistol, ordered the guest to get under the table amongst several dogs there stationed. His lordship then leisurely

proceeded to dine—not alone, but yet by himself—now and then throwing a bone under the table to his “highly honoured” guest and his own waggish dependants, who in the extreme terror of their companion secured everything. On his dismissal and arrival in Aberdeen that guest was never afterwards heard to boast of his invitation to dine at Keith-Hall. Little wonder!

The career of another well known “Bohemian” nobleman in Aberdeen was a tragic one, ending in the law courts, where his very existence was extinguished by outlawry.

Of Lord Panmure’s wild life at Brechin Castle, and his practical jokes and escapades, there are innumerable stories current, both in print and tradition. Suffice it to mention this one, showing that then, rank was supposed to cover a multitude of sins, and was not to be judged by ordinary standards, and that money cured all the ills to which flesh is heir to, and more. Dining at the inn at Forfar, one of the waiters offended him, and his lordship threw him out of the window, by which both his legs were broken. “A most trifling matter,” said his lordship; and so, when the landlord presented his bill and asked what was to be done as to the waiter, his lordship simply said with an oath, “Oh—put the price of the devil in the bill!”

When high and mighty festal occasions occurred in Aberdeen—when the carcass brought the eagles—or rather the vultures—together, then these idols of the mob met with kindred spirits—“birds of a feather flocked together,” and crowds of admirers and would-be-imitators collected in Castle Street before Dempster’s Inn, from the open windows of which shovelfuls of coppers, toasted over the fire until they were nearly red hot, were freely scattered amongst the crowd, and the eager scramble which ensued, with the shouts and yells of the heated-copper collectors afforded the “distinguished company” unmitigated delight. A volume might be filled with examples, but surely enough has been recorded to show the habits of high class society at the time.

Heaven be thanked! this class now seems to have become extinct, like the old monsters of long past geological periods. Advanced intelligence would at once boycott them. Society, acting by its police, would now bring them to book, and conscientious Sheriffs—if there was too much

method in their madness—would give them either three months' imprisonment or confine them in a lunatic asylum until proof was given that they had recovered their sanity.

But sad to say, and as a proof that each man's actions influence the future far beyond his ken, these men left pernicious examples, which were copied by others down to the middle of the century. Amongst the last notorious examples were a licentious landowner, whose greedy appetite for literature of the Holywell Street order had to be sternly refused by his booksellers; an officer in the army, who was much more familiar with the dwellers in the slums than with respectable society; and yet another reckless and improvident Laird, whose popularity amongst Aberdeen loons in the thirties far surpassed even that of Dick Turpin or Jack Sheppard, without their criminality. Years afterwards, when having seen the folly of his ways he had become a greatly changed man, the writer met him on a west coast steamer, when he was no longer a laird, and was very deeply moved when frankly, humbly, and candidly, without the use of any of the strong expletives in which he formerly indulged, he confessed that he had been a fool in his youth, and as evidence of his great change, the writer especially noted that he said the sowing of his wild oats had cost him the bitterest pangs of regret in all his after life, because he had so wantonly squandered his precious opportunities of usefulness, and that these opportunities had been lost for ever.

Of course these unruly proceedings were copied, and reflected in the conduct of the lower classes; and the King's birthday in these old times afforded them a saturnalia in which mischief towards property, and brutal violence to any one apparently above their own rank were the principal features. For the gratification of the mob a huge bonfire was kindled in Castle Street, but if it threatened to go out too soon, the mob would rush down to the Inches, and seizing a boat would haul it up Marischal Street by the force of numbers, and consign it to the flames. And on that evening, woe betide the man who appeared with a decent hat on his head. The mob greeted him, not with the French Revolutionary cry of "aristocrat," but on the shout of "a tile, a tile," the owner of a hat was jostled, kicked and cuffed, and it was well when the mob was satisfied with the destruction of the hat. If he

defended it too vigorously he was in positive danger of loss of limb or life.

Such was the conduct of the Aberdeen mob on the King's birthday in 1837. While the upper ten drank the King's health with flowing bumpers—and no heel-taps—in the Town Hall as of yore, the middle classes met in the Black Bull, the New Inn, or the Lemon Tree. It was attempted to deprive the populace of the usual bonfire in the Castlegate, which resulted in a riot. The mob seized a boat and hauled it up Marischal Street, but it was rescued. In revenge the windows of the Town House were smashed. The special constables had a hard fight with the mob, in which batons being trumps, hats, heads, and faces and noses came to grief, and blood flowed like claret. About fifty of the crowd were laid in limbo, but the constables were powerless to prevent the burning of another boat in Union Street.

This reads like a paragraph from a Californian paper a generation since, viz. : “ A stranger wearing a stovepipe hat arrived in town yesterday, putting up at the Nugget House. The boys are having a good time with that hat this morning, and the funeral will take place at two o'clock.”

The Californian boys merely copied the example of the members of the London Stock Exchange, who, when a stranger was found within the hall in business hours shouted the well-known war-cry of “ Fourteen hundred,” and then the stranger had a bad time of it. His hat was promptly smashed to begin with, and small respect was shown for his head, &c.

This training of young men in licensed ruffianism was the school in which boys were trained in mischief, and the effect of it is not yet extinct. In those far back days, crowds were always dangerous against the better classes ; while only the other day, at the opening of the Infirmary, amidst the dense thronging multitude in the streets, the duty of the police was not to preserve the peace ; of that there was no danger of breach ; it was not to protect the Princesses—why, every one of the vast assemblage would not only have spread out on the mud their cloaks and shawls (like Sir Walter Raleigh) for the Princesses to step on, but it looked as if every one there would have given their very lives for them. The whole duty of the police consisted in protecting the surging crowd against themselves, their eager pressure, and their own devoted and exuberant loyalty, which they manifested

by cheering loudly, and long enough to have blown down the walls of half-a-dozen Jerichos. Not only did the police protect them from the passing vehicles, but they enabled them to see all that was to be seen more satisfactorily. And, when, in the eagerness of the crowd to get so near to the Princess, that perchance they might touch the hem of her garment, and when the *argumentum ad hominem* failed to put the crowd farther back, and to open up more space, then it was simply delightful to see the effect of the argument of horses brought into play. The mounted police hacked their steeds on the crowd, and the gentle, well trained, kindly treated brutes behaved like very gentlemen. Horses of the last century, not having the benefit of a cheap press, and of evening half-penny papers, would have applied the only argument they knew, that of hoofs, and the only argument then known, that of brute force, but, now recognising the fact that "force is no remedy," not a hoof was lifted as a threat; every step was tenderly taken lest they should tramp on anyone's toes, and more by the application of soft, gentle, warm horse-haunch and whisked tail, than by the appeal of their riders, the crowd were borne back, and a clear way opened.

With peculiar satisfaction one near him heard Chief Constable Wyness say that the time seemed fast approaching when Aberdeen might dispense with the police altogether, the inhabitants were so well disposed. It is a very high compliment, and yet to those who have travelled on the Continent and seen the unenclosed parks, the unprotected beds of deliciously scented flowers planted along the streets, and the grass plots on which not a foot would dare to tread, because every citizen acts as a policeman and would instantly protect from injury what he knew was his own property—to those who have seen this it is evident that we have not yet quite arrived at perfection, but are approaching it. Many years ago an excited old wife said to some ill-behaved Aberdeen bairns, "Ye've got plenty o' skweelin' but vera little breedin'." Let us hope that the time is approaching when young Aberdeen will have both, and in equal quantities, with their proper educational results.

CHAPTER XI.

“Mountain and mist, lone den and murmuring stream,
The shaggy forest, and the grey hillside,
These are thy features, Scotland! these the pride
Of those that love thee, and thy minstrels’ theme.
For partial nature that denied to thee
The sun of England and the soil of France,
Hath clothed thee in the garment of Romance,
That dearer for that dearth thy face might be.
Proud mother! whose last son with reverence turns
To greet thee; land of Wallace, Knox, and Burns!
Thy rugged hills are sacred—from the feet
Of heroes: and thy bards (a countless throng)
With tuneful tribute make the charm complete—
Each moor a memory and each stream a song.”

“The greatest glory of Scotland is not her grand scenery, her mountains and her lochs, but the men and women she turns out; who by their patience, pluck, and perseverance act first as pioneers and then as leaders in every realm of industry, art, and literature in which they are engaged.”

AND now having freely wandered at our own sweet will on the banks of the “Book-Stall” streamlet, whose course we have been endeavouring to explore and set down, noting the character of the country in which it ran, picking up some of the native plants which grew on its banks, and giving slight descriptions of some inhabitants of the district, whose wants the stream supplied, and whose thirst for knowledge it helped to assuage—we return to note briefly its course, its continued growth, some of the obstacles it encountered, and the amalgamations which certainly swelled its size, but did not materially increase its power.

When Mr. Brown entered the Town Council in 1812, its ordinary work was limited as compared with the present. Although a Council in name, it was not at all like the Council of the present day, but more like a regiment of soldiers kept well under command, and

Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to question why—

all that the rank and file had to do was to sanction the measures submitted to them by the Select Committee, who acted as their commanders; for objectors got short shrift and a speedy dismissal if they did not.

As a Magistrate he had at once to take his share in the Bailie Court at its weekly meetings on Saturday, to clear off the week's quarrels. The treatment of "drunks and disorderlies" was mainly left to the tender mercies of the then custodiers of the peace of the city, the six town's officers—being hardly recognised as a criminal offence, unless accompanied with violence.

But by his office Mr. Brown got immediately behind the scenes, and to a methodical man of good business habits, and accustomed to see the balance on the right side of his accounts, the prospect of the monetary affairs of the city revealed to him must have appeared onerous and responsible, but not altogether surprising. It is not without significance that, as has been already narrated, immediately on his entrance on office a City Chamberlain was appointed, and the Treasurer's books then arranged to be kept by the system of double entry. The town's financial difficulties had begun to be talked about, and from his position of Distributor of Stamps he must have had a shrewd suspicion that already in the Town Council paper money was becoming far more plentiful than solid cash.

The consultations with his brother magistrates on this subject were so frequent that he soon found there was imminent danger of his own business suffering by his frequent absence. Certain trades and manufactures may be successfully carried on without much supervision by the principal, provided his assistants are competent to manage the mere mechanical working. But his business as a publisher and bookseller was not mechanical, but peculiarly demanded professional knowledge and advice in many cases—which none but the principal could give, and without which his clients would not be satisfied.

His son, William, had received an excellent education, and was sharp and intelligent, but he was then only eighteen years of age, and was still only in the second year

of his apprenticeship, and could not be expected to take his father's place.

David Wyllie, the head assistant, had then been twenty-three years in Mr. Brown's service, and was an excellent book-keeper; to which department he had been kept, having a special faculty for accountantship, and a gift of clearly showing his accounts by means of ruled books, which were highly commended at head-quarters in Edinburgh, and which taxed the powers of the ruling machinery to produce them.

Mr. Brown, having united the library of Mrs. Burnett along with his own, placed it in a shop on the west side of Broad Street under charge of his assistant, Forbes Frost, who had the privilege of selling stationery; which last branch of business became both large and lucrative, and his customers seeing him only naturally looked on him as the principal.

He was connected with the Scottish Episcopalian Congregation, then meeting in Longacre, under the charge of Bishop John Skinner and Roger Aiken, and which had an interesting history. Disestablished at the Revolution, the Episcopalian ministers in Aberdeen retained their pulpits and their status as parish ministers until 1694, after which date they had to hide—literally, to sing small and silently, and to make themselves as little felt as possible, in consequence of the severe laws against them and their meeting places. No church edifice of theirs being tolerated, they generally met in rooms of dwelling houses; in Concert Court off Broad Street; in a room situated in a close in the Guestrow; and then in an obscure room at the back of the Tolbooth, which in 1745 was burnt, "in an economical manner," by Cumberland's troopers, who used the wood to heat their baker's ovens.

This severe treatment of Episcopalians was meted out to them because in the Rebellion of 1715 their loyalty to the Stuarts, and their devotion to the doctrine of the divine right of kings, was manifested by many of their members taking the most active parts in favour of the Pretender. Highland chieftains supported the cause simply for the misrule they could exercise and the plunder which they and their followers could acquire under a weak government;

hence their *loyalty*, which was the logic of brute force. But the great learning and the subtle logic of the Aberdeen doctors, in favour of divine right, so permeated the county, that ever since, Aberdeenshire has been described as “the true home, centre, and stronghold of Scottish Episcopacy” of the High Church order. Besides, it being so difficult for us to transport ourselves into the position of the men in these bye-gone times, hemmed in as they were on every side by the influences of their age and their limited knowledge; and it is so easy for us to be wise after the event, that we cannot help much too lightly scorning the reasons assigned by Prof. Wm. Meston, of Marischal College (1688-1745) when he says of the natives that—

They are not fond of innovations,
Nor covet much new reformations;
They are not for new paths, but rather
Each one jogs after his own father.

For is not this the very embodiment of the reasons which make all history; an explanation of all the convulsions in society, of all the wars, the rebellions, revolutions, persecutions, and martyrdoms, which so plentifully punctuate the pages of historians!

And so it came to pass that on the presentation of a *Presbyterian* minister—no less than John Gordon, son of the Provost of Aberdeen—to the parish of Old Deer, in 1711, and though, in order to see him inducted, he was accompanied by seventy horsemen and a small force of infantry, yet the parishioners violently resisted, and by means of a trap led the intruders into such a position that they were obliged to fly, leaving a feast provided for them to be partaken of by the victorious Jacobites, who drank the health of King James and confusion to his enemies at it. It was a serious collapse to the powers that were, and was at least one of the causes of the Patronage Act of 1712, the effect of which has so entirely changed the Presbyterianism of Scotland.

Although much cowed by the law proceedings taken against the rioters, the Jacobite zeal was not quenched. Three years after (1714) William Black, Sub-principal of King's College, with the other professors, presented and forcibly intruded Mr. John Sharp, as Episcopal minister to Old Machar. The

Presbyterians resisted, and conducted worship in Torryleith's house, until the Queen's Advocate interfered. Black was tried, condemned and imprisoned, which hastened his death that same year.

About this time some gleams of religious common sense, coupled with their inherited share of Aberdonian worldly wisdom, seems to have dawned on some of the resident Episcopalians. Recognising the powers that be as ordained of God, and discarding *de jure* for *de facto*, they yielded to the cogent reasoning of St. Paul, and gave honour to whom honour was due. They took the oaths to government, and the community with their usual good sense received this so favourably that very soon after they were able to build St. Paul's Church, 1721, in which several of the Incorporated Trades built galleries for themselves and their families. But so much was the adherence of this congregation to the new Hanoverian dynasty resented by their fellow church members that, even down to 1839, Dr. Joseph Robertson, in his Book of Bon-Accord, p. 329, can speak of them as "an odd sort of Independents, which is not yet extinct."

The other two congregations adhering to the belief in the divine right of kings,—were Jacobite almost to a man,—and suffered for it. And during the rebellion in 1745, being generally supporters of the exiled family, they reaped, what, as a State church, they helped to sow, the priceless privilege of persecution, which continued down to 1806; when having made the concession of publicly praying for the reigning sovereign, the persecution was relaxed.

Yet, when these prayers were first publicly used in the chapel, they were entirely drowned by the noise of the sudden and severe attacks of coughing by which the members were simultaneously seized; but which, curiously, as suddenly ceased at the conclusion of these particular prayers. Some, even Mr. Roger, absolutely refused to join at all, saying, "that the Bishop might pray the very *cknees aff his breeks afore they would join.*"

The members of this hitherto persecuted church, welded together by their alienation from their neighbours, in their forms of worship and in their hierarchical church government—so obnoxious to the young and rising democracy—were naturally clannish; and they rallied around Mr. Frost, especially the wealthier ladies of the flock. And it was little

wonder that in the spring-time of his days he made himself agreeable to them by his *suaviter in modo* (although later on in life the *fortiter in re* was considered his predominating characteristic). For they were such ladies! "well read, well bred, free yet refined, full of spirit and sense, yet with a strong organ of adhesiveness, distinct in character each from the other, as were the men—or as is the beech from the birch, a lily from a rose." "A delightful set, strong-headed, warm-hearted and high-spirited, merry even in solitude, very resolute, indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own way, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection and spirit, embodied in curious outsides; for they all dressed and spoke and did exactly as they chose. Their language, like their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for." The race of old Scottish gentlewomen, who were thrifty, yet liberal to the poor; very freely outspoken, yet in the Scotch it seemed refined in sentiment, who had snuff boxes in their pockets, and strong common sense in their heads, seems extinct now-a-days. But in Aberdeenshire for "common sense" read Jacobitism, in their devotion to which, both in the world and in the church, "the women had a' gane wud," in 1745, and had not yet quite recovered long afterwards.

Several of them took quite a motherly interest in the young bookseller, patronised him, made him the channel of their charities, and would have provided him with a partner had he been so inclined. Backed up by the ladies, who practically rule the world, Mr. Frost feeling secure in his position, became very independent, and spoke of starting in business on his own account. And so *Anderson's Poems*, appearing in 1813, with the imprint of "J. Mortimer, & F. Frost, Broad Street," while as yet the latter was merely in Mr. Brown's service, brought matters to a crisis; with the result that the separate shop was given up, and a partnership—to last for seven years, consisting of Mr. Brown, his son William, and Forbes Frost—was formed in 1814, under the title of A. Brown & Co., which has been now retained for more than eighty years.

Extensive additions and alterations on the premises at the corner of Broad Street and Queen Street were made, and

then it became "the showiest shop in town," and quite eclipsed that of Angus & Son, in the Narrow Wynd. Fine Corinthian pillars upheld the roof, and busts of celebrated authors ranging alongside that of Homer, prints of the King, Dundas, and the Tory leaders decorated the walls. Altogether, and at the time, it was a fitting temple of literature, and it served for Aberdeen, what the shops of Allan Ramsay and William Creech long did for Edinburgh, and is yet continued in the handsome saloon of W. Blackwood & Sons. The rent was fixed by Mr. Brown at £100, this being about the highest shop rent in the city.

But the handsome accommodation and high rent were warranted, for the business was extensive and prosperous, and was carefully cultivated; running accounts being kept with upwards of sixteen hundred customers, embracing all the leading families in the northern counties. Of the members of the County Club the names of nearly two-thirds were on the books. And from the difficulty of getting payment of their accounts, and their habit of taking long credit, the custom of others was not considered desirable, especially of some proprietors of entailed estates, on which accounts losses were incurred and are on record. As an illustration of the long credit taken, a tradesman, well known by the name of "Honest John," having an account of three years' running, without any payments, and threatening legal proceedings, the Laird called and offered payment on getting discount the same as for cash. "Na! na!" said John, "I canna afford discount on three year auld accounts." "Oh, but I must get discount on such a large account." John scratched his head and said, "Weel, Sir, if ye must have it, hoo much wad ye like?" "I expect five per cent. at least." John turned to his clerk—"Johnie," said he, "Johnie! jist mak oot this gentleman's account an' pit on ten per cent. on ilka article in't." "Ye see, Sir," he said to the Laird, "if ye maun hae discount I can gie ye ony discount ye like—but I maun live!" The Laird's eyes, ears, and understanding being thus practically opened, the account was paid at once, and John did not lose his customer by his plain language.

The partnership did not turn out the success which Mr.

Brown had hoped for or anticipated. Getting more and more absorbed in public business, Mr. Brown's energies—which if allowed scope, might have restored its ancient prestige to Aberdeen—got dissipated in Council work, and in his earnest endeavours to avert the impending crisis in the financial conditions of the city. Besides this, he was now a wealthy man; the rent from his investments and properties, the revenue from the fast increasing sale of stamps, and his business profits seem to have satisfied him, and he generously gave to the citizens, who had made him what he was, a large portion of his time and all his abilities. Partnerships not being like marriages, made in heaven, are just what the partners make it afterwards, and the two juniors did not pull well together. The son and heir would naturally desire some deference, and the new partner, accustomed to independent action, would as naturally resent this from a younger man. Their relations got strained, and frequent quarrels, with very strong language, unpleasant to ears polite, on Mr. Frost's part, so embittered the connection, that in 1819, the question of the renewal of the partnership in 1821 gave Mr. Brown much thought, and this along with his being a city creditor, kept him out of office that year, much to the disappointment of his associates, who accepted his son William for the time as Master of Mortifications. Some re-arrangement as to duties being agreed to, the business partnership was renewed in 1820, and was actually continued up to 1845, when Mr. Frost died. Mr. William Brown took charge of the Stamp Department, which from being a mere adjunct to the business, had then become as important as the business itself, and to which department he was officially appointed as Stamp Distributor in 1831; and Mr. Brown devoting himself to public affairs, gradually left the bookselling business under the sole management of Mr. Frost.

Meantime we conclude this chapter by narrating that in 1828 a very young school-boy, who had received a whole white "splendid shilling" as a Christmas present, and was the sole, individual, proud proprietor of it, with *ad libitum* power to spend it as he chose, entered the "Book-Stall" at the corner of Broad Street and Queen Street, and demanded in an imperious way from a stately looking person—who, the boy thought from his manner, must also have been his own equal in riches—the sight of some picture books—for the boy

loved art as well as literature. The considerate Mr. Frost, seeing the small size and youthful appearance of the sucking book-worm, was very gracious, and spread upon the counter such an array of beautiful books, that the boy was fairly dazzled, having no conception that there were so many beautiful books in the whole world. Then and there, with the revelation of such an El Dorado before him, that boy's lot in life was determined on—so far as he could choose—he would be a bookseller, and revel ever after in the "Gardens of Hesperides," then opened out to his admiring gaze. That old boy still marvels at the patience of the stately gentleman, who, retiring to his desk, allowed him such a long and deliberate choice. But his patience was rewarded, for after looking with gloating eyes over the whole collection (worth one shilling in itself for the look), the money changed hands, and the boy went out prouder than when he entered, as the possessor of—now, what do you think? It was neither "Jack the Giant Killer," nor "Puss in Boots," nor any of those charming stories which are so well fitted to stir the imagination when it should be stirred, and which form the seed-bed of "penny dreadfuls," "shilling shockers," or Mrs. Radcliff's Romances. No, no, it was a mixture of truth and imagination, of reality and fancy, startling yet quite credible, with unlimited danger, and yet such a happy deliverance from the surrounding perils, that it fixed down in the boy's mind a criterion of excellence in all books read ever after. It was an account of "The Great Serpent of Anaconda," with brilliantly coloured plates. The story burned itself into the boy's mind, and so, when many years had rolled on, he at last met with one solitary individual who knew the little book and had been equally impressed by it, how his heart warmed in meeting with a fellow-traveller in the old enchanting regions of the far off youthful time!

Little did Mr. Frost or the boy know then the after relations which should subsist between them—that of master and apprentice, friend and correspondent, partner in the firm, and successor of the stately gentleman. And yet so it came to pass. Involuntarily there rises to the mind the old rhyme:

O little did my mither ken
That day she cradled me,
What countries I should travel in,
Or what death I should dee!

CHAPTER XII.

“ We booksellers, if we are faithful to our task, are trying to destroy, and are helping to destroy all kinds of confusion, and are aiding our great Taskmaster to reduce the world into order, and beauty, and harmony. Bread we must have, and gain it by the sweat of our brow, or of our brain, and that is noble, because God-appointed . . . As truly as God is, we are His ministers, and help to minister to the well-being of the spirits of men. At the same time it is our duty to manage our affairs wisely, keep our minds easy and not trade beyond our means.”

Daniel MacMillan to J. MacLehose, 1843.

New times demand new measures and new men !
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our father's day were best !
And doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.

James R. Lowell.

FOR some years after entering into the Town Council, and forming his partnership, Mr. Brown must have been a busy man, and keeping the printers constantly at work also. There were new and large editions issued of *Campbell on the Gospels*, 4 vols., 8vo, and his *Ecclesiastical History*, in 2 vols. ; besides such works as Keith's *Survey of Aberdeenshire*, Paterson on *Witchcraft*, Arbutnot's *Fishes and Fuci of the Buchan Coast*, Brown's *Burnett's Prize Essay*, Kennedy's *Annals*, 2 vols, 4to, Watt's *Latin Grammar*, *Welsh's Geography*, with others. Watt's *Grammar*, when revised, became *Melvin's Latin Grammar*, and raised almost a rebellion amongst the teachers in the Grammar School, who hated innovations, and a correspondence in the local *Censor*, 1825. And the purchase of libraries still continued, and included those of the Rev. John Rose of Udny, Rev. J. Paterson of Auldearn, Professor James Beattie, and Professor Ogilvie, which were all duly catalogued and offered for sale, the auctioning of books having been discontinued for some years.

It was while occupying the Civic Chair in 1822, that Mr. Brown, less from prudential considerations, one may reason-

ably suspect, than from a laudable and patriotic desire to stimulate the taking of feus, and promoting building in Union Street, took two-thirds of the ground on which Union Buildings now stand, at the very large feu-duty of £375 8s. And he completed that block—the west portion having been built in 1818—in a very handsome manner, carrying out a design which gave uniformity to the whole buildings, and thus he led the way to the control which the Council afterwards exercised regarding the frontage of the buildings erected on their feuing-ground.

But, in order to provide a really handsome news-room for the citizens, the building was cut up in such a manner as to render it unprofitable as a paying investment, even when fully occupied by tenants. And when, in after years, the Union Club started a News-room, in what is now the Music Hall, the Athenæum News-room not only did not pay its expenses but it became an annual drain upon his resources, so serious that in after years, and by legal advice, he sold the property, which cost him well on to £12,000, to Mr. Blake, the then news-room attendant, for £5.

But although he had fulfilled the obligations of the feu charter, by erecting good and sufficient buildings, approved and sanctioned by the superiors, yet the Town Council declined to accept the transfer of the property, and fortified by a decision of the House of Lords, in the case of "King's College *versus* Lord James Hay," the Council held him and his heirs liable for the feu-duty in perpetuity. Such was the reward meted out to Provost Brown for his public spirit, his exertions to keep the Town Council out of its difficulties; to beautify the city, and to provide for the citizens a splendidly equipped News-room, then of much more importance than it is even now, when there is one kept up by a public rate. Sheltering themselves under the legality of the decision, the Council would listen to no compromise, and this embittered the declining days and the last years of the old Provost. But after his death, and in prospect of the rebuilding of the Town House during which their possession of the Athenæum buildings—in which the courts were held—was simply invaluable to the officials, they consented to relieve his heirs on payment of £500; selling it afterwards for a good round sum. Corporations are said to have no consciences, nor a spark of gratitude—but members have—and in his plain,

blunt, outspoken manner, with many expletives, and in much stronger language than is now in current use, Sir Alexander Anderson, when in office, said—that though he and Provost Brown had never rowed well together, yet his treatment by the Town Council was simply, etc., etc.

If, as according to Robertson of Irvine, who knew the country well, “the every-day religion of Germany consists in swearing,” Sir Alexander would have been considered eminently religious. Certainly his litany of words had a sulphurous odour, and had best be represented by ———— Any one who had ever known him can easily imagine the terms used by the knight who never minced his words, and had a copious vocabulary always at command. “I tell you what these yer things make me come *the nighest* to swearin’ now, o’ most anything,” says one of Mrs. Stowe’s immortal heroes when, sheltering Eliza and her boy, Harry, he heard the pitiful story of their escape from slavery.

If remonstrated with and told that swearing was of no use in the case, Sir Alexander would have said, with another ———, that was just the reason why he swore: like the poet Gray who says—

“I wept the more because I weep in vain.”

Let us be tender with the failings of the tongue when it springs from the kindness of the heart, and trust that the recording angel, with a convenient sponge, will wipe out the ugly and unmeaning words, and give credit for the goodwill.

But if, by building this property, Provost Brown helped in adorning Union Street, he was thus at the same time depreciating Broad Street. The current saying that every dog has his day, may also be applied to streets—they have their time and their fashion. The long line of Union Street was then beginning to be filled with houses, and every year saw larger houses erected, and showier shops opened. In the ‘teens of the century the booksellers were huddled close together in two or three adjacent localities, and to its honour, be it said, booksellers’ shops have always bulked largely in Aberdeen.

Mr. Wyllie left Mr. Brown’s employment on the formation of the partnership in 1814, and Columbus-like,

adventurously led the way westwards, to what was then considered the outskirts of the town—No. 43 Union Street, next to Crown Court!! becoming then an almost isolated pioneer of literature, in a comparatively desert place, for he was actually more than a stone-throw from any brother-in-trade. Following this hereditary instinct, that firm still continues to fly in the same direction. Some ten or twelve years after this, westward migration also took effect in the case of a neighbouring bookseller, Alexander Watson, who removed from 51 Broad Street to 95 Union Street (now occupied by Messrs. Lumsden & Gibson).

As the annual migration of birds cannot be stopt, so, neither can the periodical migration of those who wish to follow their customers; both are natural laws. Strictly and strongly conservative although the members of the firm of A. Brown & Co. might be, they could not resist the tendency of the times, nor the effect of it upon their business, which, under the management of Mr. Frost, did not show that continued advance it had hitherto shown. Rather the reverse, and so removal was decided on, after having been in Broad Street for nearly thirty years.

Sixty years ago space in Aberdeen was not so valuable in Union Street as it is at present. There was abundant room there, and to spare, and the firm, with a library of 55,000 volumes, a stock of about 30,000 books for sale, and with many huge bundles of books in sheets, and stationery, required large and ample room. Besides this, there was the musical library (containing nearly 20,000 pieces), which being now given up, was stored in damp cellars under the Athenæum, and rotted there for fifteen years, when it was sold by auction, and brought simply the price of waste paper.

The premises No. 71 Union Street, to which the "Book-Stall" was removed in 1831, has been so entirely altered by the formation of Market Street, and the changes made by the National Bank on the buildings, that it is difficult to convey an idea of it now, especially since the removal of the piazza on the east, which, like that still remaining on the west, curtailed the width of Market Street. The three houses on the east belonged to Mr. A. Knox, mail contractor, and the upper floors of these houses were occupied by Isaac Machray, the proprietor of the Royal Hotel, then

the principal hotel in the city. The stables at the back were entered by a narrow lane from Putachieside, and over this lane Brown & Co. erected a three storey building, and through it got access to the upper flats of a large house in Putachieside, and thus in addition to their shop fronting Union Street, they had ten spacious rooms, in which, with ample shelving, it was a pleasure for the assistants to easily lay hands on any book which might be wanted, and a pleasure also to play high jinks in by themselves, or with customers, youthful or sedate, who found their way into the back premises in search of knowledge. The rooms were admirably suited for the storage and display of books; far more so than the old premises, and we get an idea of the then current rents, in finding that, exclusive of the building of the connecting narrow tenement over the lane, the rent charged for all this was only £75 per annum.

Notwithstanding the fact that two of the partners in the "Book-Stall" were strict Presbyterians, as the managing partner was a rigid Episcopalian, and latterly was apt to speak with contempt of all other denominations, the business, from being a purely literary one, having business connections with members of all the churches, gradually became more and more frequented and patronized by those who were specially favoured by the managing partner.

And when the religious revival began to make itself felt in the early years of this century, showing itself first as a ground swell in the activity of Dissenters, and in the union of the two seceding bodies in 1820; then, in the Puseyite and Ritualistic revival of church practice in England; and lastly in the triumph of Evangelicalism in the Scottish Church—society began to range itself into parties, which got more and more distinct, and businesses, particularly that of bookselling, became centres round which the partizans rallied—influential fountains for the dissemination of opinion—and getting mixed up with the separate currents of opinion, were carried along with them, and divided from each other into distinctive classes.

Both Provost Brown and his son, William, as might have been expected, if there is any truth in hereditary influences, took their part with the Non-Intrusion section of the Church

of Scotland, as led by Dr. Chalmers, while on the same principle, all Mr. Frost's sympathies were with the members of the moderate party, the high and dry men, who, in his opinion, fulfilled all Christian duty by regularly paying their half-yearly accounts, and as regularly buying from him some volumes of sermons to retail to their flocks during the next six months. Of this class of customers there were some characteristic specimens of the genus with whom he was on intimate terms. For it must be remembered that as yet the Scottish Episcopalians did not venture to speak of their clergymen as "Priests," nor of their denomination as "The Church." This belief, if then even dreamt of, like that of the divine right of kings, had received very rude handling by the events of history and the force of circumstances; and although it might have been held by a few amongst them, such as the primitive and saintly Bishop Jolly; yet such titles and claims were strongly objected to by worthy and esteemed Bishop W. Skinner, who, with many of his flock, were disposed to be well content with their position amongst the other churches in the land. And such claims were entirely repudiated by the catholic Bishop Ewing, who might be freely accepted as a Bishop of Christ's church by many, if not most Presbyterians.

At the Revolution period, if the south-east of Scotland was moderate Presbyterian and the south-west zealously Cameronian, Aberdeenshire and the north-east was almost entirely Episcopalian, and continued so for nearly a generation after. Many of the old parish ministers stepped easily into their new positions by well-oiled grooves, for at the time there was little outward difference in the forms of worship—indeed, less than there is at present, for in most congregations there was a Session of Elders. The real distinction between the new Presbyterians and their predecessors was, that the first professed loyalty to the new dynasty, which brought them favour, while the Non-Jurors were persecuted by the authorities. In their prosperity they had held that kings can make princes of the blood, Bishops, and Archbishops, and, if so, why not martyrs also. A doctrine extremely convenient so long as they were made Bishops and Archbishops, but very inconvenient if they had the chance of being made martyrs. Yet the whole course of history proves that though individuals may perish, Christi-

anity has little to fear from persecution as a foe ; but it has much more to fear from persecution as an ally.

But for the English Ritualists, Dr. Pusey, Keble, and others, this exclusively claimed title of *The Church* would at that time never have been heard of in Scotland. Bound by Acts of Parliament, and fettered by decisions of the Privy Council, members of either, being not necessarily members of *The Church* but possibly Jews or Agnostics, the earnest English Ritualists, in their Tractarian fever, envied the independence of their small Scottish sister-church, and forgetting the political causes in which this arose, would fain have filled her position, free and uncontrolled as she was.

Partly owing to this changed English feeling, and still more to a general revival of religion all over the country and in all the churches, a new day seemed dawning on Scottish Episcopacy, and to the glad and grateful surprise of its members, after an ice-bound period of more than a hundred years, during which they had been harassed and down-trodden at home, and accustomed to more frowns than flattery from their English brethren ; the wintry wind suddenly ceased, the cold blasts of censure and isolation gave place to the balmy breath of Puseyite praise, and under its genial influence, the dry bones gathered together, bone to bone, and discarding the Jacobite integument, became clothed with flesh—arose—moved, and began to assert itself.

In the early stage of the Oxford movement there was great enthusiasm for the little Church that had long faithfully kept up so much that Oxford was then striving to restore. When Bishop William Skinner visited Oxford in 1843, it was said that the calls that were made upon him for the Episcopal blessing were so numerous and frequent, as to cause him serious bodily fatigue. (Dr. Walker's *Life of Bishop Jolly*).

It was worth while to have lived and seen the awakening of this section of the church militant, especially in that district where its roots had sunk deep. Under the spiritual influences, the hitherto stunted plant suddenly sprang up with vigour and new life, and it budded, bloomed, and blossomed like a true Scottish thistle, with, as Dr. Brown would say, a considerable amount of the *Nemo me* element in it—not perhaps solely confined to it, but in it, culminating in assumptions which practically unchurched nine-tenths of their fellow countrymen.

What is related of the wounded French soldier, that, when the doctor was probing for the bullet, he said, "a little deeper and you will find the Emperor," might—with the substitution of the name of Prince Charlie—have been said by almost every Scottish Episcopalian, down to the early years of this century. Even then the feeling against Presbytery, as identified with adherence to the new dynasty, was incredibly strong and bigoted. When May Forbes, a niece of Bishop Drummond, so far forgot her narrow sectarian creed as to accept the Rev. George Pirie, parish minister of Slains (the father of Principal Pirie), as her husband, the remark of her uncle the Bishop was, that "he would not presume to limit the mercies of God, but *he was sorry for poor May!*"

This was intolerant enough, yet the Bishop felt sorry. But a far worse case occurred fifty years after this. A local city parish minister had as a faithful servant a member of his congregation, long tried and much trusted. Courted by a member of the Evangelical Union, Mary accepted his offer of marriage, and knowing her master's hatred of dissenters, she left his service and was married by the Rev. Fergus Ferguson. Three months after, she met her old minister, who stopt her and said he had been missing her from church, "Oh but you ken, Sir, I'm marriet noo, and I gang wi' my husband to Mr. Ferguson's!" "Weel, weel, Mary" said the minister, "hell-'ill haud ye baith!" Alas! so little had Christian charity permeated the professors of Christianity in the middle of the nineteenth century.

May Forbes was evidently a sensible exception to the general tendency of female opinion at the time, for, as was said and sung, "the women are a' gane wud." If the French king styled the Chevalier, that "wise old gentleman who lost three kingdoms for a lass," the lasses in Scotland of all ranks and stations seemed willing to lose everything for loyalty. There were hundreds who would fain have imitated Flora Macdonald for love of Charlie. Lady Keith, wife of the Earl Marischal, being attempted to be condoled with on her two sons having ruined their prospects by taking part in the rebellion, indignantly replied, "If they had not done as they did, I would have gone out myself with my spindle and my rock!" Jean Gordon, wife of the Gipsy chief, Patrick Faa, and the prototype of Meg Merrilees in Guy Mannering, was for her Jacobitism ducked to death by the rabble at

Carlyle, yet as frequently as she could get her head above water she continued to shout, 'Charlie yet! Charlie yet!' But her name is not to be found in the *Kalendar of the Scottish Church*, perhaps because she stole hens! And Eppy Bissett, the Stonehaven fish-wife, when she heard that Earl Marischal had recanted Jacobitism and submitted to the Hanoverian dynasty, exclaimed in disgust, "Ah me! has *he* swallowed the gollachie?"

At the end of last century the Scottish Episcopalian might have said:—

"For my *true* King I offered free from stain
 Courage and faith; vain faith and courage vain,
 For him I threw lands, honours, wealth away,
 And one dear hope, that was more prized than they."

The trials they encountered and the sufferings they endured throughout all the years of the last century shed a halo of romance around their little communion, which was cherished by them as much as the memories and traditions of the covenanting times were and are cherished by the descendants of the Cameronians and Hillmen. In one respect these parties were singularly alike; both conjoined and enjoined political objects with their religious creed; both confounded the kingdom of this world with the 'heavenly kingdom,' and both suffered persecution for this. But ah! how different and how diametrically opposed to each other were their aims and results. The flag which bore "For Truth and Liberty" has won the field, that which bore "For King and Tyranny" has been trailed in the dust, dishonoured and disowned. Reason opposed it in the hope of averting a bloody revolution. Advancing intelligence and civilization supported civil and religious liberty. The very heavens fought in favour of freedom, in the conduct of the "anointed" and the extinction of his race.

For a hundred years the grim and ghastly decorations of that "Golgotha" of London, Temple Bar, consisted of the bleached skulls of gallant Jacobites, who gave their lives for what they believed to be the cause of religious faith, loyalty and justice. Had there been any scarcity, Aberdeenshire alone could have supplied scores, and continued the supply down to very recent times. Is it even yet extinct? Read the following, which appears in this year of grace, 1895!

"The chief of the Jacobite League in England, the Marquis

de Ruvigny and Rainovol, has lately published a curious "Legitimist Kalendar," which may be described as a kind of Almanack de Gotha of the legal as distinguished from the actual rulers of the world. Of course, the real Queen of England is Mary of Bavaria. There is no German Empire, no German Emperor, but only Prussia, and the King of Prussia. The King of Spain is Don Carlos, and the Empress of Brazil is Isabella, daughter of Dom Pedro. The claim of Princess Mary of Bavaria to be Queen of England is in brief that, whereas the reigning sovereign is descended from a sister of Charles I., Mary of Bavaria is descended from a daughter. According to the Kalendar there are 20 Jacobite clubs and associations, the most important of which is the Jacobite League of Great Britain and Ireland. The league has two organs, the "Royalist" and the "Legitimist."

But if not yet quite extinct they are now looked on as old convicts out upon a ticket-of-leave, and the ignominious martyrdom they would now endure would be that of confinement in a Lunatic Asylum, if their belief was attempted to be carried into actions.

"Although," writes Lord Wolseley, "the principle of hereditary right received its death-blow at the Revolution it did not actually expire until, at the death of Queen Anne, a simple Act of Parliament made the Elector of Hanover King of England. As long as any Stewart sat upon the throne the notion of "Divine Right" survived. It was a romantic sentiment, associated in men's minds with much that was great and glorious in our history. It served to fire the dull minds of the uneducated with gleams of hero-worship, and the loyalty which is engendered brightened the most commonplace existence."

But the substitution of attachment to the State, the country, and the fatherland, for the feeling of personal loyalty, must be regarded as a distinct moral gain: an enlightened patriotism. "Such a sentiment as that which led Jacobites and Non-Jurors to fight for a line of sovereigns whose triumph, in their own estimation, was bound to be dangerous to church and law; or at least to abstain from recognising a better order, and to estrange themselves from all interest in their country's struggles—all wish to see that country triumph must be regarded as among the most lamentable of delusions." And when the Scottish Jacobites

invited, encouraged, aided, and abetted a French invasion it is not to be wondered at that they were proscribed, not for their religion, but for their disloyalty to their country.

The efficiency of Persecution, fire, and faggot, with other devilish contrivances as Church agencies for the conversion of souls, tried for so long in Scotland, had begun to be doubted, and by the beginning of this century the dawn of a new and better era was hailed, as witness the following taken from the *Aberdeen Journal*, 19th June, 1807 :—

“ Absurd and vain attempt ! To bind
 With iron chains the human mind,
 To force conviction, and reclaim
 The wandering—by destructive flame.
 Bold arrogance ! To snatch from Heaven
 Dominion, not to mortals given,
 O'er conscience to usurp the throne,
 Accountable to God alone.”

When in 1789, by the death of the last Stuart that made a fight for the throne, and the Aberdeen Synod—accepting this as the natural solution of their difficulty—agreed to recognise and pray for King *George*, they sent a deputation of Bishops to London with a Bill for the repeal of the Penal Laws, under which they had been proscribed for a whole century. The Bill was passed readily by the House of Commons, and would have passed the Lords but for the stubbornness of Chancellor Thurlow, whom they failed to propitiate, and who proved the evil genius of the Bill. He was indeed a *bete noir* and a most curious specimen of a legislator. When in a reply to a request from Dissenters from relief from the Test Act, his answer was : “ God d—— you all ! I don't care a fig whether your religion is uppermost or ours, or any, or none. If yours were uppermost you would keep us down, and we will keep you down, that's all !”

“ Ours,” says Thackeray, “ is the most loyal people in the world surely : we admire our kings, and are faithful to them long after they have ceased to be true to us . . . 'Tis a wonder to any who look back at the history of the Stuart family to think how they kicked their crowns away from them ; what treasures of loyalty they dissipated, and how fatally they were bent on consummating their own ruin. If ever men had fidelity 'twas they ; if ever men squandered

opportunities 'twas they ; and of all the enemies they had, they themselves were the most fatal."

"The edifice which the believers in Divine Right had so laboriously founded, erecting it in their sufferings, building it up with their treasures, and cementing its stones with their heart's blood, fell into ruins before the advancing tide of public opinion, was demolished before their eyes, and they were stoned with the ruins."

The partnership, founded as it was on business prospects alone, without any reference to congeniality of sentiment in the partners, was anomalous, could hardly have been attractive at first, and never became a cordial one. Forty years rubbing in the world, with its varied experiences, had extinguished all traces of his Seceder training in Provost Brown, who became an elder of the West Kirk in 1827.

But if he had been beguiled into seeming carelessness as to his religious profession, by the honours of the world showered upon him, his pious and estimable wife was not so. Thirty years past, she, the descendant of pious forbears, all connected with the Established Church, had accepted him as a Seceder, and had cast in her lot with them, and now, from principle, hard as she must have felt it, refused to leave their communion, and to this she steadfastly adhered, till death united them in a wider communion. And she had her reward, for although her sons took office in the Established Church, the good seed sown by her in precept and example, coupled, shall we say, with a diluted heredity, so operated that two of them became influential ministers of the Free Church of Scotland, and, each being called to the Moderator's chair, received the highest honours which that church could confer, and were recognised by all as worthy of the honour, and conferring honour on the office.



CHAPTER XIII.

“A taste for books is the pleasure and the glory of my life. It is a taste which I would not exchange for the wealth of the Indies. The miseries of a vacant life are never known to a man whose hours are insufficient for the inexhaustible pleasure of study.”

Gibbon.

“Among all the schools where the knowledge of mankind is to be acquired, I know none equal to that of a bookseller’s shop. . . . It would be an endless task to set down the various and opposite articles wanted, and by the demand made, one gets a better idea of the wants of the world, than in any other way. He [the bookseller] comes in contact with enquiring minds in all grades of society, and his shop is the natural resort of cultured minds.”

THIS last quotation was the testimony of James Lackington, the famous London bookseller, 1746-1816; who, by his enterprise, revolutionized the trade by purchasing the remaining copies of unsold books, which had been first published at a high price, and selling them afterwards at a price which brought them within reach of the meanest condition and the lowest purse. He was the precursor of a most useful class of men for the publishers, relieving them of stocks of books which had become unsaleable at the high prices when they first appeared, and were considered as *recherché* as grapes and green peas in May, but by age had become as raisins or grey peas in January, yet retaining all their nutritive qualities to the enquiring mind. Previous to his day it had been the custom to destroy or burn one-half or three-fourths of such books, and with this rule he complied for some time, but afterwards kept the whole stock, and sold them at reduced prices, creating quite a panic among the other booksellers. In cases like Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, in his youth, had the run of a bookseller’s shop, we see the wide and ripe scholar as the product, while as in Lackington’s case it produced the sharp, intelligent, and acute man of business, who took to his business and worked it with brains, putting the essence of the books he dealt in into his own mind, and

thus proved himself an intelligent and safe guide to his customers.

During the long existence of the "Book-Stall," a numerous race of assistants received a training in it. Quite a host of names figure in its business books, and might be given. Many of them "come like shadows—so depart," are only names, sometimes not even that, but simply "the boy." And could their after careers be followed and described, volumes might be filled with the strange medley; several cases having considerable romance connected with them, which might worthily occupy the pen of a Smiles. Even still, and to some old people, it will be sufficient to name A. Hill, William Mortimer, William Laurie, David Wyllie, Joseph Philip, Alex. Leslie, John Kiloh, James Brownie, and James Strachan, as citizens who in a past generation trod the stage of Time here, and figured in the Aberdeen Directory.

One family named Matthews furnished in succession three sons—Calder, Alexander, and James—who all became head assistants; while Robert, another brother, after being a clerk to the Copper Company, entered the service, and died as manager of the London Shipping Company. These were proteges of Mr. Frost's. In 1817 another such, James Macray, entered as assistant to Joseph Parker, of Oxford, and from that rose to be one of the librarians of the Bodleian Library, filling the position with much credit. On Mr. Frost's death he would fain have come back to the old place, had the partners been agreeable, which they were not.

Amongst many others of a later date we need only mention William Blake, once in business here; Charles Moir, of long and faithful service; John Davidson, now with a flourishing business in Ontario, Canada; James Brydon, in New Zealand; Charles Helmrich, a prosperous wholesale stationer; Alex. Christie, in the South; James C. Hutchieson, manager of an extensive paper work in Somerset, a cultivator of the muse Euterpe and a compiler of poetry; James Mair, also a compiler of books; and we close the fast extending list with the name of John T. Clark, who, along with the firm in the service of which he first began life has been useful in helping on the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." An English

applicant for a London situation being told that there was no work for him, at once said that he did not care for the work, but wanted the pay; while a Scottish applicant was informed that there was no room for more partners in the firm—a very fair estimate of national characteristics. John served for some time very satisfactorily, did not shirk extra work when a press came, never left at the regular time if anything was left undone, never complained of work, wages, hours of service, or of his employer, but had, and still retains a kindly regard for him. But he desired to leave, and gave a strange and most unusual reason, saying that he abhorred the business because “every morning I have to come to my work dressed, and have to keep my coat on all day!” It looked Bohemian, and yet was very far from it, for it was hard work in order to get his superabundant steam worked off that he wanted. Getting into congenial employment he worked with brains and will and so was bound to succeed. He now rides in a carriage of his own, and supplies the Royal Family, Her Majesty’s subjects, and other parties—some of foreign nationality—to their great satisfaction.

Fifty years connection with the firm afforded ample opportunities of studying the character of boys who served, and of finding out what proportion of them were drawn to the business by their own inclination and love of books, or were put into it by their parents simply for the wages, or because they were getting old, and rebelled against any more schooling. It is more than two thousand years since Plato, the greatest philosopher of ancient times, wrote, that “of all animals the boy is the most unmanageable.” During the long lapse of time since then, Evolution has apparently not done much for him, for the school inspector, Matthew Arnold, testified as to his barbarian character in his day. Yet the world’s wicked maxim, to “think every one a rogue until he proves himself to be honest,” has always been repudiated by the writer in the very strongest manner. “There are some who by their faces tell you that they absolutely cannot commit a deliberately mean or dishonourable act; you *know* it, and you recognise the fact as readily as you know that you cannot trust some other face.” All feel this and act on it, for there are attractive faces,

especially in the young, on which truth and honesty seem to be "writ" large, and there are faces wanting these features, which instinctively breed aversion. Given a good nest, a fair heredity, an orthodox Scottish training—no matter of what creed—and an honest physiognomy, and as surely as the Revolutionary French soldier carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, that boy will rise to the top of his profession, and will do good service to his employer all the while he is climbing. Found an applicant of this kind, an employer does well when he grapples him with hooks of steel pens, and binds him as an apprentice at once. Wanting in any of these points, prudence points out the propriety of first taking him on trial, and giving him a chance. Almost invariably it will then be found that it is those taken on trial who give trouble, and it may be considered fortunate when the trial does not require to be long, whatever way it ends.

But times are greatly changed within the last half century regarding the supply of junior assistants in business. Places multiplied faster than the supply, and now active intelligent girls, quite as smart and more docile, have largely taken the place of boys. The time looms near when, as in Paris, many women will be the managers of large and important businesses. Instead of masters having their pick of boys the boys now choose their masters, and criticise them thus :

In answer to a placard of "A Smart Boy Wanted," in the window, a veritable street arab went into the shop, and, going up to the junior member of the firm, said—"I came in to see about that place." "Well," said the proprietor, looking the little ragamuffin over from head to foot, "you know we don't pay very much here." "How much do yer pay?" inquired the boy. "Four shillings a week," returned the proprietor. "I couldn't think of workin' for that," said the boy, "for I can make more selling papers." "Well," said the proprietor, "when I first went to work I got only three shillings a week." The arab surveyed the speaker from head to foot, and then giving his head a toss and edging towards the door, said—"Well, perhaps that was all you was worth."

Americans speak of the "almighty dollar;" here the penny takes its place. Energetic boys have been known to earn from twelve to fifteen shillings weekly by selling news-

papers ; and when they have prudent and thrifty parents have educated themselves, and ultimately found their way into the ministry.

Dismissing at once any notice of those waifs and straws who floated for a very short time on the "Book-Stall" streamlet, who were soon washed ashore, and whose dismissal enabled them to find their own place ; and also of those, who, finding they had booked on a wrong train, and who afterwards took another line which led them into more congenial yet honourable employment, in which they had an opportunity of expending and expanding their peculiar tendencies with good effect for themselves and the public ; old friends and customers may not object to the introduction of sketches of the career of one or two former assistants, who may yet be remembered by some of them as obliging servants, and who cannot be forgotten by those whom they faithfully served. For is not history but the essence of innumerable biographies, and lessons may be learnt from even the simple annals of young lives.

Dr. Johnson has said that "there was not a man in the street whose biography might not be made interesting, provided he could narrate something of his experiences of life, his trials, difficulties, successes and failures." Faithfully or fancifully drawn, Oliver Wendel Holmes has said that every articulated speaking human being has, in his own life, stuff for at least one good novel. And so also Carlyle says in his *Life of Sterling*:—"I have remarked that a true delineation of the smallest man and his scene of pilgrimage through life is capable of interesting the greatest man ; that all men are, to an unspeakable degree, brothers, each man's life a strange emblem of every man's : and that human portraits faithfully drawn are of all pictures the welcomest on human walls."

Amongst the assistants in the shop at Mr. Frost's death, in 1845, was a young lad named John Cormack, connected with St. Andrew's Chapel ; a protégé of Mr. Frost's, and who had then been in his service for three years. As a bookseller he had been captured young—before the School Board came into being with its despotic sway—and both Mr. Frost and the present writer had to look after his

education, which he took readily up. He was subjected in early life to severe temptations, and when a crisis came, which was either the making or the marring of his future career, it was a pleasure to think, that with kindly treatment, it turned out to be the making. For it is true that—

“ Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife twixt truth and falsehood, for the darkness or the light ;
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right.”

He became an excellent assistant, and a great favourite with all the customers. After a faithful service of twelve years, wishing to push his fortune, a place was found for him in Smith, Elder, & Co.'s large establishment in Cornhill, London. Before leaving in February, 1854, he was entertained at supper in the “Lemon Tree” by a company of forty friends who loved him, and customers whom he had served. He soon made his mark in London, got favourably acquainted with John Ruskin and Frederick Maurice, becoming an assistant in the Working Men's College. He then accepted an appointment in the P. & O. Company's service, and was sent out by them to Shanghai, where his activity and intelligence got full scope. By collecting and sending home Chinese curios, by importing Wilson's Stereoscopic Views, and by securing an agency for the then new Aniline Dyes, which were all the fashion in China—the “Flowery Land,” and so the land of bright colours—he in a few years made a fortune ; retired, and came home, looking forward to his marriage and a life of well-earned ease. But man proposes, and God disposes ; it was not so to be. The writer met him in London on his arrival, received him at Aberdeen on a week's visit, when he went to his relations at Peterhead to settle down there. A few months elapsed, during which the young life fought a strong fight against the insidious enemy of life, who was then sapping and mining under the fair form. Then sad to say—

“ He, the young and strong, who cherished noble longings for
the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished, weary with the march
of life.”

And then the writer stood by his graveside in deep grief and sorrow, from which he was painfully aroused by hearing

the beautiful and affecting burial service of the Church of England, so murdered and atrociously mangled by the clergyman hurrying it over in a manner so jarring to a sorrowing mind, that he has never forgotten nor forgiven it; another sorrow was added by this, to that of bereavement. Milton says that he who destroys a book is guilty of murder, and surely doubly so is he who takes away and kills all the life and feeling from the "sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection," by his careless indifference and apparent unbelief. What if he had killed this hope altogether? During the time when the Inquisition was supported by the civil power, heretics and heretical books were sought out and destroyed by fire. Macaulay tells us that one book, entitled *Of the Benefits of the Death of Christ*, eagerly read in every part of Italy, and many times reprinted, met this fate, because the Inquisitors detected in it the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. "It is now as hopelessly lost as the second decade of Livy."

But now turning over a leaf and changing the subject we select another case, in the narration of which there is nothing but joy and congratulation. In May, 1862, the firm advertised for an assistant, and amongst numerous applicants, a single glance at each of whom was quite sufficient to tell them that they need not call again, there stepped into the "Stall" one day a young lad, whose fair open countenance at once spoke volumes to any one who knew anything about physiognomy, and had an instinctive belief in it. As he still lives—in order to spare his blushes—we forbear description of the face, but that both nature and heredity had richly dowered him in this feature, the narrative will abundantly prove, and for the same reason his name is withheld. Asking as to his residence, he said it was in the country, fully two miles away. When told that this was a fatal objection, inasmuch as he could hardly be expected to attend the opening of the shop at 7.30 a.m. "Oh, Sir!" he said, "you only try me! if you say seven o'clock I shall be in time, for I rise every morning before six, and take a spell of work in the garden." The fair face, the frank speech, and the earnest determination of the boy was irresistible, and the proprietor felt captured by the lad.

But while so, prudently, and in order not to show this, he continued to urge all the objections he could think of regarding meal hours, etc. To all these there were ready, instant answers, and in short it was quite clear that the boy's mind was set on the occupation and the place, and this being so it was soon settled, and without any stipulations as to being on trial, he was accepted. He became a very valuable and trusted assistant, soon becoming a great favourite with all the frequenters of the "Book-Stall," and was a model in punctuality and civility, for, with a smiling countenance, he was ever ready to oblige, and as years passed on his services became ever increasingly valuable.

Amongst old respected customers in these days, the late Colonel Fraser, of Inverallóchy and Castle Fraser, had long held an honoured place. The "Book-Stall" was always visited by him when he came to town, and he generally spent some considerable time in it, not on business alone. Then his usual dignity was laid aside for familiarity and frankness; he learnt the talk of the town, saw the novelties of the season, and freely noticed and conversed with the assistants. He appeared to notice the young new assistant in an especial manner, and on one occasion making some purchases, particularly desired that he might be sent up to the Northern Club with them. On leaving them there, the waiter detained the lad, saying the Colonel wished to see him. He seemed to have made a favourable impression, and got a handsome gift as the messenger. Next time the Colonel came to Aberdeen he called, and noticed the lad so graciously that it was quite enough to have turned his head, and, had this been possible, to have made his employers jealous. The Colonel then stated that having some papers and books in confusion at Castle Fraser, he wished us to get some one who could arrange them for him, saying that it would not occupy more than a week at the utmost. We immediately offered to procure a clerk from an advocate's office, but he instantly said, "No, no, your lad there will be quite competent, and I will pay you for his services." And so it was arranged, the time for his service commencing very curiously on a Saturday evening. A first-class railway ticket was sent him. On his arrival at the station, the Colonel in his carriage was awaiting him, and for the next eight days the lad lived in such a wealth of clover as even

no fairy story book could have adequately described. There was some sham of arranging of papers, a sort of confusion purposely confused, evidently to try the capacity of the lad, but which, to one trained in the "Book-Stall," was so easy that it was set all right in an hour or two. After that, every day was one continued round of pleasure, in which everything possible was contrived and done in order to gratify the boy. The Colonel was his companion in carriage drives all round the country side, and all kinds of amusements—provided they did not separate the two—were placed at his disposal. The frank, free, and truthful outspokenness of the boy—not yet beyond the age "when thought was speech, and speech was truth," and not yet arrived at the time of life when, as with Talleyrand, "speech was given in order to conceal the truth"—must have been a delightful study to all the members of the family, and their knowledge of *natural* philosophy must have been largely increased by contact with the young and fresh mind, brought so suddenly into such entirely different social surroundings and circumstances. At the conclusion of his week's *work*, he was most handsomely rewarded, and sent into Aberdeen with strict injunctions that every Saturday afternoon he was to come out and spend the next day with the Colonel at his castle, for which a railway pass was provided to him.

It says something for oatmeal, the *Shorter Catechism*, and the training in the "Book-Stall," that such a boy should have been turned out; a boy capable of affording a mental treat to an intellectual and highly cultured family, so far, and so highly removed in social position from the rustic class to which their greatly honoured guest belonged. We read of such things, but generally only in romance and fiction, and yet, here is one other illustration of the veritable saying, that there is no romance like that of real life, and that "truth is stranger than fiction."

If the Colonel was a physiognomist, as he must certainly have been, there was little peril to him in the experiment. It might be a mere freak of fancy, which, if unsuccessful, could easily be ended, but, if so, it was perilous indeed for the one experimented on, and in many cases might have led to disastrous results—unsettling, and making the victim discontented for life. But the Colonel's shrewdness was

happily justified, and evidently he had read the human face divine to some purpose. From the fiery trial the lad emerged without the smell of fire on him, or even the singeing of his garments, and he returned unharmed, as modest, gentle, and obedient to parents and masters as ever. The only difference on him was, that now, instead of taking a hard spell of physical work in the material home garden in the early morning, he chose the mental garden, and began a course of hard study. At Castle Fraser he seemed to have acquired his first sight of the "Delectable Mountains," which, if not exactly those seen by Bunyan's *Pilgrim*, were so rosy and fascinating that they drew him on with an irresistible attraction.

Here the story might appropriately end. Having fired the electric spark, and supplied the young mind with a high ideal, and a stimulus to exertion, which could not fail to be fruitful seed, if only it was sown in good ground, the influence of the patron might have ceased, and he might have been contentedly pleased to look for the blushing blossoms, the flower, and the fruitage as the sure result of his beneficent work. And some philanthropists would have stopt at this stage. Had they not done what they could with their money? as if money was the *summum bonum* of the life of an immortal soul. Money is by no means the only desirable thing in life. Colonel Fraser knew that, and this was not by any means his first experiment in philanthropy. For years past he had quietly experimented in this way, so secretly, that only the great day will reveal it. Although, in this benevolent work he did not let his right hand know what his left hand did, yet it was impossible that it should be hid. His family were quietly "airt and pairt" with him; if he was the explorer and the discoverer of gold fields, they assayed the ore, and reported the result—stamping him with the *Hall* or *Castle* mark—confirmatory of the Colonel's shrewd prospecting; and outsiders, like the present writer, only by persistent enquiry came to the knowledge of the nuggets he had unearthed, and brought out into honour and renown. Having lifted the boy into a higher atmosphere, he could yet condescend to his level. He visited his home, saw the nest in which his protégé was reared, enquired minutely into the circumstances of the family, and being satisfied, left substantial tokens of his good will and interest in the lad and his relatives.

Next year, getting his holidays by desire at a particular time, he was taken to London as the guest of the kind Colonel, who afterwards expressed the great pleasure he had experienced in hearing and seeing the lad's rapturous delight in the marvellous wonders he there saw under good guidance; and as a remembrance of this happy time, he showed a handsome watch and chain the Colonel had presented him with. The following year, in like manner, he was taken to Paris and saw all the sights there under the most favourable circumstances, and at a time when trips to Paris were not so common as they now are. In these trips youth was at the prow, and pleasure was his companion, but Colonel Fraser held the tiller, and all went well.

Sometime after this, the Colonel intimated to the writer that he was desirous to promote the boy's advancement in life, and could procure for him a confidential position in a large establishment, provided he was qualified as a facile reporter in shorthand, and begged that his indenture in the *Book-Stall* might be cancelled. And after the *pros* and *cons* had been discussed in the boy's interest, for the Colonel was told that the boy was bound to rise in life, this was done to our loss. He went on the staff of one of the newspapers as a reporter for a time, and has now for many years filled with credit a highly responsible position as a banker in one of our principal cities.

¶ ¹/₂ The episode of his service in the "Book-Stall," and thus the introduction to his benefactor, is looked back on by him as one of the happiest periods in an active and honourable career. And the story is told in order that the pessimist may know that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy!"

The Pyramids may have forgot the names of their founders; but the memory of Colonel Fraser will be lovingly remembered in the grateful hearts of several men now in high social position; will be handed down by them to the next generation, and recorded in print, will last as long as the English language.

"But strew his ashes to the wind,
Whose sword or voice has served mankind!
And is he dead, whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind,
Is not to die."

CHAPTER XIV.

The world's a stage ! each mortal acts thereon,
As well the king that glitters on the throne
As needy beggars ; heaven spectator is,
And marks who acteth well, and who amiss,
What part befits me best, I cannot tell ;
It matters not how mean, so acted well.

Francis Quarles, 1590-1644.

“ History may well be called a Divine Providence . . . the keeper of such things as have been virtuously done, and the witness of evil deeds. By the benefit of History, all noble, high and virtuous acts be immortal.”
Bourchier Lord Berners (Preface to Froissart).

“ Our deeds are like children that are born to us ; they live and act apart from our will. Nay, children may be strangled, but deeds never ; they have an indestructible life both in and out of our consciousness. There are debts for which the law allows no credit, which we cannot clear off by paying extra for the years that have slipped by, although we seek to do so, painfully and with tears.”

AFTER narrating some incidents in the career of two assistants ; one having a short and busy period of work, with the long rest of the grave speedily reached ; the other fitted for longer service ; surrounded, sheltered, and advanced by powerful friends, and so with correspondingly increased responsibilities and multiplied opportunities of service ; let us give some slight details of the stormy experience of a third, in which there is such a wonderful spice of piquant romance that it might have been expanded into three volumes 8vo. Dickens would have revelled in the delineation of some of the characters ; Black would have found a *Princess*, and Blackmore a *Lorna Doone* in it ; and Payne, Doyle, or Besant would have paid handsomely for a sketch of the incidents of the story, which, as occurring at the time it did, will appear to some almost incredible.

But valuable as the story may be, and “ all rights being reserved,” as the phrase runs, the writer chooses to take his old friends into his confidence, and tell something which actually occurred. For here, in plain prose, and without any poetical exaggeration, taken from printed documents—the

Condescendence, Statement of Fact, Answers, and Revises printed for the Court of Session—here is a story narrated, which, as showing what may be attempted to be done in this nineteenth century, and in a Christianized city like Aberdeen, may, and should at least make us blush for human nature, even when sorely tried.

When a new partner became necessary, it was the lot of the writer to be chosen by the proprietors of the *Book-Stall* as the successor of the episcopal Mr. Frost, and, of course, he succeeded to all the effects, influences, and customers of the place. Having already served for twelve years there, he was conversant with all the customers, meeting them not only in the shop, but many of them at the hospitable table of Mr. Frost; who had this peculiarity, that all his irritable temper was expended on the youngest apprentice, while, if he could stand that, and, if in spite of it he rose to be head assistant, then he could do no wrong, and was made more of than he deserved. If the somewhat stern discipline was felt to be hard by the boy, then the favour shown him as the young man made him strenuously endeavour to show that he merited it. Some natures are easily led, but refuse to be driven. Partly, then, owing to Mr. Frost's favour, and partly to family connections, the writer was freely admitted into the inner circles of Episcopalian society, and what a revelation it was to him!

As Dean Ramsay relates, in the beginning of this century, the Episcopalians were by Presbyterians considered a people by themselves, between whom there was a great gulf fixed; by their creed and practice, they were isolated from their neighbours, and if on hospitable thoughts intent, they gave an entertainment, it was spoken of by invited bigoted Presbyterians as just *chapel folks' kail*. In the days of the body-snatchers a grave was rifled under the very windows of an Aberdeenshire manse. The minister, relating the affair to a brother, concluded this sorrowful tale with—"Nae doot it was naething but an *Episcopalian cratur*; but, sir, it was a human bein' after a'." This was the extent of that charity which "thinketh no evil, and hopeth all things!"

On their forms of worship, they might be as touchy as a hedgehog; on the necessity of the *three orders* they were as

firm as their native granite ; and the Scottish supply of clergymen falling short of the requirements, the then numerously imported English licentiates, who, in the first fiery fervour of Puseyite enthusiasm, crowded into Scotland to convert the savage Presbyterians, and were sometimes far too rashly received there, only added flame to the fuel already ablaze, and they out-heroded Herod in their unbridled zeal. Mr. Frost was mercifully removed from the evils to come, for his ideas of Christian duty in the payment of accounts for necessary purchases would have received a very rude shock from the conduct of some of these Apostolical Successionists.

Amongst native Episcopalians, true sons of the soil, perhaps the most learned and the most devoted follower of sincere conviction was the Rev. Patrick Cheyne of St. John's. Bishop W. Skinner was universally admitted to be a human being, mixing freely with his fellow mortals, and sharing in their joys and sorrows, their cares and trials. But Mr. Cheyne stood somewhat apart from ordinary work-a-day humanity ; he took little interest in mundane matters, but was every inch of him a divine, with his eyes fixed upon things beyond this mortal life. The writer believes that in common with other fellow mortals he ate and drank, but the only trait of humanity he met within him was, that sometimes in solitary walks and retired places he met him smoking, and was pained to see that then he carefully tried to conceal the habit. Of all in office in the Scottish Episcopalian Church in his closing days, he stood out *facile princeps* as the firmest and truest representative of the old traditions of his Church.

It was by his recommendation that a young man, who had already served some time in a bookselling establishment, was accepted as an assistant. He proved himself competent, became a good salesman, and soon after his appointment it was noticed that a number of young ladies, understood to be members of the church choir with which he was connected, began to frequent the shop, always contriving, with true clever feminine tact, to see and be served at the counter by him, the other assistants, with amused interest, noticing the assignations, and watching the course of events, so interesting to young hearts.

Twelve months or so after his engagement, having been sent to the bank with the drawings of the day, on his return

he showed a parcel of notes which he had found on the pavement opposite the Bank, and on looking at them there were found live £20 notes folded together, evidently just as received from the Bank. They were so very old, worn, and dirty, that it was no wonder although Sydney Smith said that "he never knew the meaning of the words *filthy lucre* until he saw Scotch Bank Notes." Inquiry was immediately made at the Bank if any large sums of money had been given out that day, as "a large sum had been found," and the reply was that no sums of that kind had been given out that day.

The money was banked, and, although the find was advertised for many weeks after, no claimant ever appeared. It was a curious circumstance that it was never claimed, although advertised then and long after.

Some considerable time elapsed, when the principal of the "Book-Stall" was sent for one day by an advocate in town, who said that his natural daughter, then eighteen years of age, and a member of the same choir as the assistant, had in her possession some small books and trinkets which had evidently been received from our assistant, and that these coming from the "Book-Stall," he said he had no doubt but that we were being robbed by him, and begged that if this could be substantiated a charge of theft might be lodged against him immediately. The base charge so confidently made against the lad, and involving such laxity of management in his employers, made us at once suspect the motives of the advocate. Enquiry was promised and instantly made; and the result being that finding that the articles were duly paid for, this was at once communicated to the advocate, very evidently to his great chagrin.

This naturally led to enquiry on the writer's part, with the result of eliciting the following facts, *all as afterwards deponed to*. The two young people had for a long time past been attached to each other, and were said to be then engaged—had vowed to love each other "until a' the seas ran dry, and the rocks melt wi' the sun." But in consequence of some ecclesiastical disputes arising in the congregation, of which they and their relations were members, in which the girl's father and the assistant had taken opposite sides, the former had taken deep offence at the assistant; had

forbidden any intercourse between the two young people ; and, finding that, notwithstanding his commands, the intercourse still continued, the daughter was locked up, and, on her effects being examined, the presents already mentioned were discovered, and hence the interview, while the daughter was strictly guarded in durance vile, and seemed rather to enjoy it. For the course of true love to run smooth and without ripples was "awfully" humdrum ; was altogether unnatural, and wanted that glamour and romance for which a healthy young woman hungered.

Matters continued so for a time, the girl declining to come under any pledge of discontinuing the intercourse. But, as is well known, "love laughs at locksmiths." Boys' daring and girls' wit conjoined may be safely pitted against any bolts, coupled with even the most lynx-eyed watchfulness.

Means of correspondence were easily contrived, for is not adversity a great schoolmistress, and misfortune the mother of ingenious inventions ? And does not Pope say :—

" Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banished lover, or *some captive maid*.
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul and faithful to its fires ;
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indies to the Pole."

The sighs in this case did not need to be wafted so far. By means of a thread let down from her attic on high, a cord was drawn up, and by means of a cord there might have been even a rope ladder. At any rate there were letters passed, and intimation was thus given that on a certain morning she would fly from her prison-home, and she claimed some help to enable her to reach Edinburgh, to which place she meant to fly. All this was accomplished, and the empty cage was the first and only announcement to the relatives that their bird was flown, taking nothing with her from her father's house but the clothes she was then wearing.

The girl was already far on her way to Edinburgh when her flight was discovered. The rage of her relatives may be imagined, but cannot be described. Having very shrewd suspicions that she must have been assisted in her escape by one individual well known to them, they speedily called at his house, but all their efforts to get any information regard-

ing their relative were quite fruitless, the lad declining to answer any question, and the eyes and ears of his relatives being judiciously closed. Failing in this quarter, the present writer was sent for, and then, and for the first time, he was made acquainted with a partial account of the circumstances which had occurred, having to guess at the remainder. He was ordered imperatively, on the pain of the highest displeasure of the advocate, to question the assistant, and, in case of his refusal to divulge full information, to dismiss him at once.

The writer said he had no objections to question his assistant, and to impart any information he might thus acquire; but, in case of his refusal to answer, he firmly declined to dismiss the lad at once, without knowing much more than had been now, and for the first time, made known to him. The advocate—well known to be one of the most vindictive men in Aberdeen, and not to be trifled with—uttered dire threats of vengeance, which did not in the slightest alter the resolution of the writer, and which, as a recompense for his conscientious firmness, when attempted to be carried out in acts afterwards, turned out indeed the greatest benefits he could have conferred.

Failing to get his revenge thus carried out, the advocate that same day lodged a charge with the Procurator-Fiscal, charging the assistant with "aiding and abetting" his daughter, "and being art and part *in her carrying away her clothes, my property.*" This very absurd charge was never intended to be tried; it was the merest blind, concocted for a purpose which speedily came to light. Late at night, and when there was no likelihood of bail being procurable, the lad was seized by the police, and, refusing to answer any questions other than those relating to the charge, he was locked up in prison for the night.

The reason for his imprisonment came to light early next morning. An emissary was in waiting for the Union Street postman, and asked him if he had a letter for the "Book-Stall" assistant; receiving for reply, that if he had, he certainly would only deliver it at the proper address; that it might be called for there, but that he could not deliver it elsewhere, nor to any other person. Threats of being reported for insolence only made him more firm in his refusal. The advocate was himself also on the watch to

intercept the postman of the district in which the lad resided, and on his showing a letter addressed to the lad, the advocate seized it, saying he "would see to the delivery of it."

The letter was from the young lady, conveying the intelligence that she had reached Edinburgh safely. She refrained from giving her address, but desired a letter from her correspondent. This was enough for the advocate, who immediately desired the Procurator-Fiscal to liberate the lad, which, strange to say, was done without any explanation being given to him, or him being brought before a magistrate as the law requires. Perhaps it would have been better if he had declined this liberation, and demanded to be tried on the charge.

The advocate went off instantly to Edinburgh, and, getting the aid of detectives, the girl was seized on calling at the Post Office for her expected letter, and, by false representations as to her lover betraying and giving her up, was induced to return to Aberdeen, where in her father's house she was again confined, and guarded much more strictly than before.

Readers will naturally ask if such conduct as this was possible in Aberdeen. A member of the Society of Advocates stealing a letter, the property of, or in custody of the Postmaster-General, and, either by himself, or in collusion, incarcerating a person in the common prison for the night, in order to carry out his schemes of vengeance ! It was indeed a pretty kettle of fish, with some troublesome bones for some people in it. Of course, such a vindictive man had made enemies ; of course, also, his clever and talented daughter had made friends ; and their sympathies, as well as those of the friends of the young man, were instantly aroused. "If things like this can be done here with impunity, the land is not worth living in ; it is simply intolerable," they said. And so quite a crowd of citizens of both sexes came forward to the rescue, like the brave knights and ladies of old. Canny and prudent Scotchmen and Scotchwomen, knowing full well that law was a two-edged weapon, yet took instant action, and put the case into the hands of the best legal advisers.

A memorial to the Postmaster-General was forwarded, and another to the Lord Advocate, regarding the stealing of the letter. Enquiry was duly made, and it would have gone

hard with the Advocate, but that the postman was bribed to confess having given the letter, which brought the punishment on him, and the receiver pleading the feelings of a parent, and adding "Peccavi," and, being backed up by powerful interest, the authorities declined to prosecute.

But, undeterred by failure in this case, which, if heard, would have certainly brought out the whole circumstances, an action in the Court of Session, claiming substantial damages, was instituted. The summons was issued, precognitions were taken, the Record adjusted and printed, and everything was ready for the hearing, when, frightened by the certain exposure, an offer of a modified sum for damages and expenses was tendered and accepted, because, on the part of those more immediately concerned, there were no vindictive feelings.

But these feelings were not reciprocated. During the course of this action, the persecutors of the lad had got word of his find of £100 in bank notes, many months previous, and the aid of the Queen's Remembrancer was now invoked to carry out the peculiar and almost unique British law on the subject. That law gives to the Crown, money, coin, or plate, if hidden in the earth or any private place, the owner of which is not known. But in this case the notes (representing money) were not hidden, but were found lying open and exposed to all and sundry, in which case, and if advertised, the law does not seem to apply. It did not apply in England at least, when Joe Grimaldi, the celebrated clown, found a sum of about £250 in notes, and advertising it without any owner being discovered, was allowed to retain it.

Some very unwise steps were taken by the authorities, as the case was actually brought up in the Police Court, and the writer was attempted to be conjoined with the finder. But John Smith, the respected President of the Society of Advocates, and his agent, Dr. Grub, soon showed that the Police Court was not the place for such a trial, and got expenses; which was perhaps all that was wished, with the view of reducing or exhausting the sum found.

It was understood that the case was afterwards settled by the finder being allowed to retain a share of the sum.

On the daughter's return to Aberdeen and renewed

incarceration, finding out the real state of matters and how she had been deceived, she told her father that she would escape from his custody as soon as she could, and he, finding it impossible to alter her resolution, dismissed and discarded her allowing her to retain her wearing apparel, his property. She went back to Edinburgh, where she soon got a good situation as governess, and gave great satisfaction.

The trials of the young man were not over—by no means—more are known, and might be mentioned—but desiring to escape from further persecution, he took a situation in the South, and a few years after was married to the brave girl who, in proof of her constancy, had suffered so much for him.

If one half of the world does not know how the other half live, as little do they know how they act; and the romances taking place around them. “Ay, ay,” said Scott, speaking of Melrose, “if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains.” And as Carlyle says—“Could the reader take an Asmodeus-flight, and waving open all roofs and privacies,” and all hearts and motives, what a world would be seen !



CHAPTER XV.

“ According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read,
For much good or much bad they are debtors.
But before with their A B C they start,
There are things in morals as well as art
That play a very important part,—
‘ Impressions before the letters.’
Dame Education begins the pile,
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian Style—
But alas ! for the elevation ;
If the lady’s maid, or gossip the nurse,
With a load of rubbish, or something worse,
Have made a rotten foundation.”

T. Hood.

“ What the child admired
The youth endeavoured and the
Man acquired.”

Dryden.

JUST as a plant taken from its native habitat, and placed in entirely new soil and environments, may be expected to develop new features, so it is with human beings. The influence of the innate heredity may lie dormant for a generation or two, overmastered and altered by the new surroundings and culture to which the young child is subjected, and by which a new type of character is developed; and these influences make each generation different from the previous; prevent the stereotyping of the race and lead us to have larger hopes for the future. But amongst the numerous influences powerfully effective in modifying and changing both the character and the career of the race, such as removal from the place of birth, change of circumstances in the family, the character of the mother, the all important influence of the nurse, the contagious contact of companions and the training of teachers, a very large place must certainly be given to the books read and assimilated in the plastic soil of the young soul. The seed-bed of the nation is the nursery; the character of future citizens and rulers and the

annals of a country depend on the training in the home and the influence of the fireside, for to children—

“ Books are a real world both pure and good,
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastimes and our happiness may grow !”

The fathers of Robert Burns and Thomas Carlyle are splendid specimens of “impressions before the letters;” while their sons are proof copies with the letters added. It is to men like them that Scotland owes its high position among the nations. Good rules may do much, but good models far more, for in the latter we have instruction in action—wisdom at work. Bred themselves from men who were persecuted for their opinions, which they believed were founded on the “impregnable Rock of Ages,” and so ingrained in their consciences that they were prepared “to suffer the loss of all things for them,” it is little wonder that although destitute of letters themselves, yet conscious of it—and this indeed is the main thing—the highest ambition of the humblest peasant in the land was to give at least one son a good education in the hope of seeing him “wag his head in a poupit” some day. “As a Calvinist, Carlyle’s mother was certain that her Tom’s fate had been fixed from eternity, as *his mother* she was equally certain that he might go to heaven if he chose.” The religious instinct in Ruskin is a heritage from Scotland, as were all the early training influences of his life. So is his conscience and shrewd common sense, with romance. His restlessness, fervour, and impetuosity, are all characteristic of the Scot in him—nay, by one branch of his forbears he is Jacobite, and by the other Covenanter.

A true old fashioned Scotch education began on the mother’s knee, and was continued, at least weekly, by questions in the Calvinistic manual—which is strong meat—and required learned and recondite explanations, dissertations, and illustrations by the father which generally, in former days at least, he was quite capable of giving. The atmosphere smelt of Calvinism, and when the young minds of the children tried their wings and essayed a flight by themselves into the world of literature, the books which they could lay hold upon all told much the same story.

To young enquiring minds anxious to know something of the world with all its wonders around them, how horrible—

instead of the pure, sweet knowledge of nature—to be condemned to grind over vile, doggerel, monkish grammars and dictionaries! and to waste the best years of youth in acquiring odds, ends, and patches of dead languages having not the slightest interest; in many cases a mere grinding of wind instead of strawberries! or an eating of sawdust in order to strengthen the jaws.

Have we not all read with quickened pulse, with unwonted emotions of the heart, with choking sensations, somewhat relieved by water springing from the eyes, how two dear little bairnies, fresh from the perusal of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, toddled hand-in-hand up the avenue to the mansion of the Laird, and ringing the bell, enquired "if this was the house Beautiful, and if they could see Misses Prudence, Piety, or Charity?" with all of whom they seemed to be already well acquainted. Most fortunately they were not repulsed by a surly footman in plush; but were met by one of the family, who, instantly divining the situation, showed them no small kindness and attention, took them into all the rooms, treated them to food which they thought divine, and answering all their eager enquiries, dismissed the little darlings with the sure certainty that, having seen Bunyan's veritable house and the young ladies, they were so far on the way to the Celestial City—which indeed they were—"for of such is the kingdom of heaven." As Augustine Birrel relates, did not Charlotte Bronte, at the mature age of six, with profound belief in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, set out alone from Haworth parsonage on pilgrimage. And at her tender age is it to be wondered at that after a mile's journey and coming to a place on the way answering to her idea of the "valley of the shadow of death," the dear little woman should have become faint-hearted and turned back? The idea of pilgrimage was a proof of the Divinity within her, and the turning back—without a "Greatheart" beside her, was a proof that she was human.

Still, and notwithstanding episodes like these, involving those who have the charge of young immortals with awful responsibilities, it is a good rule to read only what is interesting. "The tale of fiction," says Dugald Stewart, "will probably be laid aside with the toys and rattles of infancy; but the habits it has contributed to fix, and the powers which it has brought into a state of activity, will remain with the possessor, a permanent and inestimable treasure to his latest hour." But

the reading current amongst the lower and middle classes at the beginning of the present century, generally led in the very opposite direction, and their tendency was to breed immorality in servant girls, and juvenile burglary in boys, which is now attempted to be nipt in the bud by an enforced residence in the Reformatory. Marryat's novels were the means of sending to sea two "Book-Stall" assistants, one of whom was effectually cured by his getting a touch of the rope's end, and came to no good. His life was a failure. The other, a fine young fellow, finding his relatives hostile, made arrangements for a flight to London, believing that he had only to present himself to be at once admitted as a midshipman in the Navy. This intention of his being communicated to his parents, was prevented by them from being carried out; but finding his mind bent on a seafaring life he was shipped as an apprentice on board a vessel trading between Swansea and South America, and on the third voyage the ship and all on board disappeared and was never more heard of. Even when books read did not determine the career in life, they in many cases most powerfully influenced the action. When Dickens's *Christmas Carol* appeared, several thousands of copies were sold in Liverpool, and never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant was there so much rejoicing in the homes of the poor there, by the unprecedented generous outflow of Christmas gifts which ensued. It was the common subject of remark in the place, that if it produced like results elsewhere, not any one sermon ever delivered, nor all the sermons ever published, had produced such an outburst of "Goodwill to men." Yet the reading of Captain Marryat's novels is credited with having brought far more seamen to the Navy, and of much better quality, than all the old pressgangs—one volunteer being equal to two pressed men. So powerfully influential are some books—especially so if these books are entered in the Liber Expurgatorius of Rome, or are tabooed and boycotted without discrimination as a class.

Think of the effect produced on the mind of "George Eliot" by the first perusal of *Thomas a Kempis*, as delineated by her in the case of Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill and the Floss*. It was a record of her own spiritual awakening—then she heard for the first time—"that low penetrating music which has pierced and soothed so many wayward hearts through the

long centuries, and drank it in as a draught of life from the wells of God . . . then she first saw that heavenly vision of peace, won out of sorrow, and secret joy kindled in spite of outward conditions of distress." It was her life-time companion, and on her death a well-worn copy of the book was found within reach of her lifeless hand. Think also how explorers have been made by the reading of *Robinson Crusoe*; how many islands have been peopled, and continents settled through its influence. Surely happy were the children whose parents were so very liberal as to allow them to read a work of fiction; who could indulge their fresh sentimentality in reading *The Persecuted Family*, *Helen of the Glen*, or Prof. Wilson's story of *The Elder's Deathbed*. How powerfully affecting the stories were, and how stimulative the "letters." Far, far better than any *Reading made Easy*, than any teacher, or even any University, are those books, which so kindly and gently win their way into the young soul, leading by flowery paths into enchanting regions, and teaching "all that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been." They are the happy possessions of the humble, and the lasting wealth of the lofty and the wise, for does not Keats say:—

Bards of passion and of mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth!
 Have ye souls in heaven too
 Double-lived in regions new? . . .
 Thus ye live on high and then
 On the earth ye live again;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us here the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumbering, never cloying.

Here, your earth-born souls will speak
 To mortals of their little week;
 Of their sorrows and delights;
 Of their passions and their spites;
 Of their glory and their shame;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us every day
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

It was the good fortune of all the "Book-Stall" assistants to have the very freest access to the enormous accumulation of books in all branches of literature in the place. The very atmosphere breathed by them was literary. As we write we

have before us an interesting document showing the effect of this. It is dated 13th February, 1820, and goes on to say, "The origin of the following speculations was a dispute held some days previous to the writing of this, to endeavour to discover whether preaching a Discourse composed by another, even granting that that discourse should be the happy instrument of converting a sinner, is *ipso facto* a dereliction of duty?" And proceeding, a declaration and agreement is drawn up and signed "that we do not enter on this discussion merely for the purpose of disputing, or of making *our own* side of the question appear the most reasonable, whether reason be on our side or not," &c., &c. And the signatories are Calder Matthew, D. Brown, Chas. Brown, R. G. Dunbar. While it is added, "For reasons best known to himself, John Kiloh declined affixing his name." Considering that two of those who signed, were sons of the head of the firm, that both became eminent clergyman, and that both filled the Moderator's Chair in the Free Church, the document is interesting as showing the familiar relations the parties bore to each other, and the mental exercises in which they engaged in common with the assistants in the "Book-Stall."

The motto of the firm might have been "Industry and Integrity." Yet each partner had a distinct speciality of his own; that of the old Provost after fifty years' experience and having passed more books through his hands than all the then booksellers of Aberdeen put together, being very wide—especially in the value, both literary and commercial of books of all classes,—although, with his conservative ideas, he was somewhat apt to forget the changed circumstances of half a century, and which changed still more during the next half.

The speciality, or rather specialities of his son, William, were his knowledge of classical, musical, legal, continental, and controversial literature, and his culture was of a higher character than that of the other partners. Of Mr. William Brown, although regularly bred to the business, it might be said—and he admitted it—that he was not a bookseller, but a gentleman connected with the trade; and in his later years, while he accepted the profits he was shy of acknowledging the connection, for reasons connected with his Government appointment as Distributor of Stamps and Collector of Taxes. Certainly he took no part in the management.

Mr. Frost's mind was of a narrower and more restricted character. There was a wide spread and often related story current regarding him, that on a presbyterian fast-day,—a day, of course, not observed by him, he found his way to Stonehaven—a long way off before the era of railways. After dinner in the inn, becoming gracious to his companions whom he would not have recognized in Aberdeen, one of them expressing grateful acknowledgments of his hitherto unexperienced genial character, he explained it at once by declaring that “travelling expands the mind.” His companions must surely have been newspaper reporters in embryo, for the saying with his name attached to it became proverbial.

More emphatically than either of the other two partners, he was a business man, and methodically correct. A thorough specimen of the Bibliopole, his knowledge of books, acquired partly from the Provost, was more commercial than literary, his recreative reading being generally *Catalogues*, and his favourite book of books, “*Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson*”; which he earnestly advised the writer to read once a year, with alternate doses of catalogues in place of fiction—good worthy man!

Every man has his craze in this respect. When the Rev. Dr. Jamieson, the Secession minister of Forfar, and the compiler of the *Scottish Dictionary*, was a student at Glasgow and a favourite with Muirhead, the professor of Humanity, Jamieson asked of him the loan of some Latin book of the amusing type. The Professor looking sternly at him, said—“Oh! John! John! why waste your precious time on a book of that kind?” “What should I read then, Sir?” “What should you read! why read *Virgil*, John; read him day and night, John! read him eternally, Sir!” Only think of it! the heathen that Muirhead was.

To Mr. Frost, Dr. Johnson evidently was a model, and, if he read his life so frequently, it is little wonder that some traits of the Doctor's rough characteristic outspokenness should have been unconsciously copied by him. On one occasion a highland student called asking if we had “any second-handed Cæsars?” Being told that we had not, but that the new ones were cheap, he asked a sight of them and got one. Turning up some particular passage he became utterly oblivious of his surroundings in the fixed and rapt attention he paid to the book, and to one particular passage

in it, which he read and then turned the leaf. The assistant then asked him if it would suit, but the absorbed student made no reply. Asking him again, he said, "Oh, maybe it will!" and continued his perusal. Mr. Frost noticing his long continued presence then came forward and said that he must not detain the assistant, but must make up his mind whether he would have it or not. Getting a little irritated at the student who continued to read, he asked him if the book would suit him. "O aye, the book'll do. Fat's the price o't?" "Three shillings." The reading threatening to be again resumed, Mr. Frost said "Now, this will never do; will you take it?" After a pause the student said, "I'll gie you eighteen pence for it!" The book was instantly seized, and pitched to the farthest end of the counter, and the offerer pithily told in brief unpolite terms to go to the very warmest place conceivable. In Johnsonese fashion this relieved and soothed Mr. Frost's feelings, so injured and irritated at the cruel and wanton depreciation of any books of his, while the poor, innocent, guileless student, who was only carrying out his hereditary habits, fled in dire dismay at his unexpected warm reception.

One assistant could not but recall Mary Lamb's lines—

I saw a boy with eager eye
 Open a book upon a stall,
 And read as he'd devour it all;
 Which, when the stall-man did espy,
 Soon to the boy I heard him call,
 "You, Sir, you never buy a book,
 Therefore on it you shall not look."
 The boy passed slowly on, and with a sigh,
 He wished he never had been taught to read,
 Then of the old churl's books he never should have need.

But if the "Book-Stall" assistants were interested spectators of tragedies like this, affording them an insight into men and manners, sometimes they were diverted by incidents which roused their risibility.

One Friday a big, burly looking farmer came marching into the Stall, but stopped about the centre of it and looked around him in evident wonder and amazement. It was quite apparent that he had several sheets in the wind, had been bit by the distiller's dog, and wanted another hair of it, and the instant surmise of the writer was that in search of

more liquor he had come to the wrong place. As he stood in the centre of the shop, paying no attention to those at the counter, Mr. Frost stepped up to him and asked if he could serve him, when the following colloquy ensued:—

“Ha’e ye ony beuks?” “O yes, plenty of them, as you can see.” “Dyod aye, man! ye seem to ha’e a gey curn o’ them . . . eh—eh—lat me see—Ha’e ye Bingan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*?” “Yes, we have,” and an assistant preparing to bring some copies the farmer said—“Ha’e ye the *Confusion of Faith*?”

Here a vague suspicion of the waggish character of his customer seemed to cross the mind of the proprietor of the Stall, and he said—“We have the *Confusion of Faith*. Do you want it?”

“Na, na, nae in the meantime! but nae doot ye’ll ha’e lot’s o’ Bibles?” “Yes, we have, but do you want one?” “Weel—nae the day—but faun I dee want ane, I’ll ken faur to come.” And off he stalked; the old Provost sitting in his chair in the corner, bursting out into an explosive laugh and saying “that’s a character for you!”

An eminent authority has said that “whisky and freedom gang thegither,” and so far as individual freedom of speech is concerned, when the whisky is present and the wisdom is absent, the saying is quite true. But this story also illustrates the still older adage of “In vino veritas,” for whatever it may be in the present day, it is certain that owing to the early training in the olden times, not infrequently when a douce and generally sober citizen was beguiled into imbibing more spirits than was good for him, and when he was either slightly elevated or maudlin fou, then theology was the favourite theme on which he spake with unction, pious sentiments flowed from his lips, and his talk was redolent of spirituality. Like Sir John Falstaff, he became for the time a perfect mine of Scriptural illustration, and wise and godly words fell like pearls from his snout. This farmer was an instance of this, and he talked as he was taught in the impressive days of his verdant youth, before, by the evil examples around him, he had got corrupted.

The man who first affected Carlyle’s father for good was the drunken schoolmaster of Hoddam, a clever man, named Orr, who, when in drink, talked Bible as others rant poetry,

and was ever most pious and repentant in his maudlin moments.

Besides the potent influence of books, and the study of the personal traits and characters of the three partners, the assistants had the peculiar advantage of coming into contact with several diverse elements in society; each class having a distinct atmosphere of its own, which revolved around—yet centred in the persons of the respective partners. And this in itself is no small advantage to a young man entering into life, broadening his views, widening his affections, obliterating his prejudices, and liberalising his opinions.

By the year 1835, Provost Brown, having been then full fifty years in business, had thus gathered up all the accumulated wisdom derived from a wide and varied experience in private business and public work, and that in the most exciting period of our civic history, or even in our national annals. The son of one who was familiarly known as the "rinnin' minister," his activity in this respect had been cut short by an unfortunate carriage accident, which compelled him to submit to the amputation of a leg; but his mental activity was as brisk and nimble as ever, and he had quite a host of friends and admirers in the then influential classes of Aberdeen, many of whom made no pretensions to a love of literature; but gave the firm their solid and nourishing custom for their stationery and business books.

A promoter and director of the Gas Company, the Town and County Bank, the London, and the Leith Shipping Companies, the Scottish Provincial Assurance Co., and many others, he gave to the public and these companies what was meant for the firm, yet getting his own special salary for his own special service. His office was the *Book-Stall*, and there congregated almost all the notables of the city. Old cronies of a bygone century, and ex-Provosts of a past régime came to bewail with him the extinguishment of the light of other days, and the degeneracy of the present times. City officials like Clerk Carnegie, with Alex. Fraser his deputy, and the deaf James Hardy as chamberlain, called on him, told him their griefs, and bemoaned their lot to have to serve a lot of mean-born-Whigs, and said that the world was all going to these Whig-dogs ever since he left the civic chair! All

this he took *cum grano*, for he was much too human and humane to be a "vicious Tory." He was not only greatly honoured in these days by the magnates of the city and county for his sterling good sense, but this recommended him to all classes, and his generally shrewd and sensible advice was eagerly sought by brother directors, burgesses, and by very many investors, who trusted him with their all, and never had reason to regret their confidence, so frankly given, and so faithfully returned as it was with fruitful results. In the lively stirring scene of the "Book-Stall" of the time, the very dullest employee had himself to blame, if in addition to learning the ordinary business, he did not acquire an extended knowledge of human nature, much more useful than mere trade knowledge, for there it was patent to his every-day observation.

Ruins we know, as Ruskin says, are fondly garrulous of better days.

So are old men. As Macaulay says, "Chatham was only the ruin of Pitt." And so were the Provost's cronies; they had many an old world story to tell of times when they had to stand "i' the imminent deadly breach" before a meal mob, or a King's-birthday riotous assemblage—when they had to face death itself—at an execution; or, when as officers in the Volunteers they had the possibility of actually crossing swords with their auld friends but now inveterate enemies on the other side of the channel. Coupled with this and even more dreadful was the fearful fire of raillery which they had to encounter in the convivial parties of the period, when wags like Sandy Bannerman would sing songs like this:—

"Noo if the French were landin'
Atween the Don and Dee,
I doot these gallant sodgers
Wud be the first to flee;
For though their Captain bold might frown,
And their Chaplain nicht declaim,
There's little doot oor warriors
Are valiantest at hame."

Considering the well known, and widely celebrated, warlike, death-defying character of Aberdeen Officials and Baillies—some of whom in these latter days can sleep tranquilly and undisturbed, although threatened to have their heads taken

off by an unruly mob of Buchan Anti-trawlers—the wily cunning wags that they are, now putting their trust in unlimited hospitality, with the dispensing of casks of “Long John” and oceans of usqueba; and kill their adversaries with a kindness which is now felt to be irresistible; so far have they progressed in the knowledge of the new and eleventh commandment! But in those far back days raillery of this kind was considered seriously libellous and might have led to hostile meetings. For even before, but certainly ever since the battle of Harlaw, the courage of Aberdeen Provosts and Baillies was celebrated both far and near. So much so, that by a civic enactment the Provost was prohibited from going beyond the city boundary, not only that he himself might be preserved, but also that by his death-dealing sword the country might not be depopulated. From primeval times Aberdeen Baillies were objects of reverential awe which continued down to the days of Lord Cockburn, who, sensible man! was nervously anxious not to offend them or to keep them waiting for the arrival of the judges when on circuit. On one occasion, when he was in the west, the Lords on the north circuit sent word to the city officials that they would arrive at the Bridge of Dee at four p.m. on a specified day to process into town. The day arrived, and the careful Clerk Carnegie had all things ready. The awe-inspiring cortege of carriages with the Town Serjeants in their brave and brilliant liveries, uneasily and perilously perched on horse-back, left the Town Hall in good time, and after safely depositing the Provost in the hotel, wended their way to the Bridge, arriving there in ample time.

It is a proof of the wisdom of our city forefathers in office that they not only took care of their Provost, but had a kindly regard for the worldly welfare, the material creature comfort, and the spiritual consolation of all their magistrates, for in the *Council Register*, 1750, vol. 61, page 482, this entry is found:—“The gentlemen going out to meet the Judges on the Circuit; and stopping at any public-house, the Dean of Guild may give them a moderate glass only.” So, satisfied that they had done their duty, and fatigued with their foreign travel beyond the precincts of the burgh, they gladly entered the Inn to refresh themselves, leaving the serjeants and postillions to look out for the Judges coming over the hill to the south.

Hour after hour passed away, moderate glass—which, of course, meant one glass at a time—succeeded moderate glass, until the term became rather inappropriate, when about eight o'clock notice was given that the Judges were approaching. The company immediately turned out in great spirits, or *vice versa* with great spirits in them ; but for the honour of the city, it is proper to mention that the Senior Baillie, never for one moment forgetting the dignity of his representative office, approached the carriage of the Judge, and, taking a huge turnip-sized silver watch out of his pocket and pointing to it, said, "Ca' ye this four o'clock, ma Lord?" The Judge blushed as scarlet as his robes ; winced under the merited rebuke, and never forgot the lesson he had received. That Senior Baillie deserves to have a granite statue erected to his memory at the Bridge of Dee, with his question engraved on the pedestal, for is not time money ! A wicked tradition—and that kind has as many lives as a cat—has it that early next morning, when the ostlers were proceeding to clean out the carriages for the procession of the Lords to the Court, Clerk Carnegie was found in one of them fast asleep. Tradition may have wronged the worthy clerk, but it is also said that on hearing this story, a local poet was inspired to write a song with the well known refrain "*There's aye some water faur the stirkie droons ?*" adroitly hitting in it more cases than that of Clerk Carnegie.

We have heard it said that Lord Campbell gave a different reason for the unique custom of Aberdeen in its reception of the Lords of Justiciary. He is represented as alleging that in ancient times there was a Grand Justiciar of Scotland with very extensive and arbitrary powers indeed. And on one occasion of his visit when the Provost and Magistrates met him, he hanged the Provost at the end of the Bridge for some imaginary offence ; "since which time no Lord Provost has ever yet trusted himself in the presence of a judge *outside the walls !*" This may have been said at the close of a Circuit dinner, and allowed to pass, because Aberdeen has no walls. But all true Aberdonians will rather believe that the Justiciar was in greater danger of being *hangit* than the Provost. He and his Baillies were always considered "dour billies to deal wi," which accounts for Lord Cockburn's nervousness, he being a particularly wise and well informed man.

CHAPTER XVI.

“The fixed and unchanging features of the country also perpetuate the memory of the friend with whom we once enjoyed them ; who was the companion of our most retired walks, and gave animation to every lonely scene. His idea is associated with every charm of nature ; we hear his voice in the echo which he once delighted to awaken ; his spirit haunts the grove which he once frequented ; we think of him in the wild upland solitude, or amidst the pensive beauty of the valley. In the freshness of joyous morning we remember his beaming smiles and boundless gaiety ; and when sober evening returns with its gathering shadows and subduing quiet, we call to mind many a twilight hour of gentle talk and sweet-souled melancholy :—

Each lonely place shall him restore,
For him the tear he duly shed :
Beloved, till eye can charm no more,
And mourn'd, till pity's self be dead.”

W. Irving, 1783-1859.

“Those who are gone you have. Those who departed loving you, love you still ; and you love them always, embalmed and enshrined in the golden casket of memory. But they are not really gone, those dear hearts and true—they are only gone into the next room : and you will presently get up and follow them, and yonder door will close upon you and you will be seen no more.”

LOVE and Friendship being the two satellites of the human soul, without them life would indeed be a dreary desert. But as life is lengthened to us, those we love drop away and our circle of friends grows every year less and less. Let us be thankful when the circle is narrowed by death, and not by alienation, for dead friends are friends for eternity, without any necessity for those revelations which the spirit world will make clear, and which will unite those who were alienated on earth.

And yet it is with sad and melancholy feelings, full of mournful regret for his loss, full of subdued, tender recollections ; yet full also of happy memories, brightly illuminating a long, confidential, and unbroken intimacy of nearly half a century with GEORGE WASHINGTON WILSON, that we comply with the earnest requests of several mutual

friends, that before death seals for ever human eyes, silences human tongues, and strikes human hands with palsy, some of these recollections should be given to his very numerous friends and associates in the "Book-Stall."

For in his young days it was one of his early "houffs," where he was well known both to the employees and the customers, and where, when continued intercourse had soldered his soul to that of the then proprietor, he spoke out his inmost sentiments more frankly and freely than he did anywhere else.

Trained in methodical habits, the then proprietor of the "Book Stall" had been long accustomed, like Captain Cuttle, to note down any occurrences thought important at the time. And these, "stewed in their own juice" for a sufficient time, and afterwards distilled, formed the groundwork of a journal, the perusal of which in his old age enables him to live, not only verily, but vividly in those far back times and scenes; which times and scenes, to those who have not adopted this plan, must be mere dim and misty cloudlands; peopled by shadowy forms, faces, and objects—projecting through the gloom like spectral ghosts and phantoms—while the writer has a red thread guiding him through these catacombs of the past.

When photography began to make itself heard of, Mr. Wilson had adopted miniature painting as his *role* and profession, and had hitherto been successful in it—

"Blest be the pencil which from death can save
From dull oblivion and an early grave.
Blest be the art which can immortalize
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes."

But, like many others, he had the idea that this art of his was doomed to extinction by the new process, and so, more awake than others to the progress of science, he occupied his spare hours in continual experiments on lenses and cameras—in which his first handicraft as a joiner was then, and on many after occasions, invaluable to him; for in many wanderings in wild out-of-the-way excursions, accidents to the camera would sometimes occur, and then he had "to shoe his own

horse," and he did it quite effectually and efficiently, when many others would have broken down in sheer despair.

The daguerreotype process of sun pictures on silverized copper plates was first exhibited in the Mechanics' Institution to Aberdonians in the forties of this century; but beyond Mr. Wilson and Mr. Ernst Donald (a provision curer, then in the employment of C. Gordon & Sons), it seemed to have failed in attracting anything like general attention. Specimens are still in existence, and yet retaining their excellence.

The collodion process (1852), was an immense stride in advance, and when, in 1854, the fashionable *carte de visite* was introduced, it seemed to photographers something equal to the discovery of a new continent. Several citizens—Francis Craigmile, teacher; William Shepherd, confectioner; Thomas Riddell, and others, gave time and attention to it, but in a fitful sort of way, and as mere amateurs.

Far and beyond all these, however, Mr. Wilson's experience, both as an artist and an optician, carried him ahead of all competitors. So much so, that the late Mr. John Hay, the carver and gilder, one of the shrewdest of Aberdonians, recognising his artistic abilities and possibilities, induced him to join in a partnership with his son; and an operating room being erected off the Guestrow, adjoining Mr. Hay's workshop, a flourishing business was conducted there for some years, during which Mr. Wilson's talents and time in manipulating the camera, the chemicals, and the colouring of the pictures were severely taxed, while Mr. Hay had the satisfaction of framing the pictures.

The new "black art," being evidently fitted to deal with more subjects than human ones, and the whole tendency of the times being a demand for accuracy and truthfulness in the delineation of anything attempted to be depicted, at the writer's request Mr. Wilson turned his attention to landscape photography, and to please him, he experimented and took various views in and around the city, some of which are now valuable.

In ancient times the old Greeks in their mythological manner harnessed the sun, and compelled him to draw—the chariot of Apollo—but first by Thomas Wedgewood (in 1791-3), and then by Daguerre (in 1839), the practical

moderns harnessed him once more, and compelled him to draw—sun pictures for photographers—free from the aberrations and the phantasies of the human intellect. For from the time of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and all through the ages, the pictures drawn by human beings were tintured and modified, not only by the personality of the man, as a materialist or a spiritualist, as a poet or an artist, but by the tyrannical fashions of the continually changing times. If we want literal, if somewhat prosaic, truth, then Canaletti, the Venetian painter (1697-1768) furnishes the nearest approach to it; if we want fiction, coupled with the richest and the most gorgeous fancy and imagination, then our own English Turner (1775-1851) supplied it to satiety.

This was art for the cultured and refined; for the common people, the condition and the presentment was of the crudest kind. The popular literature, even well into this century, consisted mainly of chap books, comprising "all kinds of histories, godly and other patters, valentine writers, dream books, fortune tellers, old ballads, broadsheets, slip songs, etc.," on all of which there had been little change for some generations, and on which the rude figure of a man did duty as a true portrait of Judas Iscariot, Robinson Crusoe, Frederick the Great, or Oliver Cromwell!

J. Newberry, the bookseller at the "Bible and Sun in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1766," that good old friend of "all young gentlemen and ladies who are good, or intend to be good," was not only the first to issue a series of delightful children's books, full of common sense and good advice, but the first to illustrate them with cuts made specially for them, and in which, with sly humour—worthy of Oliver Goldsmith, the reputed author of *Goody Two Shoes*—the cuts are said to be by Michael Angelo! and the originals to be preserved in the Vatican!

But the upheaval of the human mind, to which the French Revolution gave birth, operated in every department of human enterprise. The search for knowledge and truth received an impetus it has never lost since, and by means of cheap publications like the *Penny* and *Saturday Magazines*, *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, etc., literature began to penetrate into the highways and byeways of the land. Then illustrated newspapers sprang into existence,

and photography came as the realisation of Burns' earnest desire—

“ O wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us.”

In September, 1850, Mr. Wilson issued a bird's eye view of Aberdeen, which, lithographed by Keith and Gibb, was very cleverly sketched, and being remarkably accurate, will continue to retain a high local value. In 1853, he commenced business by himself in Crown Street, and acquired celebrity by his portraits, in which his only rival at the time was Mr. Roger of St. Andrews. When he had collected some hundreds of these, at the suggestion of the writer, and with his assistance in the arrangement, two groups of “Aberdeen Portraits” were issued, which, on their publication, gave rise to not a little wonderment amongst the citizens, as to when and where so many of their number could have been assembled and taken—as many believed—at one and the same time ; and only when it was discovered that some of the number had been dead for many months, was it found out that the portraits had been grouped, and not the citizens. The then novel idea was a great success, and sold by thousands ; was demanded by the public far faster than with Mr. Wilson's conscientious carefulness in the washing of the prints—in order to secure their permanency as far as possible—they could be supplied. For, only—

“ See how man's subtle skill paints some loved face,
Bids sunbeams work his will on forms of grace ;—
Too soon the light-born picture fades away ;
That living face and form, that portrait may not stay.”

A photographer merely anxious to make money, and careless of his artistic fame in the future, could and would have supplied them as fast as wanted, but Mr. Wilson was so careful, that, after forty years, copies of them still exist as brilliant as the day they were issued. And now that the artist himself has crossed the silent river, an old Aberdonian having these two groups, is in possession of a veritable Pantheon, having in it the small divinities of the stage they trod, and by means of it he can recall the days of old, and live once more for a short space of time amongst his respected, admired, or beloved companions. It is far better than a

walk in the churchyard, more expressive than a funeral sermon, and comes home much more feelingly to the heart, and especially to the affections, than even an eloquent discourse on death, for as drops of water wear the very stone, so the continuity of the Reaper's work is forcibly impressed on us, and sighing, we say :—

“ Like clouds that sweep the mountain summit,
And waves that own no curbing hand,—
How fast has comrade followed comrade
From sunlight to the sunless land.”

When, in 1838, Wheatstone discovered the principle of the Stereoscope, by which a drawing of an object was invested with reality, and an actual body with a visible projection and rotundity ; but still more when, in 1849, Sir David Brewster brought this discovery within the compass of optical lenses, an entirely new world was opened up to the photographer. Mr. Wilson's new found friend—who luckily had a good deal of the optimist in him, and who was thus fitted to be the complement of one who was inclined to take pessimistic views—was keenly alive to the new possibilities opened up to the world of art, and strongly urged him to experiment with these new lenses and produce some specimens ; for already stereoscopic views by Frith had attracted attention, and were in demand. We two then took a holiday—if hard work could be called so—and came home with about a dozen specimen views, which were entirely experimental on his part, with little or no outside guidance. Among these was a view of the “ Old Mill,” at Cults which, when developed and mounted, was so satisfactory, that although stereoscopic pictures were then two shillings each, the writer at once gave him an order for two dozen copies. Looking up in greatly visible astonishment, he said—“ Are you serious ? ” “ Quite serious ! and it is only the first order.” “ Then ” said he “ this is something worth cultivating.”

And so it proved to be ; it sold well, and many dozens of it were needed, and were highly appreciated by the public. It was even more appreciated by the “ Stall ” proprietor, who felt a sort of parental affection in the bantling, and especially as he was then spontaneously placed by the photographer on quite exceptional terms—even more favoured than by “ the

most favoured nation clause." A partnership was pressed upon him again and again, but literature was his first love, with a sneaking fondness for art, and although the pursuit of the new art would certainly have been more profitable, yet if he had accepted this partnership, he would have conscientiously felt himself to be guilty of bigamy, and that he could not think of. The unwritten, even unexpressed relationship—a sort of quasi-partnership then formed—continued as long as Mr. Wilson lived, with mutual pleasure, profit and delight to us both.

Next year, in August, 1859, the writer accompanied him on a photographic excursion to Braemar, which proved so delightful and inspiring, that he could not refrain from giving an account of it in the *Aberdeen Herald*; and as showing the entirely different character of the photographic process then and now, the following extract may be permitted:—

“ Shifting our camera to the rocks overhead (above the Colonel's bed in Glen Eye), for a view of the glen, the exciting character of taking photographic pictures was brought strongly into notice. Talk of deer-stalking; and the excitement of watching the antlers as one crawls snake-fashion through the mud and moss to get within reach—or of salmon fishing, and the delight experienced when, after an hour's hard contest, the strain begins to relax, and the fear commences, lest having got him within reach of the gaff, an unskilful hand may, in the attempt, rouse all his dormant energies, and he may yet carry off your tackle as a trophy instead of being carried off himself. Somewhat akin to the photographer is the moment, when with plate in the camera, and hand on the slide, he casts a hasty glance at the sky, and then on the scene, removes the cap, and then, with nervous anxiety, fearing to breathe lest the leaves rustle, counts the seconds; watching if the trees are steady, and the light constant; eagerly desiring that the little cloud may pass and allow the sun to stream out for a few seconds, to gild the tips of the rocks, to burnish the rugged bark of the trees, to lighten the foreground with a living glory, and to stamp the picture as “ a joy for ever.” To secure such, was a delight—much better than any form of sporting—

Far, far among the Highland hills,
'Midst Nature's wildest grandeur,
In rocky dens and woody glens
With camera to wander.

Since this was written a whole generation has passed away, and to the photographer of the present day all things have become new. The art has become easy to the very meanest capacity. But surely, all the more honour to him, who, like Livingstone, found his own pathway in the then unknown

country, who made numerous discoveries in it, and yet who was so entirely unselfish as to publish through the "Book-Stall" all his discoveries, laying bare his most recent discoveries without any reserve. For if any man ever did so, he worked, not so much for his own special advantage, as for the love of, and the advancement of art, and like all men who do so, he at last received his reward.

Encouraged by the success of the Braemar stereoscopic views which from that year became one of his specialties, the writer induced him to accompany him to the Trosachs, lived ten days there, and explored every nook and cranny, and came home laden with valuable negatives.

After that, year by year, we were constant companions, and explored together many of the wildest districts of Scotland with the aid (?) of maps, which were so very imperfect, that we sent corrections of them to the publishers, and before the Ordnance surveyors had penetrated into these districts, the then best maps of Scotland received valuable corrections from us, which were thankfully acknowledged and adopted, to the great benefit of future explorers.

In 1860 we worked the west coast,

" Where Grampians over Grampians soar,
Where dowie dens deep bosomed lie,
Where ends the long Atlantic roar,
Beneath the savage hills of Skye."

visited Oban, Tobermory—with the remarkably fine waterfall of Aros—then Skye, Iona, and Staffa.

This adventure proved so remarkably successful, both pleurably and profitably to all parties concerned, that urged, first by the earnest requests of the wide-awake proprietors of the west coast line of steamers, who forwarded free passes and orders for unlimited attention and provisions to us on all their boats (which last was declined); and next by the extraordinary demand, and the tear and wear of the negatives, the trip was repeated next year; and surely never were two individuals in the humble ranks of life treated so kindly and generously. It was a repetition of the experiences of Dr. Johnson and his henchman Boswell, or that of Prince Charlie and his humblest adherents. Treat a Highlander as a suspected person and he will *do* you, as he thinks he is being *done*; treat him fairly, squarely, openly, and honestly,

and he is your firmest friend ; but treat him generously and with confidence, and then, like the Israelites in the days of the Exodus, he will willingly submit to have his ear bored with an awl to the door post, and be your slave for ever ; will treat with scorn the offer of any amount for your betrayal, and like John Brown, will serve with all the devotion of a loyal heart.

On this occasion Staffa, so glorified by Dr. Johnson as a temple of the Great Architect of the universe, was the especial subject of study. After spending three days on Iona, having there Sandy Macdonald's cottage to ourselves, while the family adjourned to the barn, and one of the days being a Sabbath, when, as we often tantalisingly found to be the case in our travels—

“ Heaven for one day withdraws its ancient ban,
Unbars its gates and dwells once more with man—”

very early next morning, in a four-oared boat under Sandy's command, we were on our way. It is true—and that man is to be pitied who has not felt the truth—that

“ There are moments in life which are never forgot,
Which brighten and brighten as time steals away,
Which give a new charm to the lowliest lot
And shine on the gloom of the loneliest day.”

There are also whole days, the lustrous brilliancy of whose perfect enjoyment lightens up all one's after life, and of which it may safely be said that the recollection of the entire *abandon* of satisfied delight made them “days of heaven upon earth.” Such, amongst others, as the first introduction of a young and enthusiastic soul into the glamour and romance of the Scottish Highlands—a fitting preparation for the world-wide wonder of the first sight of the Alps ; the first sail along the Caledonian Canal—from *Inverness*—with its ever growing glories—as a preparative comparison for the Rhine and the Italian lakes ; the first entrance into Edinburgh or London ; into Paris, Lucerne, Lausanne, Geneva or Venice ; the first ascent of Loch-nagar or Dumyat—to compare afterwards with the view of the German plains from the Brocken, of Switzerland from the Rigi, or the plains of Lombardy ; the gardens and the

battlefields of Europe from the pinnacle of the temple in Milan!

Nor amidst the star-spangled galaxy of delightful memories, indelibly photographed on the brain, can we ever forget the shores of Loch Maree—of Maggiore and Wallenstadt; the falls of Lauterbrunnen, the Oltschibach, and Schaffhaussen; the marvels of St. Gothard; the Schynn Pass; or from the Via Mala the sight of the lovely valley of the Domlesch; or the wonders of Chamouni.

Those who have had the felicity of seeing such scenes in congenial and appreciative company can understand the keen delight felt by us in undertaking this voyage. "The man is not to be envied whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona," said the really pious Dr. Johnson. And as on the previous quiet, calm, holy day we trod the fields of the sacred isle,—quite equal in sanctity to the Arabian Mecca, or the Hindu Benares; as we wandered through the Cathedral's ruined aisles, saw the sculptured crosses, looked on the many tombs of an ancient—almost prehistoric—line of kings, mused on the many marks of a former civilization, and visited on the western shore the landing place of Columba and his followers in their rude coracles, we felt the truth of Dr. Johnson's saying, and the text of one sermon received was "Earth says to the earth, all shall be ours."

The blessed peaceful Sabbatic influence still reigned on Monday. We could not have even made, wished, or dreamt of a more perfect day. The tranquil air, the purple coloured hills, the deep green sea, and the azure sky, all seemed combined to favour us. The golden sun had but just peeped over the summit of Benmore, completing the complementary colours to our view, when bending to their oars our boatmen swept out of the bay, singing in chorus Gaelic songs, which came back to us in echoes from the rocky shores of Mull. Slumbering seals, reposing on the outlying rocky islets, roused from sleep, raised their heads and listened admiringly. As we approached they slid off into the sea, but having once acquired a safe distance they raised their heads above the burnished water and lay still, evidently appreciating the orpheus-like strains of melody possessed by that hideous monster, Man, with whom they have had a hereditary blood-feud ever since the Fall.

Life there was evidently exuberant, prodigal, and seemingly well "worth living." The air was flecked, and the surface of the sea was dotted with birds. And by the numerous seals, and the multitudes of cormorants and divers around us, as well as by our own vision, we could see that the ocean positively swarmed with fish. The sight made us more than previously inclined to believe the story of a Wick hotel waiter who, in the herring fishing season, being asked by an English commercial, "if there were any herrings in the bay?" "Herrings!" said the waiter, "why, they are so thickly crowded together that you could not get down a spoon amongst them!" "Indeed! and are there any cod?" "Why, Sir!" said the simple waiter, "there are more cod than herring!" And he was quite astonished at the boisterous mirth which his statement raised.

Among new acquaintances of the birds, we experienced the case of love at first sight, in seeing the "Rosy Tern" or sea swallow, one of the most graceful and loveliest creatures in the universe, a great stranger on the east coast.

Scanning the sky from time to time, we drew Sandy Macdonald's attention to some bullety looking clouds of the "Banff-bailie" order, which lay in the west, when he said, "they were no favourites of his whatever!" But bright light, calm air, and still sea, seemed caressingly to welcome us with fair promises to the photographer. As we approached the island at low water we received a sudden new revelation. No printed description and no pictorial representation in black and white can convey any adequate idea of it. The floating, waving beds of tangle around gave the sea a deep purple hue, shaded off into green in the depths; and then, what with the romantic form of the mass, draped with lichens, mosses, ferns, grass and flowering plants, it was a very blaze of the most harmonious colours. Even the numerous patches of white, from the dropping of the birds, added striking contrasts to the general effect of the black basalt.

The fine, but little known, lines of the poet, William Sotheby, 1757-1833, so exactly describe our feelings on landing, that after quoting them, with adaptations marked in italics, it would be a waste of words to add anything—

“ Staffa, *we* scaled thy summit hoar,
We passed beneath thy arch gigantic,
 Whose pillared caverns swell the roar
 When thunders on thy rocky shore
 The roll of the Atlantic.

That hour the wind forgot to rave,
 The surge forgot its motion,
 And every pillar in thy cave
 Slept in its shadow on the wave,
 Unrippled by the ocean.

Then the past age before *us* came,
 When mid the lightning's sweep
 The isle with its basaltic frame
 And every column wreathed with flame
 Burst from the boiling deep.

When mid Iona's wrecks meanwhile,
 O'er sculptured graves *we* trod,
 Where time has strewed each mould'ring aisle
 O'er saints and kings that reared the pile,
We hailed th' Eternal God !

Yet Staffa more *we* felt His presence in thy cave,
 Than where Iona's cross rose o'er the western wave.

It was a day of hard work, but of unmitigated delight. So accurately could Mr. Wilson judge the power of the actinic rays, and the potency of his chemicals, that although, as is often the case, a brilliant morning is no guarantee of a quiet afternoon, though clouds came crowding up from the west, and the light changed every hour, yet out of twenty-four negatives then taken, twenty-three were perfect. And for these, publishers would willingly have given him £15 each, while they were worth far, far more to him. The steamer arrived at noon with its motley crowd of tourists, who at first made a hideous noise in the silent cathedral cave, but becoming awed and solemnised ended by singing *The Old Hundred psalm* and *God Save the Queen*, an embodiment of piety and patriotism, while we and our crew took a leisurely, hearty, and well-earned lunch, with the sauce of a hunger little known in cities. We would fain have continued our work, but Sandy warned us of an approaching gale, and we had to make haste to be gone. In the quiet morning our boatmen had to row all the way, which seemed merely over broad and gently undulating fields, but the sea had now become broken and choppy, and if the coming was

monotonous, the return was exciting. Sail was speedily set, and in our boat we went bounding over the billows, in this manner :—

“ One side on high, one buried in the deep,
Her deck to meet the ocean, slanting steep,
Beneath the swelling sails, her mast bowed low,
She mocks in speed the following breaker's flow.
Back from her bows the broken waves are cast,
And far behind her in the moving waste,
A level track declares the well sped way,
Where, swiftly circling, sports the eddying spray.”

and reached Iona in safety.

In our excursions, it was not always fair sailing under favourable breezes. The photographer of that day had to work his way under conditions undreamt of by those of the present time ; just as Livingstone had painfully to penetrate through regions which railways will afterwards make easy to traverse.

So much did Mr. Wilson do in opening up the Highlands to future travellers, that the difficulties and trials experienced by him are now almost inconceivable. Districts now penetrated by railway, and with comfortable hotels, were then practically inaccessible, unless to those who despised even ordinary comfort. In many out-of-the-way places we had to put up in hovels where drovers of cattle were the only customers, where the beds were extremely suspicious, and where in order to protect ourselves from the attacks of “ jumpers,” we had not only to sponge ourselves, but to sprinkle the very beds with the cheap, but extremely powerful whisky of the district. If the scenery was fascinating and our stay was thus prolonged, then the eggs, and after that their producers, speedily disappeared from the district, and we had to depend for our very existence on dried venison, which required a hatchet to chop it up, and steam grinders to masticate it ; or we were treated to savoury sausages, very highly spiced, which in our tours of discovery were found to consist of “ braxie mutton ”—sheep found dead on the hills !

We owed our sustained vigour, nay, our very existence, to a careful, prudent, wise, and judicious use of the only medicine procurable in the sparsely inhabited districts—a medicine which was thought to be the fatal foe of hurtful microbes, and the destructor of all harmful bacteria or bacilli, but all the same dangerous in itself. For an intelligent,

enquiring physician, exploring this region found, that the nearest doctor, being in very many cases, quite out of reach—was informed that the native recipe, either for comfort or discomfort, was one glass of whisky; for ailment, two; and for serious illness, three glasses; and if that did not cure, then the case was hopeless, and the patient, considered not worth preservation. He thought the practice very primitive and simple, but not much more so than of the Scottish blacksmith and cattle doctor, who, on his failure in Scotland, started as a doctor in the north or England.

As narrated in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, he was once travelling in the North of England where one of his servants fell ill, and when this *doctor* was called and came, Sir Walter thought he recognised him, and said "Are you not John Lundie from Tweedside?"

"Just a' that's left o' him, your honour."

"You used to be a horse-doctor and now you are a man-doctor—How are you getting on?"

"Very weel, Shirra! my practice is sure and orthodox, and I depend entirely upon twa simples."

"Yes, and what are these?"

"Ou—jist laudumy and calomy, Sir."

"Simples with a vengeance," said Scott, "But do you never kill any of your patients, John?"

"Kill," said the doctor, "Weel—whiles they dee, and whiles nae, but it's the will o' providence. Onyhow, your honour, it will tak a lang time to mak' up for Flodden."

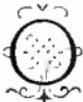
And yet the Scotch are said to have no humour!



CHAPTER XVII.

“ His ears are shut from happy sound :
His eyes are softly sealed :
The oft-trod, old familiar ground,
The hill, the wood, the field ;
The path which most he loved that runs
Far up the shining river,
Through all the course of summer suns
He treads no more for ever.”

“ A little row of Naphtha lamps with its line of Naphtha lights, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past : they who are gone are still here ; though hidden, they are revealed, though dead, they yet speak.”—*Carlyle*.

“  NCE on a time,” as the story goes, a bold and bluff Scottish sea captain, regaling himself with his usual companions in the accustomed houff in a small town on the Fifeshire coast, was interrupted in the midst of a story by his mate telling him that his vessel was ready to sail. He stopt his story at the most interesting point, joined the ship, voyaged almost round the world, came back after many months' absence, and on his arrival, he went back to the old place, found all the old companions in their accustomed places, and lighting his pipe, resumed the broken thread of his discourse thus :—“ Well, as I was saying,” etc.

So, the writer resumes in the words of the captain—“ as I was saying,” journeys with Mr. Wilson were not all fair sailing. No, indeed ! no porters were awaiting us at our termini, ready and anxious to assist us with our luggage, which, as it contained neither dress-shirts, nor toggery for parties, but ample supplies of collodion, glass plates and chemicals, along with the camera, and a portable tent, was somewhat formidable. So different was our luggage from what was usual, that it attracted great attention in the Highland districts, and begat no little wonderment by many parties as to what occupation we followed, and what the luggage consisted of.

On one occasion, having done Elgin Cathedral to our satisfaction, we travelled by the last train to Craigellachie. having as a fellow-passenger, a proprietor of one of the numerous distilleries of the district. He was in the happy condition that the cabman in *Punch* who envied the half of a very drunk man's disease, might have envied the whole of his. He was not "mighty sober," as the Forfarshire farmers say of a man who is unwell, but was in the best of health and *spirits*, and was simply brilliant, had all his wits about him, and his tongue wagged at the rate of fifty miles an hour, "whisky and freedom ganging thegither." He used great freedom of speech to us, and seeing us examining some of the two-ounce bottles of collodion, he demanded to know what we were, and our business in the district. He was not easily satisfied, but on being waggishly told that we were agents for the sale of French brandies and claret, of which the small bottles contained samples, he seized one of the bottles, and it was with some difficulty that we prevented him from gulping the contents. He then insisted on our accompanying him to his home in Glenfarklass, where he declared that, with the native product, he would make us much more victorious, happy, and glorious o'er all the ills of life, than with all the contents of our bottles we could possibly be. Even when told our real occupation, the invitation was not retracted, and it stands good still, and will always stand as a specimen of Highland hospitality.

Photographing was then the pursuit of pictures under difficulties. The very impedimenta required two individuals to carry it, and we were only too glad to secure a third whenever we could. But many a weary tramp "o'er moors and mosses mony o," had we by ourselves, and that ungrudgingly. The fatigue, the poor accommodation, and the sometimes scanty fare, were all soon forgotten when we came into comfortable quarters in the midst of beautiful surroundings. With the collodion process, the absolute cleanliness of the glass slides was of the very first importance. There was a knack in cleaning them, in holding the slide by a pneumatic apparatus so as not to expose even a corner to the grease of the human hand, which the writer could never acquire. And on this occasion, after the unwonted exposure to the open air, the hard day's work at Elgin, the night journey to Craigellachie, the weary and dangerous tramp

through the pitchy darkness from that to the humble hostelry kept by the well-known "Cum-a-rashie," the return from thence again with a hand-cart to the station to bring all our baggage to our lodgings; when after all this, notwithstanding his weariness, Mr. Wilson had to sit late into the night carefully cleaning the plates for the next day's work, and smilingly telling his awkward companion to go to bed, and be ready to help him next day; then never was the writer more ashamed at his own awkwardness, or more deeply impressed with a sense of the unselfish, loving, and generous character of his companion. These traits in his character came out more and more the longer he was known, and of him it may be said, that the most intimate companion will invariably esteem him the highest.

Then, if the reader is not wearied, as he may well be with the recital of these minor trials, which however bulk largely in the sum of human existence, it must be mentioned that there were others still more minor, almost infinitesimal, very seldom thought of or taken into account, which materially interfered with our comfort and enjoyment. When on the deck of one of our splendidly equipped West Coast steamers, the delighted traveller passes through the Kyles of Bute, through Loch Awe, or along the Caledonian Canal from Inverness, he is charmed with the mountains clothed in their purple heather, with the lowly, lovely glens which penetrate the country, with the rocky islets, the ruined castles, the gay looking villages at which the steamer touches, and the snug-like residences which stud the shore. The Fiords of Norway may be more savagely grand, the Italian Lakes may be more gently beautiful, the much be-praised Rhine, from Cologne to Mayence, may be more gay and fashionable, but any Scotchman, aye any Briton, coming back from the sight of these, and bespattering them with praise, while he has not seen the Scottish West Coast, ought at least to be hanged, drawn, and quartered for high treason to his country, whatever else he might be sentenced to.

But in the West Highlands there is one serious drawback to the pleasure of photographing, and that a most irritating one to thin-skinned individuals who live in towns, in the myriads of midges which fill the air, and settle in clouds on all who invade their haunts, and torture them. After a day's operations in the recesses of the Trosachs every exposed

inch of skin on our bodies was covered with blisters, and on one occasion in Skye, when attempting to develop the negatives by the side of a little rivulet, the swarms were so dense as to drive us away in despair. We could find no effective defence from their attacks, though the application of ammonia relieved the pain. Hear what a recent writer in *Temple Bar* says on this subject:—

“ Amid scenes of the greatest beauty the surroundings are not wholly of Paradise. With conditions so very favourable for their enjoyment of life, the midges may be expected in myriads. They are, in fact, infernal. They gyrate in thick circles round the head, singing and stinging at their pleasure ; and battalions of them find a way up the tightest of sleeves. Even our dog can get no rest, snapping at them, despatching them by mouthfuls, but making no impression on their numbers. The infliction is as bad as any of the Ten Plagues, and tobacco is only a very slight bar to the impetuosity of their attacks.”

(How very pat and appropriate an “elegant extract” like this is ! The writer delights in, and makes no apology for introducing this, because he always remembers the case of the Scotch parson, who, after delivering a powerful discourse, apologised to his session for using so many extracts. “Deed sir !” said an honest elder, “ye needna apologize for that, for we a’ thocht the extracts were the very best o’t !” And, that sometimes these extracts assume the poetic, (or even the advertisement) form, certainly makes the text look more picturesque. When Archbishop Whateley’s *Elements of Political Economy* appeared, it being thought desirable by some of his friends that, for the benefit of the Irish, an edition should be printed in the Celtic tongue, two translators were appointed, and did their work. On the first printed sheets being shown to the Archbishop, he noticed some stanza-looking lines on the intervening pages, asked what it was, and got for answer—“Your Grace, me and my comrade conceived that it was moighty dry reading, so we have just now and then interposed a bit of a pawem to help it forward !” So have we for the same reason.)

Mr. Wilson’s eminence as a photographic artist rose by leaps and bounds. A copy of his first published stereoscopic view of the “Old Mill at Cults” now lies before the writer, and at present, so great has been the progress of the art, that he wonders that he could have been so rash as to order even two dozen copies of it. But at the time it was considered marvellous, far more satisfactory than anything in the way of representation than had previously been invented. For it was not a mere flat picture with the simple outlines

of the subject, but it had a visible rotundity about it, hitherto unrepresented in art, the foreground, subject, and background, all standing out in their relative positions to our marvellously constructed stereoscopic eyes, which so few think about. For all artists found much the same trials as the "Shepherd" in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, when he said, "I fin' maist diffeeculty in the foreshortnin' and perspective. Things wunna retire and come forret as I wish—and the backgroun' will be the foregroun' whether I will or no'." The two lenses in the stereoscope—equivalent to our two eyes—rectified this at once.

The lover of nature must often have been deeply impressed with the surpassing beauty, the majestic grandeur, or the quiet loveliness of many scenes in this God-made world, and would naturally be desirous of retaining his happy recollections of them when they were unexpectedly presented to him. Not then knowing of any existing view of the scene; not being an artist, or capable of drawing it, or, if one, not having the requisite time, his only plan would be that adopted by the writer for full fifty years now, and with decided success. It is a plan as simple as that of the child who is set down to commit to memory the 23rd Psalm. Taking as leisurely a view of it as he possibly can in the time, he shuts his eyes and recalls it, repeating this process until it is photographed on the retina of the eye—on a space of less than an eighth of an inch—for whence, relegated to, and stored up in the brain magazines, it may at any moment be reproduced in all its pristine vividness and reality.

The writer walked through Glen Tilt in 1838, and sunny spots in it, with the very position of the clumps of ferns near the tiny waterfalls, then thought so beautiful, by the adoption of this plan, which is capable of indefinite extension, come back to view, and recall all the fresh feelings of that far back time to the present day. And here, it may be said, that a process of this kind is the foundation of a strong and retentive memory. It was in this way that Macaulay made a mental picture of the various times and personages and fitted the minutest detail into its appropriate place in the vision which he conjured up and could recall at pleasure, as Moore said, even to the "rubbish."

But if the view of the "Old Mill" now seems somewhat prosaic, our Braemar trip was fruitful in new suggestions,

struck out between us ; for while his artistic eye invariably selected the best point of view, he was always ready to experiment on a hint. On one of the last days of this trip, and when pushing our way through the brushwood below the Falls of Garr-valt he had selected his point of view, which was the best attainable, and had there planted his camera, when the writer suggested that by withdrawing the point of view some four feet back, he would surround the view with an arch of greenery, which would at least fill up the vacant space in the foreground. He at once adopted the suggestion as an experiment, and with the happiest result, for although the foreground was out of focus, and the near branches of the trees with their leaves, looked simply black blotches on the picture, yet, when placed in the Stereoscope, the view became intensely realistic, and the idea of the relative distance of the objects depicted came most vividly out. He adopted this plan wherever it could be adopted afterwards, and hundreds of his finest views are distinguished by their splashy, blotted appearance to the eye, and the magnificence of their effect in the stereoscope.

One extremely valuable lesson, known as he finds to very few individuals, the writer learnt from him, and which he desires to communicate, as a source of enjoyment to old friends and new customers of the "Book-Stall," as the knowledge of it has been a great enjoyment to the writer for many after years. On dark and gloomy days, when photographing was out of the question, Mr. Wilson spent the time in sketching in water-colours the scenes he fain would have photographed ; generally and generously presenting these to the writer, by whom they were, and now, oh ! how much more so, highly valued. Free and candid outspokenness, and without any reserve, being the rule with us two, the writer objected to some of them as being slightly over-coloured, and said this was a common fault of artists who exaggerated the tints of nature, simply to produce a striking and startling effect when exhibited in a gallery or exhibition, and to kill the pictures around them. This objection being urged to one sketch of his, carefully preserved by the writer, that of Castle Ruthven, (Ruin) near Kingussie, the artist took the writer to the spot from which the sketch was taken, and desiring him to bend on one side, and thus place his eyes

in a perpendicular, instead of the usual horizontal stereoscopic position, and then to say if it was over-coloured?

What a new revelation it was then! Between the point of view and the horizon line of the Grampians there extended a plain of from ten. to fifteen miles, a wild, waste, heathery muir, with nothing attractive in colour to ordinary vision. But by the eyes being placed perpendicularly instead of horizontally, the whole scene became a panoramic picture, seemingly placed at a few hundred feet distance from the observer. Miles of blooming heather, with its rosy hue, were crowded into so many feet, and the intensity of colour so condensed that so far from exceeding, the sketch seemed then to come short of that of Nature as to colour. Coleridge must have known this concentration of colour when in his beautiful sonnet of *Cloudland*, beginning "O! it is pleasant," he says,

*"Or with head bent low
And cheek aslant, see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks."*

There are fads in art, as there are fashions in dress. Pre-Raphaelitism went to the one extreme, and those muzzy, obscure, indistinct pictures, which seemed painted for people whose eyesight was irretrievably damaged, went to the other extreme, with the swing of the pendulum. A sketch by Wilson, however hastily done, or a finished picture by John Mitchell, have, to the truthfulness of a photograph the added charm of colour, and will always remain "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

In after years, when by the beauty of his stereoscopic views he had acquired celebrity; when his fame had spread over the whole civilised world; when, aided by the modern press, he had done more for opening up Scotland generally, than Sir Walter Scott had done for the Trosachs; when by the extraordinary demand for his pictures he had to revolutionize his business, and to turn his modest studio, and his humble workshop into a huge manufactory; utilizing all the resources of science in its engineering machinery, and of art in colouring and mounting the views; and employing many hands in order to meet the ever-increasing demand; then our working trips and hard labour ceased. He had trained

a staff of assistants to replace the negatives which were worn out, and to submit new ones for his approval. And then we became as it were travelling inspectors of new scenery, visited London, Windsor, Shakespere's country, Melrose and the border, penetrated the wilds of Sutherlandshire, and explored Orkney and Shetland. As compared with Sutherlandshire these islands are populous places, but there the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls, boils round the lonely isles, pouring its surge among the stormy Hebrides. While in Sutherland there were wild solitudes and lonely places—

“Where matin hymn was never sung,
Nor vesper, save the plovers' wail ;
But mountain eagles breed their young,
And aerial spirits ride the gale.”

But the deer were in droves, and in one November journey we could hear all around on every hill the belling and hoarse roaring of the stags, as they guarded their harems, like so many Turks.

So mild was the weather, that driving down the side of Loch Broom and passing various shepherds' shealings, children as naked as they were born came running after us to see the Sassenach strangers. Allusion has already been made to the swarming fish on the west coast. In crossing some of the numerous sea lochs by the ferries, and particularly at Kyle Sku, fish could have been scooped out by us in basketfuls. Much has been said about the Highlanders' laziness, and their Litany is said to be—

“O that the peats would cut themselves,
The fush shump on the shore,
And that we in oor beds nicht lie
For aye and evermore, Och, ochay, Ahmen !

But the men are not there, but have gone to Canada or Australia ; while if only facilities of transit for fish were made, there are rich golden mines to be found in the swarming sea at home.

Mr. Wilson was anxious, many years ago, that we two should visit Norway, but we could never spare the time necessary, else Norwegian trips might have become fashionable five-and-twenty years ago.

Mr. Wilson had the honour of taking the first photograph of the Queen and Prince Consort at Old Balmoral, about

the year 1850. He was then employed by the Prince to photograph from time to time the progress of the new palace as it was being built. These being entirely satisfactory he was very frequently summoned to take portraits for her Majesty of any distinguished visitors; one notable group of Royal personages including the late Emperor Frederick then the *affiancé* of the Princess Royal. On all his visits Her Majesty, with that womanly tact which distinguished her as a Sovereign, recognising his modest humility and his shy and sensitive nature, was peculiarly gracious, and made him feel quite at home. On one visit he had photographed the Royal Family; some of the portraits with but indifferent success. After being nighted in the castle, he was out early next morning, away up on the hill-side, fixing his camera for a view of Lochnagar. Her Majesty and the Prince in these happy days of theirs, were out for an early walk, and seeing him, strolled through the heather to see his point of view. Coming up to him the Prince said, "Now, Mr. Wilson, you certainly will not have to complain of your sitter not being steady to-day, as you did to me yesterday, for Lochnagar sits very steady indeed."

But if the Royal Family were quick to recognize the genuine character of Mr. Wilson and his artistic ability, to appreciate it, and mark it with their favour and patronage, so were all their dependants from John Brown downwards. Cannie Scotchman—pure and unadulterated as he was—he kept his weather eye open, and seeing how the wind blew, he made all things easy for his generous friend Mr. Wilson. Alone of all the household, John could over-ride all state regulations, and despise all court etiquette. On one occasion Mr. Wilson called on him, and was asked if he would like to see Her Majesty. "No, no," said Mr. Wilson "I have just been smoking, and I must be smelling like a brock." "Hach, man!" said John, "I often have to see Her Majesty that way, and she does not care a'e bit, she's weel accustomed to that." And so the interview took place; and Mr. Wilson retired, not only with his head still intact upon his shoulders, but with the expression of Her Majesty's high encomiums bestowed upon him, with orders to forward everything he did which he thought would interest her, especially any views he might take of Glen Feshie, which she had recently visited. It was in order to supply Her Majesty with these, that in

1861 Mr. Wilson, along with the writer, took a Speyside tour, the records of which, as preserved, are full of all the elements which give interest to a voyage of discovery, in practically then unknown regions.

Like a loyal subject, heartily seconded by his companion, he was most anxious to gratify Her Majesty, but Queen's weather was denied us; instead of it, we had the absence of Sol, the presence of cloud and fog, the rain it rained every day, the Spey was in roaring flood, and every cart-track the bed of a torrent. All day long, dense mists of heavy rain rolling on the hills or pouring down them, as if the whole inhabitants—aerial or terrestrial—had been washing at the same time. Naval commanders with all the resources of the empire at their command, having failed to reach the North Pole, what could two humble but devoted servitors do but accept the inevitable; and discretion being the better part of valour, endeavour to preserve their lives for the future service of Her Majesty?

By Mr. Wilson's death Her Majesty has lost a devoted, and quietly but specially honoured servant; Scotland, a celebrated artist; Aberdeen, a loyal citizen; his family, a fond relation; his numerous friends and admirers, one who will be much missed by them in all the days to come; and the small chain growing smaller every month, which binds the writer to this present world, has had one of its few remaining links suddenly snapt.



CHAPTER XVIII.

“Ten ordinary histories of kings and courtiers were well exchanged against the tenth part of one good history of booksellers.”—*Carlyle*.

“For the other employments of life do not suit all times, ages, or places: whereas literary studies employ the thoughts of the young, are the delight of the old, the ornament of prosperity, the refuge and solace of adversity, our amusement at home, no impediment to us abroad, employ our thoughts in the night, attend us when we travel, and accompany us when we retire into the country.”—*Cicero*.

THE three partners of the Book-Stall, the trinary stars which, to their satellite assistants, filled their horizons with the ever-changing atmospheres around them, were a never-failing source of interest and attraction to their young and eagerly inquiring minds. In many an employment, the endless monotony tends to breed stagnation of thought, and to turn men into mere machines. Even in a bookseller's business, if it is a class one, either scholastic, medical, or religious, the culture and intelligence of those engaged in it is apt to become cramped, dwarfed, and stunted, as compared with those who enjoy a wider air, a freer atmosphere, and a more varied mixture of those elements which constitute general society with its many-sided character.

The atmosphere of the Stall reminded one of our Spring weather, it changed continually, had an endless variety, and was both bracing and stimulative. If the cronies of the Provost brought into the place blinks of light from old oil crusies, wafts of air from long past seasons, ancient flowers of anecdote in which “a faint and odorous sweetness lingers with faded petals, though their bloom be fled,” and reminiscences of the bye-gone, a-stirring up of dead leaves which strewed the vales of their memory, and brought into light yet some living flowers—those who called on his son, the youngest partner, kept us all in touch with the present. And as in nature, the sudden mixture of two different atmospheres—still more three—produces disturbance and storm—so in the Book-Stall, the sharp contrasts between old and

new, past and present, personified in the visitors, prevented anything like stagnation in our little world.

Both the Provost and his son had inherited quick, emotional, and impulsive natures. By the age of the first, his wide experience of the world, and as there is good reason to believe, by the ever present, quiet, steady, religious influence of his partner in life, he, in his olden days, had been toned down to live in a very equal temperament which was not easily roused; although he was—as much so as ever—fond of company, of the feast of reason and the flow of soul, and keenly alive to wit, repartee, and joke.

From some far off ancestor—say Jubal—Mr. William Brown—like many other persons of a sensitive and emotional character—had inherited a love of music, and from his earliest years, and all through life, he was powerfully affected by, and very deeply attached to it. And for its cultivation and fruitage he was born, not only in a congenial soil, but at the proper time. The hour and the man came together.

For Aberdeen long enjoyed celebrity for its proficiency in music. Its printer, Forbes, is said to have had the first music types in Scotland, which is not correct, but it is true that in 1662 he printed the first collection of secular music which had appeared in it, and so popular was it, that it went through three editions; while the Aberdeen Burgh *Sang Schule* was the last of these pre-reformation institutions, continuing until 1758, and we have looked on the house in the Back Wynd in which the *Schule* was held.

But although by the beginning of the century this school was defunct, and the Musical Society, at one time so influential, was then in its decadence, yet it is possible, nay probable, that this did not imply any declension in the musical taste of the inhabitants, but may have arisen from the more general diffusion of this taste, and its more extensive cultivation in middle class families, who did not find easy access to the society's full-dress concerts. And this is confirmed by the establishment and long continued prosperity of the Musical Library, which was begun and carried on in the Book-Stall.

Here both time and space fail us to speak of the revivals of sacred music in 1754 and in 1854, both emanating in

Aberdeen, and from thence flowing over the whole of Scotland in a mighty and powerful stream. The account of this would require a volume to itself, but as these rambling sketches may perhaps serve as a *Memoire pour servir* for the future historian, and help to preserve some incidents, and show some traits of character now happily defunct—we note that in the latter year a well known banker, a trustee in St. Andrew's chapel, and a lover of music, asking the writer what was doing in music, and being told that a psalmody class of eight hundred members was then meeting in the Mechanics' Hall, that the effect was magnificent, and that as the fee was only a shilling a quarter, he should look in and hear it. "Well, well," he said, "that certainly is sacred music——cheap." Now, reader, please don't be horrified; don't even shudder at the exceedingly inappropriate terms in which his appreciation was expressed. Remember that a generation has passed since then, and that at the time there was a remnant of a previous generation still alive, to whom the plentiful use of oaths and bad language was simply the sign of a liberal and genteel education. The very ladies admired it as manly; as the right and mark of a gentleman, and accordingly all tried to be thought such. Swearing was at one time an aristocratic fashion. The daughter of Henry VIII., "Good Queen Bess," who saved England by her masculine courage, is said to have "lied like a fishwife and swore like a trooper." The naval chaplain cursed the sailors because it made them listen much more attentively to the sermon, and the habit was not confined to naval chaplains. Bad language was the popular slang of the period, and was used by all classes, even by ladies themselves at times. Mrs. Dundas, the mother of Viscount Melville, being told that the Prince of Wales had been boasting of his intimacy with a lady, broke out—"the——villain, does he kiss and tell?"

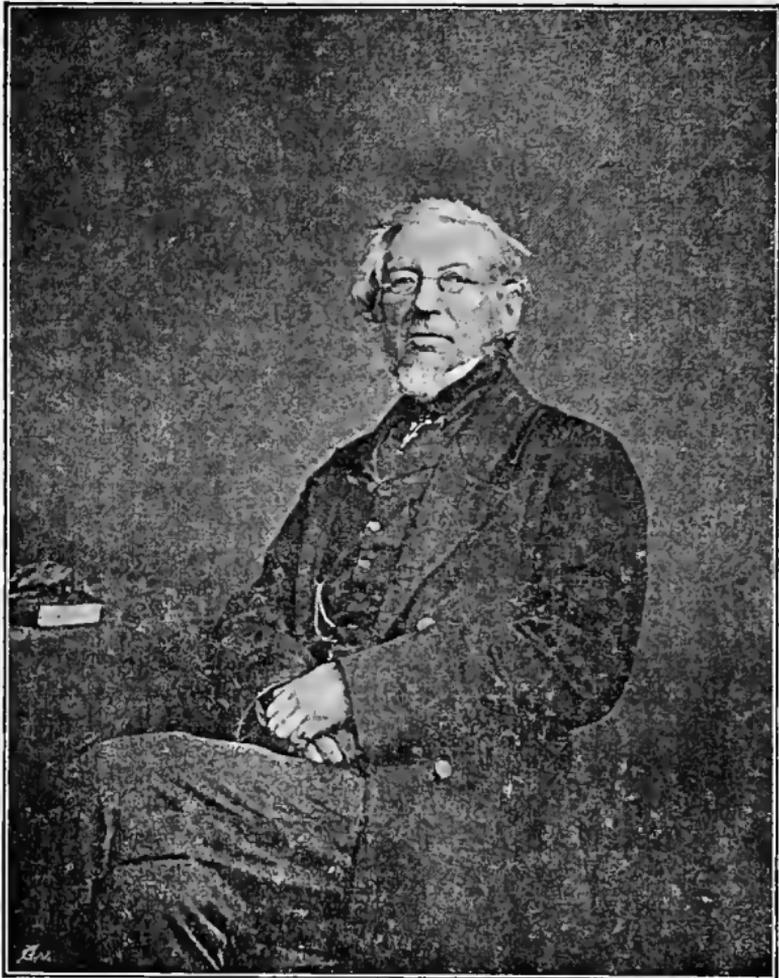
Language in those days used a freedom of expression which is not tolerated at present, when, in some circles, and in the presence of ladies, it is considered impolite to speak of the bare legs of a table. Even the occupant of a pulpit called a spade a spade, and not an agricultural implement. The following is too tempting an example for insertion, to omit it. Of the Rev. Hugh Hart's many eccentricities numerous examples are in print—here is a new, and by good

authority, a true one. In his latter days the attendance in his chapel in John Street became scanty, and the seat rents fell away. One Sunday forenoon in the course of his sermon he said—"My brethren, as I was on my way here this morning, I was addressed by a gentleman in black, who condoled with me on the empty pews and the deserted church, as compared with the old days; and then he said 'Mr. Hart! Mr. Hart! you are not going the right way to work, Sir; this way of yours will never do, you are preaching much too sound doctrine for your people; you should preach more smoothly and pleasantly to them, and instead of the rigours of the law, you should say, peace, peace, to them.' 'My friends,' says Mr. Hart, 'when I took a good look at him, I soon saw that this was the very devil himself in disguise, and immediately said to him, '*you go to Hell, Sir,*' and so—he then went home at once."

This kind of profanity, then considered to have some profitable uses, is now thought a proof of low breeding, as vulgar, reprehensible, stupid and sinful, so we shall not soil our pages with more of it. But how did Florence Nightingale deal with it in the Crimea? A soldier severely and shockingly wounded was brought into the hospital in such dire agony, that after the manner of his kind, he burst into a frenzy of cursing and swearing. The surgeon bandaging his wounds sternly reprovèd him, saying, "How dare you use such language in the presence of Miss Nightingale?" Florence, who was standing at his bedside, said, quietly but firmly—"Please to mind your own business! Can't you see that the poor man is in fearful agony, and does not in the least know what he is saying." Think of the delicate, highly cultured lady giving this strange rebuff to the strong masculine mind of the surgeon! It was like a pure and heavenly beam of light from God's own sun, streaming unpolluted through the murky atmosphere, and taking no taint from it. Her speech was heroic, so that—

"In England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
Through portals of the past.
A Lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of true heroic womanhood."

Mr. William Brown, like a great many others at the time, grew into a knowledge of music as children learn to speak, without ever troubling themselves as to the rules of grammar.



MR. WILLIAM BROWN.

Art had never taught him clefs or moods in music, had never carried him across the *pons asinorum* of the formation of keys, which once passed makes the after progress easy and delightful. Of these thorny difficulties he chose to continue ignorant to the last, for Nature had enabled him

to find a by-way for himself, and continued practice had made him perfect in reading music, but his ear was so keenly sensitive, that a false note in harmony, or tones in the minutest shade too sharp or flat drove him almost distracted. In the first half of this century the service of praise in our presbyterian churches was simply excruciating to all sensitive ears, and so sensitive were his, that even in church, his writhings of body, and contortions of face under the torture, were painfully apparent to all around him; and all through the congregation the tyro, or the ignorant in music, could easily judge of the character of the music by Mr. Brown's behaviour. When in the early Indian career of General Sir David Baird, he had the misfortune to be captured by Hyder Ali, and was kept in a dungeon chained to another prisoner, his mother, no doubt deeply affected by the tidings, felt all a mother's love and anxiety for him, but knowing his active, indomitable nature, all she said was—"Weel, weel! pity the loon that's chained to oor Davie." And so with feelings like that of Mrs. Baird, it might be said of Mr. William Brown. If by his musical ear he had beatific times, and moments of ecstatic delight, revelling in a world of sound, of which grosser souls like that of Dr. Johnson could only say that it was "a pleasing noise," then his face and whole demeanour showed his unbounded delight. But this being a dual world, every ecstasy having in it its corresponding depression, every pleasure its pain—every joy its suffering, and every immense happiness its intense sorrow, the tortures which he endured from music—unexpressive of the sentiment, or false and untrue in the uttering—rendered him quite incapable of controlling his emotions, which got vent in contortions of face and body, in action, and even in speech. "Then," say we, "pity those individuals, who, for the two hours' service, were chained to the pews adjoining that occupied by Mr. Brown," for as some of them said, their devotional feelings were sometimes sadly interrupted,

He was the barometer in the church as to the condition of the musical atmosphere, and his actions were watched by those in the front breast of the galleries, and all within sight of him. If his face was serene they joined in the harmony, but if clouded they sat silent and with very good reason, for then there was something undoubtedly musically wrong;

just as a deaf member of the House of Commons could always tell if the atmosphere was serene in the House, and almost know what was going on by watching the face of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. W. Brown's intense earnestness in whatever interested him manifested itself both in speech and action. In a print of the thirties of the century, he is described as "a public character at church meetings—no man seems to be more alive at a meeting—he is eternally on the move—flying from one place to another with notions and messages, and we know not what." (Was he not the grandson of the rinnin' minister!) "He is no great speaker—*habbers* a good deal, and is one of your apologetic speakers, devoting a long time to small matters, such as, 'I beg pardon,'—'I should not detain you, but &c,'—and, 'Really, Sir, I should not mention this, but I feel so much myself, &c,' and so on, wandering from the even track (if it has one) of his speech. But as we don't like to say much on church matters—the *Herald* monopolising that department—we take leave of Mr. William Brown." No one acquainted with the free criticism of James Bruce—the reporter for the *Journal*,—on the public men of the day, can doubt the authorship of this paragraph. Articles of his can be detected in queer out-of-the-way places.

But for Mr. B's heredity, and early training, he might possibly have joined the Episcopal Church, as many others did, for the musical service alone. Had that church been at peace, and not as it was, distracted by contentions between the two Scottish sections regarding their Communion Service, the pretentious claims of Priests, and the new Ritualism, undoubtedly it would have received far larger additions to its membership than it certainly did,—from this cause alone. But at that time, such was the ferment of mind in all the churches, that doves who flew out from one ark in hope of peace and rest, found none, and came back again bearing an olive branch, and were glad of the old shelter.

So devoted was Mr. Brown to music that he built at Broadford Cottage a large and handsome music room, unrivalled then in any private residence in the city. There it was his delight to collect all the professionals and music lovers in the place—Mr. Baker, organist, Arthur Thomson, the banker, and his two accomplished daughters—the vocal *prima donnas* of the Musical Society: Aleck Ewing, the

master of many instruments, and the composer of a hymn tune which will live as long as music is known—Henry Ambrose Smith with all his associates in the Haydn Society. With his daughter Catherine (now Mrs. Burns,) presiding at the grand pianoforte,—and as a performer she was then considered amongst the first in Scotland ; with her father at the double bass, Mr. Baker, first violin, Mr. Ewing, second, Mr. Gordon, viola, Mr. Smith, flute, and with a ready and willing batch of vocalists, chamber music and masses by the first masters would be heard in perfection.

“ Miserere, Domine !

The words are utter'd and they flee.
Beethoven takes them then—those two
Poor, bounded words—and makes them new ;
Infinite makes them, makes them young,
Transplants them to another tongue,
Eternal, passion-fraught, and free—
Miserere, Domine !”

No wonder that some of us employees who were privileged to be present should have been then deeply smitten with the love of music. The happy memories of these meetings dwell in our minds as the first entrance into a higher and purer atmosphere, which seemed “to bring all heaven before our eyes,” the echoes of these strains ring in our ears all through the many summers and winters since then—“When Music, heavenly maid, was young.”

The gigantic case, as we youngsters thought it, for Mr. Brown's double bass violin lay on the floor of one of the store rooms in No. 71 Union Street. With what awe the young apprentices were introduced to it, especially when they were told that the fiddle was an antediluvian one, and had belonged to Goliath of Gath. But as too much familiarity breeds contempt, it came to pass that when the youngsters were playing high jinks in the long suite of rooms, (which afforded Andrew Murray—a grandson of the Provost's—a pistol range of nearly sixty feet long), and when James Matthews, the foreman, came down to call a message boy, two of them would jump in and conceal themselves in the fiddle case until he passed into the next room, when they would bolt out of it and run upstairs to the shop. It was a delightful little trick, but was tried once too often, for next time as he passed, James fastened down the sneck of the

case and kept the two nickums in durance vile until they roared for mercy. Boys will be boys, even though young booksellers.

Just as the strings, of a well-tuned piano, though untouched, will vibrate and sound responsive to the notes of a singer beside it, so, like an Æolian harp, did the soul of Mr. William Brown respond to all the musical impulses of the time and place. The Aberdeen Musical Festival of 1834, the continued blossoming of seed sown sixty years previously in the establishing of the Musical Society—itsself an outcome of the old *Sang Schule*—was an epoch in the musical annals of the city.

It was a fine example of heredity in the inhabitants, the final and last attempt to revive the old Musical Society on its ancient conservative and exclusive basis. It failed in this, because by that time the reign of Democracy had begun. But it did a world of good. For the first time out of Edinburgh, the soul-inspiring strains of Handel's "Messiah" were heard in Scotland, and the echo of its strains has never ceased reverberating for sixty years. During the three days of its continuance Mr. Brown was in a fever of excitement, and some of his employees—to all of whom tickets of admission were given—caught the infection. Some of them could say—

" Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or, like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other, with a wild surmise,
Silently,—upon a peak in Darien."

The seed sown by that Musical Festival fell on congenial soil ; it sprung up and fructified with ample results in after years. The story of the " Harmonic Choir " with its powerful influence ; the doings of the " Euterpean " and " Haydn " Societies ; the establishment of the " Musical Association," with its high-class concerts ; and the rise and progress of the " Association for the Improvement of Psalmody," from which sprung the " Choral Union " with nearly forty other societies, would form the groundwork of more articles than the writer can ever hope to write, and for which there is ample material, somewhat antediluvial, however, to a great many readers, unless addicted to ancient history.

Meantime, and trying to keep to the thread of our story, we mention that in 1856, in consequence of the introduction of an organ in St. George's Church, Liverpool, then in connection with the Free Church, the question of instrumental aid in worship was raised. Dr. Candlish republished an old treatise condemning the introduction, and Mr. Cromar vindicated it. The two little books were put into the writer's hands, with the request of a review for the *Aberdeen Herald*, which was supplied and published.

Besides trying to expose some absurdities in the arguments of anti-organists, who persisted in viewing the question as the organ *versus* the human voice, and not as an aid; the prior question why music *per se* was used, and why the praise was sung and not read, was considered. And it was attempted to be shown that if the words supplied the theme, the music intensified the feeling, and supplied the very essence of praise—the emotion—without which, according to all human experience, the praise was cold and lifeless. The article concluded thus—

“Space will not permit us to continue the subject, but we indicate a line of argument far too little attended to, and attention to which may be of use in the controversy. Unfortunately the practical settlement of it in favour of the organ involves sacrifices of cherished prejudices which present, even in this liberal and enlightened age, great barriers; while its settlement against the organ saves some expense, which seems more valuable to many than feeling or emotion. We have no hope of seeing the organ general in our Presbyterian Churches, and have no wish that any church or congregation should “break up,” or even that the relation of churches or individuals should be painfully affected by the question; but we do think that there ought to be sufficient liberality of feeling manifested, as to permit those who agree among themselves to use the organ if so inclined.

“We are slowly but certainly making advances in this matter. One hundred years ago the introduction, in this quarter, of the pitch-pipe for the simple purpose of taking the key introduced much discord! and, combined with the cessation of reading the line, and singing the tunes a little faster than the rate at which they were formerly sung, ‘occasioned such disturbances, distractions, alienations, divisions, and heartburnings, that the 1745 was but a jest to

it'!! Let it not be said in after years that this question was so handled, but that permission having been granted, some congregations adopted the organ, while others did not; and that in either case the praises of God—formerly so cold and lifeless in their utterance—at this time assumed a new importance as an element in worship, and men awakened as if from a dream to a sense of duty, and to the benefits they received from a proper attention to this duty."

The amusing thing in this deliverance of full forty years ago is the optimist view of 1856 as a "liberal and enlightened age," and the pessimist view of having "no hope of seeing the organ general in our Presbyterian churches." Yet the hope of "sufficient liberality" has been fulfilled, which makes the writer still an optimist, with encouragement to continue so; amply justified of late.

Mr. William Brown only read this article on the Saturday evening after it had appeared, and it seems to have touched him to the quick. With his usual impulsiveness he instantly went off in search of Mr. Carnie, the then sub-editor of the *Herald*, and in spite of all the well known strict rules of the press as to reticence in disclosing the names of contributors, by his cajoling earnestness—we shall not say bribery, because that is a thing unknown to sub-editors, who will brave an action in a civil court rather than disclose this—he wormed out from him the fact that the article was written by his own partner. If Mr. Brown was pleased with the article before, he was doubly pleased now, nay, was intensely surprised and delighted, and he ordered a number of copies forthwith, which he posted to Dr. Candlish, and all his Free Church friends, and with good results.

Next day—Sabbath—the writer found him waiting for him on his exit from church; still so excited that fellow members thought something tremendously serious had happened. He was pleased to express his gratification at the views stated, and begged the writer to forward him anything more he wrote on the subject.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Is there a heart that music cannot melt ?
Alas ! how is that rugged heart forlorn !
Is there who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born ?
He needs not woo the muse ; he is her scorn.
The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine :
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page ; or mourn,
And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine,
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.”
Prof. Jas. Beattie, Aberdeen, 1735-1803.

“Music is a moral law. It gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything. It is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just, and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless dazzling, passionate, and eternal form.”—*Plato.*

“Society, dead or alive, can have no charm without intimacy, and no intimacy without interest in trifles.”

“These trifles are the sunglints on the landscape.”

“To feel at ease in any company—or at any period—to find the humour of its jokes, the wit of its sayings and the point of its repartees, we must be conversant with the public and private life of the actors.”

THE musical atmosphere which made itself felt even in the business premises of the “Stall,” but which hummed around Broadford Cottage in a stringy, sing-song sort of way, as we have narrated, was every now and then agitated by new airs and strange melodies brought into it by wandering minstrels from the sunny south.

Although absolutely and entirely unknown to the vulgar Cockneys, who conceived it as inhabited by a race of barbarian reivers or cattle lifters dressed in kilts, yet to all well informed Englishmen, Aberdeen had always stood out as an oasis in the Presbyterian desert. For it had been loyal to Charles I. ; alone faithful amongst the faithless, its doctors had boldly defended the kingly prerogatives ; it possessed two universities ; its musical reputation was the growth of

centuries and the admiration of southrons. Richard Francks, who visited it in 1658, says :—

“Here you shall have such method in their musick, and such order and decorum of song devotion in the church as you will admire to hear, though not regulated by a cantor or quirister, but only by an insipid parochial clerk that never attempts further in the mathematicks of music than to compleat the parishioners to sing a psalm tune.”

Even although in this unbelieving age we may feel inclined to take this with “a grain of salt,” yet the very numerous testimonies as to the comparative proficiency of Aberdonians in music come to us at such early dates, and from so many different sources, that their cumulative effect is equal to a surgical operation on the minds of the citizens, and carries with it a large amount of credibility. About one hundred years after this, the famous John Wesley, who was accustomed to hear hearty singing, visited Monymusk on two different years, and records in his Diary his great delight and satisfaction with the congregational song in the parish Church, under the charge of Thos. Shannon. In the Roman Catholic church services music has always held an important place, and rightly so, for if all things come from God, surely we are bound to give Him what is so peculiarly His own special gift of music—which so enriches us, yet which might have been withheld, had we not been spiritual and immortal beings, as well as human, for :—

“What know we of the saints above?
But that they sing and that they love !”

In the revulsion of feeling—in the almost inevitable swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other, which so characterizes this human life of ours, when the Reformation suddenly broke like a thunderstorm over Europe, opinion became divided in a threefold manner as to the form and manner of worship. The Romanists, fortified by centuries of hereditary culture and experience of human nature, like the Tories of the present day, maintained the *status quo*. Calvin and his followers, Radicals as they were, swung the whole length of the pendulum to the opposite extreme, discarding all but the simplest forms of worship, (and one set of Baptists and another of Quakers, discarding music of any kind in their service and discountenancing it as childish and

Jewish); while the Lutherans took a middle course, their leader saying, "After theology I give music the second rank and highest honour . . . whoever despises it, with him I can never agree."

In pre-reformation times Aberdonians were high Romanists. The "Book of Deer," and the "Aberdeen Breviary," amongst the earliest specimens of church services extant in the country, have been long celebrated; and their churchmen, Prelates and Bishops, stand high on the rolls of fame. The City Minstrels were so celebrated, that in 1503, decorated with silver badges and the city arms, they were sent to Holyrood to grace the marriage of James IV. with Margaret of England. And when, eight years after, the King and Queen visited Aberdeen, the musical cultivation of the citizens is celebrated by William Dunbar, the poet, thus:—

"Ane fair procession mett her at the Port,
 In a cap of gold and silk full pleasantlie,
 Syne at her entrie, with many fair disport,
 Ressaivt hir on streittes lustillie :
 Quhair first the salutatioun honourabilly
 Of the sweitt Virgin, guidlie mycht be seine,
The sound of menstrallis blawing to the sky :
 Be blyth and blissful, burgh of Aberdein."

which is all very well as a professional reception, but it is more interesting to read that music was in such general cultivation, that—

"Syne cam thair four and twentie madins yung,
 All claid in greene of marvellous bewtie,
 With hair detressit as threides of gold did hing,
 With quhyt hattis all browderit richt brawlie,
Playand on timberallis, and syngand richt sweetlie."

While a century after, (1601), on a thanksgiving day, all works being stopt, the inhabitants accompanied the magistrates in procession "throw the toune, singing of psalms and praising of God": a practice which, for the promotion of harmony amongst the magistrates, and as a delightful spectacle, might be considered worthy of re-adoption.

When in 1662 Forbes printed the volume of music popularly known as the "Cantus," he dedicated it to the council, and says:—

"Seeing that it hath pleased Divine Providence, in the persons of your Honourable Wisdoms, to bless the bench

of famous Bon-Accord with such a harmonious heavenly consort of as many musicians as magistrates . . . Yea, the fame of this city for its admirable knowledge in divine science . . . hath almost overspread Europe. Witness the great confluence of all sorts of persons from each part of the same, who of design have come (much like that of the Queen of Sheba) to hear the sweet cheerful psalms and heavenly melody of famous Bon-Accord ; whose hearts have been ravished with the harmonious concord thereof."

And that his praise did not go unrewarded is evident from a minute of council, 18th March, 1663, bearing that "ane hundreth merks Scotts money" be paid to John Forbes "for his paines in printing certain musicall songs dedicat to the Counsell."

There is much reason to suspect that in regard to a knowledge of harmony, town councillors at present have degenerated, and in order to restore the ancient prestige of Bon-Accord, it might be worth consideration whether at Ward meetings, candidates should not be heckled in music, and put through their facings in tune and time. And they might also give their favourite song, and be asked to read a piece of music at sight.

That in the matter of taste, the old councillors required, and had discrimination, is evident, for in 1630, the Council—

"For dyvers respectis and considerationis moving tham, dischargit Thomas Wobstar, their common Pyper, of all going throw the towne at nicht, or in the morning, in tyme coming with his pyp; *as being ane incivill forme to be usit within sic a famous burghe, and being often fund fault with als weill be sundrie nichtbouris of the town as be strangeris.*"

The Music School, so named at the Reformation, was the lineal but secularised successor of the ecclesiastical training school, continued down to 1758, and it bulks largely in our local annals in the appointment and payment of its teachers. Dissociated from church control, the musical service at worship lost its previous high character, James Gellat, the precentor of the west church, finding his scholars but poor substitutes for trained choristers, and Thos. Shannon, a soldier in General Monk's regiment, having attracted attention by his proficiency in music, and being bought up by some Aberdeen gentlemen, revolutionized the old psalmody, and may be considered to have been the death of the Music School.

But if Shannon was the proximate cause of the death of the antiquated *Sang Schule* he was the very life of music; was not only the re-creator of the ancient reputation of the city for its musical culture and taste, but the means of making it yet more famous than ever. For first in Scotland, he, in Aberdeen, revolutionized the ancient church song, banishing the old slow much-quavering style hitherto used, and which lingered long in some remote highland churches, and introducing a comparatively plain song with single syllabic notes. He taught classes in Aberdeen and the surrounding parishes so successfully, that when the then new West Church was opened, 9th Nov., 1755, he and a band of his pupils, mostly farm-servant lads and lasses gathered from Kintore and Monymusk, came into town and led the praise; astonishing, electrifying, and delighting all the amateurs and virtuosos of the musical city.

But even in a *dead sea* like Aberdeen, a daring renovation in the church service was simply intolerable to the worshippers of the far-famed goddess "Use and Wont." The objurgations if not loud were deep, and but that the memories of 1745, of the "butcher Cumberland" and bloody Culloden, were yet recent, raw, and rankling, some Jenny Geddes might have thrown a stool at Shannon and raised a rebellion, in which many of the church members would have joined.

For unfortunately, not only did their two collegiate clergymen take opposite sides, but the whole city was divided into factions. Headed by the members of the Musical Society one party was for "Reform," another for "Use and Wont," or backed up by the Shorter Catechism "the pure and entire," while the Dead Sea-ites said the question was unimportant, a mere difference between "tweedledum and tweedledee!" and these war cries kept the city in an uproar for weeks, as bad as at Ephesus. In these circumstances the professors of King's College did themselves and their institution infinite honour, by appointing Shannon precentor in their chapel, still paying Gideon Duncan, weaver, the previous precentor and his choir, on condition that they continued their services, conforming to and aiding Shannon in his reformed method, a most wise-like proceeding! Yet Gideon, so humbled in his position, affecting to be pricked in his conscience—or having been bribed it is said—revolted, and along with a small party attempted to sing in the old

style during worship, thus producing confusion worse confounded. Summoned before the Baillie court as a disturber of public worship, he was convicted and fined fifty pounds Scots. The case was carried to the Court of Session by his zealous supporters, and for a Psalmody reformer or a student of Scottish character (especially Aberdonian) the arguments pro and con in this trial as given in the *Scots Magazine* 1755-6, are most amusing and instructive reading.

The new method being simpler and easier, triumphed, and from Aberdeen spread all over Scotland. That it was new is evidenced by a paragraph in the *Scots Magazine* of the time, where it is stated that an Association for the Improvement of Psalmody in Edinburgh has been formed, but "whether the new method recently introduced in Aberdeen will be adopted, is not yet decided." Before the Song School had expired, a number of citizens had in 1745 combined to form "The Musical Society," which for a period of at least sixty years so flourished that they gave weekly concerts during the winter season, and paid liberal salaries to the best leaders and performers of the day. The musical taste of the city must have reached a high pitch of excellence when the orchestra was formed of such men as Dr. John Gregory, George Skene of Rubislaw, George Moir of Scotston, Dr. George Skene, Colonel Knight Erskine, Mr. Robertson of Foveran, Dr. James Beattie, Mr. Annand of Belmont, Sir Wm. Forbes, John Ross, organist of St. Paul's, Dr. Dauney, Francis Peacock, Mr. Thomson of Banchory, John Ewen, and others who gave their services gratuitously. But in the course of two generations, death and removals weeded the most of them away, and during the next twenty years its existence was merely nominal, and after an expiring spurt in the Musical Festival of 1828, it was finally wound up, leaving in the care of the Professors in Marischal College some valuable relics—the president's golden lyre, ornamented with diamonds and rubies, a fine picture of St. Cecilia, an excellent organ, a harpsichord, and a large collection of music.

In an interesting account of the Society by Dr. and Dean of Guild Walker, printed in the *Aberdeen Journal*, 29th Jan'y, 1889, and since reprinted—it is stated that in 1838 the members sold the property by public roup, and conveyed the proceeds for behoof of the Girls' Hospital. Beattie's

violoncello, which drew tears from the eyes of Mrs. Siddons, became the property of the Doctor's brother, James. His love of music as well as art, and his invaluable services to his native city on their behalf, are fully commemorated and perpetuated in the gift of his splendid collection of books to the Public Library, a collection such as any Library might be proud of, and few, if any Public Libraries in the country possess;—to which his trustees have added his portrait by Sir George Reid; and of his gift of valuable pictures to the Art Gallery. His recent death has been greatly mourned by many loving admirers. He has left a noble example, and so—

“For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men.”

We think it is S. T. Coleridge who writes, (and it is parodied by Mark Twain):—

“Swans sing before they die, 'twere no bad thing
Did certain persons die before they sing.”

But this could not be said of the Aberdeen Musical Society. With that deep philosophical teaching which underlies the text of many of our juvenile stories—Bluebeard who so rapidly disposed of his numerous wives—was simply emblematic of that fickle fashion which never allows its puppets to reign for even a single generation, unless there should happen to be something immortal in them—when Phoenix-like they rise from their own ashes. On the Society being finally wound up, it might have been proclaimed of it, as of Royalty in France in ancient (but not modern) times, “Music is dead, long live Music!” The Society had existed for sixty years, and during two-thirds of that period it had been powerfully influential; and if during its latter days its concerts had been fewer and not so well attended; by its previous teachings, by the cultivation of taste which ensued, by the success of *Brown's Musical Library* and that of *Knowles & Sons* as manufacturers of musical instruments—it became evident that if music had lost its temporary and intermittent lodgings in the Concert Room off Broad Street, it had taken up a permanent abode in the hearts and homes of the citizens of the “braif blythe toun.”

That this was the case is evident by the continuous care taken in the appointment of precentors to the West Church,

which seems to have been always most carefully considered. Competitive trials were the rule for many years. James Chalmers, the printer, certified by Burns as "a facetious fellow," and attested by the Musical Society as possessing musical talents and skill, filled the office from 1774 to 1797. In 1792 John Aitken, teacher of vocal music, advertises in the *Journal* that he is now to reside in Aberdeen, and is to open a class on Sunday evenings gratis, to parties who bring with them recommendations from ministers. And in after years the Town Council repudiating the local practice of "keeping their ain fish-guts to their ain sea-maws" advertised in England for skilled musicians, and drew from thence John Knott from Newcastle, who held the office from 1811 to 1824; then William D. Kenward from Durham, 1824-28. From 1828 to 1831 the office was filled by a townsman William Simpson, who had the temerity to engage a lady to give a solo at the close of the service in the aristocratic West Church—a foretaste of "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons"—which did not at all please the conservative Aberdonians, and was at once put a stop to. After this Edward Peele came from Durham for a few months, and then Alex. Colston, from the south, served from 1832 to 1855, when Aberdeen had become a burning and a shining light in music, and had trained up sons of its own to fill the places of sons of the stranger.

All these, with other precentors, such as Wm. Maitland of the East Church, who published a collection of Tunes; Alex. Keard of Trinity Church; John Ross, organist of St. Paul's; and R. H. Baker of St. Andrew's, frequented the "Book-Stall"; drawn there largely by the influence of the Provost, and the musical leanings of his son. Mr. Frost had not a grain of music in his composition. Like his pattern Dr. Johnson, he could just tolerate it, else the "Stall" employees would probably have come into more frequent contact with James Davie, who became choir-master in St. Andrew's Chapel about 1835, and who, from 1802 (when he published a collection of sacred music, which looks as if it had come out of Noah's Ark) up to 1857, was a potent factor in the musical development of the city. As an instance of his energy, it may be mentioned that in his early career having an application to teach flute-playing, of which he knew nothing, instead of stating his ignorance, he at once agreed,

on getting the promise of a good fee. Putting off the first lesson for a week, he procured a flute and lesson book, and managing to keep ahead of his pupil, at the end of two quarters, both were respectable performers.

Davie indeed was the first to project on an extensive scale a Choral Union. The members met first in a hall in the Flourmill Lane, and latterly in another in Crown Court, off Union Street, and the bright and brilliant memories of these meetings will never be forgotten by those privileged to attend them. Deacon Robb, the clerk of St. Andrew's Chapel, whose duty it was to lead the responses, and most gravely and reverently to say "Amen" to the sonorous voice of Bishop Skinner, was one of Davie's choir, and a regular and punctual attender the Deacon was. He was a useful, even a skilful vocalist, one to be depended upon in a complicated passage or a difficult run by those who sat next him. But when the crucial test of the evening's performance, Weber's "Laughing Chorus," came to be performed, then the Deacon's geniality and humour fairly overpowered all rule and authority. Entering into the spirit of the chorus *con amore*, he so revelled in it, and that so outrageously, that the staid, sober, methodical, and musical "ha, ha's," trained to run in harness, overleaped all their traces, broke away from all control of the conductor; and the chorus,—joined in by the audience—ended in a riotous torrent of laughter, unequalled in the writer's experience, save on one occasion at an election nomination of the Second, or as it was termed the "funny" ward, somewhere in the forties or fifties of this century.

At that time there was to be seen on the streets a well-known figure "crookit like an Z," in the person of Geordie Weir, a tailor, noticed in Riddell's "*Aberdeen and its Folk.*" Small in stature, and so much zig-zagged as still farther to diminish this, he attracted the attention of every person who saw him, and he was familiarly known as the "Partan." But if dwarfish in body, he was gigantic in his own estimation, and had a very high idea of his own abilities. Nature, with its own way of trying to balance accounts, and preserve the equilibrium of the race, had provided him with an immense continent of a wife, to marry whom would have required at least three ordinary sized men, and beside her Geordie looked like a very sprat alongside a whale. His heroism in courting and marrying her was unsurpassed by

Jack the Giant Killer, St. George and the Dragon, or Sir Francis Drake, when in his tiny barque he attacked the huge Santissima Trinidad, the Armada flag-ship. According to Sydney Smith, there was enough of her to furnish wives for a whole parish. To marry her would be a case, not of bigamy but of trigamy. You might people a colony with her, or take a walk round her if you were in rude health, and with frequent resting places.

Geordie took a deep interest in all municipal affairs, attended all public meetings, and specially those of the Second Ward. At one of these meetings in the Old Grammar School, he was there, seated in one of the "factions," but, from his small size, practically invisible. The candidates were duly proposed and seconded in eulogistic terms, and the proceedings were about to close without the usual fun, when Mr. T. Ewen, advocate, known as "stumpy Ewen" from his wooden leg,—rose and expressed his great surprise "that one of our best known and most eminent citizens then present, had been so grossly overlooked—one well-known to them all—noted for his high upright standing, his elevated and lofty position, and his straightforward and erect walk and carriage"—here all looked around the assemblage in wonder and amazement who this could be, but when Ewen proposed Mr. George Weir, tailor, the laughing chorus which broke out, and was continued for full ten minutes, completely eclipsed Weber's musical effort, and it seemed that every one present had become a Deacon Robb for the time, and was his equal in explosive laughter.

But Geordie, who had all his wits about him, was quite equal to the occasion, for it was only in body that he was the ninth part of a man. He sprang to his feet or rather slipped down from his seat, but being then invisible to the audience, his head not appearing above the desk, he was greeted with cries of "Stand up" reiterated until he first mounted on the seat, and was then hoisted up by his neighbours and held by them on the top of the perilously sloping desk. He gracefully bowed his acknowledgments with a smiling countenance, as long as the uproarious tumult lasted. On its subsidence—from sheer exhaustion—he then very neatly and nicely thanked Mr. Ewen for his proposal, and the audience for their hearty approval, but gratefully declined the honour.

Small, crooked, and crab-like though the *Partan* was, he bulked on the Aberdeen horizon—large as the rising sun—was in his own opinion an important personage, and was confirmed in this opinion by the notice he attracted from the strangers in the town, and also from the boys and the Baillies of the period. In those days Time was like a laggard schoolboy and did not hurry on as it does now, when hours are so much shorter, and supported by his help-meet, Geordie had ample time at his disposal.

Having once had the misfortune to appear as a culprit in the Police Court, his sharp wits saved him, but after that, becoming interested, he became so constant an attendant that he might have considered himself as assessor to the presiding Baillie. On one occasion, this official observing his absence stopt the calling of the charges, but immediately on Geordie's appearance—"Noo," said the Baillie, "Noo we can go on!"

From what has been already stated, it may be considered certain that the early celebrity of Aberdeen as to proficiency in music has always been maintained. The great musical revivals in Church Psalmody of 1754 and 1854 both emanated from it, and spread all over Scotland. And those conversant in musical matters know that the criticism of an Aberdeen audience as to a musical performance has always been considered by artists or artistes as one of the fairest and most just criterions to which they could be subjected, and was valued accordingly by them. If the receipts from concerts in this place so far north were perhaps not equal to that of more populous places; the hearty appreciation, and the genuine sympathy of the audience in good honest work, made up for it, and in some cases did indeed far more than make up for the smaller remuneration.

Amongst the wandering stars in the musical world who found their way into this out-of-the-way place, where he could only hope to pick up hundreds of pounds, when going elsewhere he might have shovelled in thousands, was that wonderful phenomenon Paganini, the most famous of violin virtuosos. And coming here as he did, with all the weird legends, and the strange runiours of his devilish parentage, coupled with his extraordinary ghost-like appearance, made his visit and his appearances in the "Book-Stall," one of the most memorable of all the writer's earliest recollections.

Somelhow or other Paganini had got an introduction to Mr. William Brown, who paid him much attention, and certainly no stranger character ever visited the "Book-Stall." Tall, lank, skeleton-like, with a pale, narrow, wax-coloured face, with no trace of blood in it, with long dark hair flowing down over his shoulders, and with an uncanny mysterious expression in his eyes :—

" With his mournful look,
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seemed
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret lived forlorn."

His extraordinary genius, "the power of taking infinite pains," was made the most of by an admixture of charlatanism in his character, which mystified his hearers, and magnified the powers of his performances. It was said that it appeared as if long streaming flakes of music fell from his string, interspersed with luminous points of sound which rose in the air and shone like stars. He threw Europe into paroxysms of wonder and admiration,—and little wonder although the boys of Aberdeen, were awe-struck by his other-world looks, and by the demoniac legends current regarding him.

One of the many legends regarding him, as related by G. A. Sala, was, that having assassinated one of his mistresses he had been condemned to five years' imprisonment. A compassionate gaoler had allowed him the use of a violin in order to solace the dreariness of his captivity ; but for fear lest the prisoner should knot the strings together and hang himself he only allowed him the fourth string. By constant practice Paganini succeeded at last in phenominally scraping and executing a whole concerto instead of executing himself.

His Aberdeen exhibition was in the theatre in Marischal Street, and if tradition is true the tickets were 31/6. Some of us loons hovered in a quiet street at the back of the theatre, unusually silent and no romping, and as a reward, now and then caught snatches of wondrous melody in the heaven above us, succeeded by rolling thunders of applause. If poverty makes men acquainted with strange bed-fellows, so does music, and every strongly abnormal faculty with which some men are gifted. Hardly any greater contrast

could be conceived than that between the staid presbyterian elder, William Brown, and Paganini, whose body lay unburied for five years, because he died without the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, and was only buried by the direct appeal of his son Achille to the Pope. The strange conjunction of these two reminds us of the lines of Goethe:—

“Like as a plank of driftwood
Tossed on the watery main,
Another plank encounters,
Meets, touches, and parts again.
Thus, 'tis with men for ever
On life's uncertain sea,
They meet—they greet—and sever,
Drifting eternally.”

Or as Longfellow translates the idea—

“Ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness ;
So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another ;
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.”



BYRON'S HOUSE, BROAD STREET.

CHAPTER XX.

“Here we’ve a feck o’ auld warld stories
And anecdotes o’ Whigs and Tories :
O’ characters that died afore us
In by past time.
An’ pickins fair frae memory’s glories
In prose or rhyme.”

Andrew Sheriffs, Bookseller, Aberdeen, 1780.

“Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that being nothing art everything! When thou wert, thou wert not *antiquity*, then thou wert nothing, but had a remoter *antiquity*, as thou called’st it to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, *modern!* What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses are we that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we for ever revert.”

Charles Lamb.

HAVING already said that the atmosphere in 71 Union Street was both varied and changeable, like our Spring seasons, the readers of the *Book-Stall* will not be surprised if they experience something of this variety and changeableness in these reminiscences.

When the Rev. Rowland Hill (1745-1833), that truly evangelical Church of England divine, was asked to preach to a congregation, the members of which were very practical and fond of having a subject regularly divided into heads, while he, like De Quincey, was very discursive; in order to please them, he said that for their sakes he would divide his discourse into four heads; *1st*, he would go round it; *2nd*, he would come up to it; *3rd*, he would go through it; and *4th* and lastly, he would go away from it. Now this comprehensive plan seems to the writer extremely suitable as a model, save that, as in the past so in the future, he means to mix up all the heads in a conglomerate fashion; going round it, coming up to it, through it, and away from it as best suits him. And although he is free to confess that his “hobby has the bit in his mouth; goes his own way; sometimes trots through a park and sometimes paces by a cemetery” yet there is a method in his madness, which prevents him going on at present with farther details of the musical

atmosphere in which the employees of the "Stall" found themselves immersed.

The musical period attempted to be described by us was in the thirties of this century, and having incidentally alluded to events which happened in 1856, it might naturally be expected that something should be recorded of those citizens who, in that intervening period, so largely helped in the musical education of the citizens. Their names may not figure largely in commercial enterprise, but those of William Anderson, clothier, and Precentor in the Free South Church; William Smith, tea merchant; Arthur Thomson, the local agent of the Bank of Scotland, and the first President of the Psalmody Association; James Valentine, who was conjoined with the writer as joint-secretaries; William Carnie, the conductor or conductors *ex officio* who were employed and paid by the association; with the names of others still alive, cannot be omitted from any complete record of those times, and some notices of them are preserved and may yet be given, for they were powerfully influential in their day, and in helping to mould the next generation in a love of music.

We have already said that Mr. William Brown had a knowledge of classical and continental literature. The first of these was derived from his training in the "Book-Stall," and the last from his travels. Last century the "grand tour," as continental travel was called, was the finishing touch of the education of a nobleman, and the valued perquisite of his tutor. Mr. William seems to have enjoyed this unwonted luxury, for the business books record payments made to him for books bought on the continent in various places. And thus by his travels he seems to have got interested in the struggles of the Protestants abroad to maintain and extend their belief. And on the arrival in this country of any of the continental protestant pastors his house was always open to them, and all the influence he possessed was exerted in their favour.

Amongst the number of such were the celebrated Vinet, and the historian D'Aubigny. And the Rev. Adolphe Saphir, whose recent death is yet mourned, was a tutor in Mr. Brown's family, and Professor Sachs of genial memory, who from the first was a better Scotchman than many natives, was all his life an honoured intimate. All these

brought into the "Stall" wafts of foreign air, manners and customs new and strange to us.

In the first quarter of this century the liberty of public meeting was restricted to a degree hardly conceivable by us now. Chief Justice Kelyng laid down the law to a jury thus—"By levying war it is not only meant when a body is gathered together as an army, but if *a company of people will go about any public reformation*, this is high treason." And the Seditious Meetings Prevention Act of 1819 was intended to stop all public meetings, and was cleverly evaded by political parties then giving public dinners to their favourite politicians. To be shut out from all criticism of public measures was abhorrent to free Scotchmen, and accordingly their attention was turned to ecclesiastical and religious questions on which, in the comparative freedom of their church courts—assemblies, synods, presbyteries and sessions—was brought down to the commonality the privilege of thinking out and uttering their sentiments, thus the Scottish people have received a training unequalled in any continental nation, save possibly to the inhabitants of the Swiss cantons. And the more that this is studied the more it will be found that the questions discussed in church courts, the Apocrypha controversy, and in a far higher degree the proposed Catholic Emancipation Bill and the Voluntary Controversy, paved the way for a free press, and the liberty of free speech and open discussion—the palladiums of British liberty. The stir and the tumult which the discussion of the above three subjects caused in Aberdeen, and in which Mr. W. Brown actively participated, was a fitting education for the discussion of the coming Reform Bill, and that prepared the way for the Non-Intrusion controversy and the Disruption in 1843. By the visits and the friendship of the many foreigners who found their way to his home, Mr. Brown's liberal education was largely increased.

And here, although not in chronological order, the strange and unusual atmospheric wave of Revivalism which passed over Aberdeen must be mentioned.

The Rev. W. C. Burns while a student here, resided with his uncle Mr. W. Brown. On Mr. Burns being licensed he became a great, earnest, and popular revivalist, and produced an immense sensation; holding meetings in churches and schools late at night, and being followed by crowds largely

composed of factory girls, although people of almost all ranks attended. It was a wild excitement for the time, a reaction from the doctrine of the extreme Calvinists, promising to all and sundry an easy entrance into eternal bliss without any trouble, or having to fight the fight of faith. The employees in the "Stall" saw a good deal of Mr. Burns, and were interested spectators at many of his meetings, where strange scenes were witnessed. There was no question of his piety or his abounding zeal, although many questioned his prudence and discretion. Opinion was much divided regarding the movement, some ministers patronising him and lending their churches. Others, glad to see the careless aroused, offered to assist, but if their addresses bore the slightest reference to straight and narrow is the way, etc., then they were not asked again, and were very distinctly tabooed and boycotted.

Such an unusual phenomenon, and so unprecedented a thing as a revival happening in the immediate proximity of "the dead sea of moderatism" created great interest in the community, and this interest was kept up by fierce attacks in the local press on Mr. Burns and all who in any way countenanced him. So much so, that the Aberdeen Presbytery were compelled to take the matter into consideration, and appointed a committee to take evidence and report, and this was printed in an octavo pamphlet of upwards of a hundred pages. The Committee of Presbytery held thirteen meetings, five of them in the Lemon Tree Tavern, examined sixteen witnesses, amongst them the leading men in Aberdeen, and the editors and reporters of the newspapers who were present at the meetings, and received replies to a series of queries from parties at a distance.

Under the guidance of the Rev. W. R. Pirie of Dyce, the convener of the committee, the examination of the witnesses was carefully conducted, and their evidence, with the written testimonies of others being all printed, the pamphlet forms a very valuable contribution to the history of Revivals, and to our local knowledge of men and manners at that time, furnishing an insight into the opinions of so many notable citizens. The discussion of Revivalism by "langheaded, cannie," Aberdonians, makes the pamphlet a valuable contribution to our local literature.

It is something to have the opinions of such men on such

a subject as—James Adam, editor of the *Herald*; Jas. H. Wilson, the then sub-editor and reporter; James Bruce, reporter to the *Constitutional* and *Journal*; William Clark, elder in Bon-Accord Church; William Simpson, procurator fiscal; William Watson, sheriff-substitute; Alex. Leslie, elder in West Church; Dr. William Henderson of Bon-Accord; Robert Ness, ditto.; Charles Troup, farmer; William Duncan, *Constitutional* office; Henry Paterson, banker; Alexander Laing, coachbuilder; David Mitchell, advocate; James Reid, joiner; and James Kerr, elder in Bon-Accord. And also to have reports from eleven of the most eminent men in the Church of Scotland on such an interesting subject is valuable.

Although from the character of many members of Presbytery, a hostile verdict was fully expected, the decision arrived at was, that while regretting the reference to two of the meetings where much excitement prevailed, yet it appeared that in the awakening of this city and neighbourhood there was a call to increased thanksgiving. How nobly William C. Burns won for himself a name as one of our most successful missionaries in China is well known.

Breezy although the surrounding atmosphere then was, gusty blasts of passion and prejudice whirling about and raising clouds of dust, which only obscured the truth; inside the "Stall" the atmosphere was even unusually calm and serene at the time, owing possibly to the antagonistic position of the three partners to each other regarding it. Deeply religious, and strongly impulsive as Mr. Wm. Brown was, he might have been expected to take a decided part, yet his inherited prudence, and the precepts of a pious mother conscientiously conservative in religious doctrine, kept him quiescent: Fascinated by the fiery fervour and earnest enthusiasm of his nephew, he was yet restrained on every side. Like Goethe, he cried "more light, more light!"

Mr. Frost, again, with his strong churchman proclivities, saw no necessity for more light—not in the very slightest. With his firm belief in the necessity of the "three orders and apostolical succession," the whole question of Revivalism was to him simply a phase of fanaticism. It was not provided for in the Prayer Book, and to him that was quite sufficient. Forgetting that God fulfills himself in many ways, that "He answers not always in every particular as we

expect," that from its introduction to the present time, Christianity is full of these outbursts of religious fervour, in which, as in every good movement, dross and chaff are mixed up, and we are to be thankful when the good predominates; and not remembering, that in the material world "spring thunder showers come up in silent corn blades," he objected to all such unusual manifestations as thunder showers and Revivals, and put up his umbrella against both of them. He was barely civil to Mr. Burns when he entered the "Stall," and was as crabbed and crusty to all who favoured Revivals as Dr. Johnson was to all Scotchmen—Boswell excepted.

And so the cog-wheels of the "Stall" machine not being exactly grooved to each other, and to the same radius, it was not to be wondered at, that when with the breezy atmosphere some sand and grit got blown in upon them, heat and friction should have been produced in their motion. But for the controlling, regulating influence of the old Provost, the fly-wheel of the business, the friction would have given more evidence of its existence than it did, that is amongst the partners, who had prudential reasons for quiescence, who took Carlyle's advice, and erected amongst themselves an altar to Silence. So much do circumstances affect actions.

It was quite otherwise with their assistants. They, while keenly observant of the words and actions of the principals, were quite free to form their own opinions, and to take such action as they chose. And if ever young men got a favourable opportunity of educating themselves by the free expression of opinion in the Book Stall on the Voluntary and Non-Intrusion controversy—which last was simply the cause and continuation of the first—they had that. They did not hear only one side of the question, for owing to the divergence of opinion amongst the partners, the place was a focus round which the revolving opinions were attracted and fell into it, keeping it in active flame. The Evangelical *Nons*, rallied around the Browns. The Moderate *Intrusionists*—

"From Cook of St. Andrew's, to Bisset of Bourtie,
The head and tail of the Moderate party,"

made the Stall a rendezvous, and Mr. Frost and the firm their publishers, through Dr. Robertson of Ellon, and Messrs. Paul & Pirie. So the employees were specially favoured, and

as it were behind the scenes, seeing many private encounters ; and by attendance at Church meetings witnessing the reviews, and at Synod and Presbytery meetings the actual battles of the combatants.

It is little to the credit of the Moderates of the time that they had no faith in the professions of their fellow churchmen, believing that only a few of the most prominent leaders who had committed themselves would leave the church. And if so, it is no wonder that Mr. Frost should have so firmly believed this that having wagered that not more than twenty would secede, it cost him several hats, much to his grief. Yet surely it was better that he should have lost a hundred hats than that the honour, good faith, and glory of his country should have been tarnished, as he wagered it would be. His own fellow church members had shown him how firmly, and constantly, and amid obloquy and persecution they could adhere to an abstract idea, which they had to abandon by the stern logic of facts. He did not dream that mere presbyterians could act conscientiously. However all Scotchmen throughout the world were proud of their country, and all who valued stedfast adherence to a principle rejoiced at the event.

Of course amidst the hundreds who ranged themselves under the banner of Spiritual Independence, there were some who withdrew when the ultimate issue became clear ; and it is not for us to judge them, but their own consciences. Others again who, after leading their own flock and the world to the battle, basely deserted in the very hour of need, and lived unhonoured by their associates, despised by others, and died unwept and unsung. Aberdeen seemed to have thrown aside the robes of Moderatism and honoured itself by the fact that every minister in it resigned.

One of the county clergymen had for years been a strong Non-intrusionist, but as the contest deepened, his zeal slackened, and as the crisis approached he became, to the wonder of his congregation, strangely reticent on the subject.

This caused much speculation amongst the members of his flock, and they were all keenly on the watch for any sign, by word from the pulpit, or word or action outside, as to whether he was to sit still, or go out. One Monday morning, in April 1843, a parishioner called on another and said, "Man, I ken noo, hoo oor minister's to gang!" "Fat wye ken ye

that? I wis watchin every word he spak yesterday, and there wisna a cheep about it. Is he to be oot or in, than?"

"He's to bide in, man! for this mornin', as I past the manse yaird, I saw him shauvin piz," (*i.e.* sowing peas). Shrewd, cannie and considerate Scotchmen, both actor and narrator were. As Nanny Lind of Craigdam said (see page 6) it was "juist a naitural inference," and it came true.



CHAPTER XXI.

ABERDEEN :

ITS LITERATURE, BOOKMAKING, & CIRCULATING.

Read at a meeting of the Library Association, 5th September, 1893,
and now extended.

“ An old university town, betwixt the Don and the Dee,
Looking over the grey sand dunes, looking out on the cold
North Sea.”

Dr. Walter C. Smith.

IF, as according to Dr. Arnold of Rugby, the eighteenth century was the seed-bed of modern history, then the nineteenth century (practically and properly commencing with the French Revolution, when the seed first sprang into leaf) is the reapingtime of modern history and discovery. Then the first nation to begin the reaping, was our own much loved country.

While continental nations, either maddened by fiery drams of carnage and conquest, which in their frenzy they called Glory ; or, helplessly stupified by opiate draughts of disaster and apparent ruin, lay exhausted and hopeless, then, Great Britain, strong, if not impregnable in its insular position, and in its resources of coal and iron, and immensely powerful in the practical good sense of its population, in their pluck and perseverance, in their continual industry, in their never ceasing manufactures and ever extending commerce ; then, Great Britain, with hardly any of the evils, reaped in the next generation all the benefits which accompanied the advent of the new born Liberty.

If it was a glory for men to have lived in the Elizabethan age, so is it with us in the Victorian age, for as in the days of good Queen Bess, discoverers were court favourites, so now all sorts of agencies are employed to extend our knowledge, and discovery is both fashionable and profitable. Christianity sends out missionaries like Moffat and Livingstone. Civilization seconds it by sending travellers like

Burton, Speke, and Stanley. Science comes in to help by its Challenger expedition. Our very army, which some think a waste substance, (*and the utilization of waste substances is the glory of the present age*) in its inactive state measures base lines, and lays down trigonometrical surveys; and when active conquers India, annexes Burmah, occupies Egypt, penetrates Abyssinian wilds and helps in their civilization.

To us, adults, our army is the teacher of geography *par excellence*. No sooner is it in campaign than a battalion of newspaper correspondents tell to those who have to stay at home all about the country invaded. Obscure, sleepy villages like that of Waterloo might have for ever remained so, but for our army operations, and so also might Tel-el-Kebir. Suddenly, by the stern logic of events, they are brought into prominence, figure in our maps adorned with two crossed swords as the site of a battle, become pilgrimage places to Britons, and thus a source of wealth to the countries in which they are placed; it is a wonder that both places, along with the whole of Switzerland, have not been carried over to the Chicago Exhibition!

Place names all over the county, coming down to us from a hoary antiquity beyond the range of recorded history; and the traditions which have floated for centuries around them, connect runic inscriptions with the Norsemen, cells with saints, wells with abbeys and monasteries, conical mounds with the Sagas, standing stones with the Druids, under ground dwellings, round towers, hill forts and entrenchments with forgotten races, and ruins with the residences of kings.

When Edinburgh belonged not to Scotland, but to Lothian, a province of Northumbria; when Glasgow was also outside Scotland, being included in the Cumbrian kingdom of Strathclyde, "Aberdeen," according to John Major (1521) "was the regia or royal city of the Scots," and situated in the centre of the kingdom.

Documentary evidence from the time of Alexander (1107) shows the special favour he had for the city. William "the Lion" (1143-1214) erected a palace in it, which he frequently occupied. It was in 1308, when the question of the independence of Scotland was at its lowest ebb, when King Robert in bodily weakness and great dejection having been defeated in almost every engagement, and ready to despair of the

recovery of his health and kingdom, sought refuge in Aberdeen, but was so encouraged by the offers of assistance that with the aid of the citizens he won the battle of Barra, which proved the turning point of his fortunes.

Once again, a century later (1411), the citizens, under the leadance of their Provost, Sir Robert Davidson, broke the fiery onset of the Celtic clans and determined the fate of Scottish Civilization. Forty years later, at the battle of Brechin (1452) they kept the crown for the time in the Stewart dynasty.

So, also, the marriages and inter-marriages of the members of our Royal Family teach us genealogy, heraldry, and Continental politics. The acquisition and accumulation of wealth by an ever insatiable commerce, is continually extending our knowledge, and so also is the spending of that wealth by the ever increasing number of tourists, globe trotters, sportsmen and adventurers. When Pope enunciated his famous saying that "the proper study of man was man," the student's opportunities were few and far between, as compared with the present, when everybody travels and knows every other body—when English students frequent Continental universities—when Indian students take their degrees in Aberdeen—when Paris has been discovered to be the Yankee heaven—and when the highest study, aim, and ambition of an American lady millionaire is to marry an English nobleman, and in the matter of wealth to supplement his deficiencies. The study of wealthy American ladies is Noblemen, and Husbandry.

From a period as far back as the thirteenth century England has always been regarded as a Fortunatus' purse, an El Dorado for needy European princes and their underlings. In 1236 Eleanor of Provence on her marriage with Henry III. brought over in her train a number of damsels of noble birth and long pedigrees, but with empty purses and impecunious habits, who were provided with husbands among the rich young English barons; a beautiful and beneficent example of the action of Free Trade, the superfluity of one country supplying the necessities and the luxuries of another. It still goes on, but the tide has changed and the action been reversed. From the land of Democracy,

where every man is as good, if not better than his neighbour, come shoals of American heiresses—

“ the pretty dears
All song and sentiment ; whose hearts are set
Less on a convent, than a coronet,”—

and settle down, in a united-state-fashion amongst our Aristocracy and Nobility. Sharp-witted Americans being greatly disgusted with the prevalent practice, ignoring human nature, assert that the tuft-hunting is due to the pernicious influence of Sir Walter Scott, who has indoctrinated young Americans with foolish notions of Castles, noble titles and such like frivolities. As it threatens to become an international question, not subject to arbitration—a kind of matrimonial McKinley Bill laying a heavy tax equal to death duties on the marriage of American ladies with foreigners has been seriously proposed.

To a great many Englishmen the city in which you are at present is a veritable discovery of this century ; to bookish and learned Englishmen it is at best only a rediscovery. For, more than two centuries ago it was better known to many Englishmen than it was at the commencement of this century. Its reputation was an ancient one. According to John Mayor, in his “*De Gestis Scotorum*,” it was the original home of the Scottish monarchy, and down to the union of the crowns was the frequent and the favourite residence of many of the sovereigns, who kept yule there. In the wars of the “*Brus*,” and also of Queen Mary, several of their most momentous conflicts took place in the county. Charles I. had a warm regard for it, and bestowed on its citizens high privileges by his charters, because, alone faithful amongst the faithless Scottish burghs it stood out on behalf of his divine rights. By his cavaliers and divines it was known as the “*Oxford of Scotland*,” and the reputation of its doctors, professors, and clergy was known to Clarendon, upheld by Archbishop Laud, and greatly praised and lauded by him.

But if famous in England, the reputation of Aberdeen was infamous amongst the Scottish Covenanters. Samuel Rutherford called it “*dreich and dry*.” It became the

battlefield of every faction into which the distracted country was then divided, and was seized and plundered, its inhabitants murdered, and its houses burnt by each of the contending parties time after time as they got a temporary ascendancy.

The famous historian of the period, our clerk Spalding, who amongst annalists holds much the same position as Izaak Walton does amongst fishers, tells the story in such quaint fashion, and in such minute detail, that it is not to be wondered at although he gave the name to a Book Club, and that his "Memorials" should have been printed by two of them. After reading them, the surprising thing to the reader will be, that any annals or records of the city should have escaped the severe plundering and the general havoc and conflagration in the city.

Although not absolutely fatal to Aberdeen, yet the effects of the Civil War were extremely disastrous. After the accession of the Hanoverian dynasty the conservative inhabitants, clinging to the old Scottish Stewart kings and to their favoured form of Church Government, fell from the high position they had formerly held at court. But—

"Then closed the age of sturt and strife,
And better times sprung into life—
Whaur cannons smoked, noo houses reek,
Whaur bullets whizzed, noo engines shriek,
In peacefu' tilts the people strive,
And at their simple labours thrive,
Work blithely in the braid daylight,
And sweetly, soundly sleep at nicht."

And at the close of last century Aberdeen was chiefly known by Londoners for its "salmon and Finnan haddocks," and on the Continent for its worsted stockings and its pickled pork—to such base uses had the intellects of Aberdonians been turned!

If Aberdeen appeared in Maps issued in London, all knowledge of it seems to have disappeared in Gazetteers. Writing in the Aberdeen Almanack of 1838, Dr. Joseph Robertson says—"Our fair city seems to have existed and (lamentable to say) to exist chiefly as a target for Gazetteers, and Cockneys, from Ptolemy downwards, at which to shoot the blunt arrows of their ignorance." Whether the Devana of the Romans was Aberdeen as presently situated, or the

Roman camp at Culter, has been to antiquarians as good a subject for dispute as a Donnybrook fair is to Irishmen for a harmonious breaking of heads. As Dr. Robertson says—“One writer will have it here, another there;” one “in the vast Atlantic—one in Ayrshire—one somewhere north of the Forth, or in the bogs of Ireland. The Encyclopædia Metropolitana locates it on the banks of the Forth—which is spanned by a noble arch—through which bridge, says the Penny Cyclopædia, that river, or the Dee magnificently flows—its Town-house is said to be ornamented with two towers and spires,” (prophetic announcements, long before the events) having two places of worship in its West Church, two Roman Catholic Chapels, and one Episcopalian, two Universities in a village called *old* Aberdeen—and near by, a river Don with “a fine Gothic arch of 67 feet *square*” over it, and at which a canal from the harbour terminates; the whole overlooked by a mountain, surnamed the “Buck, or Cabrath, 5,377 feet high.”! Another Gazetteer briefly describes it as a fishing village on the east coast of Scotland, the inhabitants of which live chiefly on fish and seaweed. That in the intervals of fishing the natives followed the noble Scottish profession of reivers—cattle-lifters from the south—in other words were simply thieves and robbers, was the universal English belief, and that all Aberdonians wore kilts was chronicled in the early and even later pictures of the *Illustrated London News*, where they are so depicted.

Travellers in old times who have visited Aberdeen, vary in their accounts of it according to their varying moods of mind, the condition of the weather, or the parties they met. Richard Francks, the Englishman, visited it in 1658, and has nothing but praise to record. Dr. Johnson and his henchman, Boswell, came in 1773, and though the Doctor was handsomely treated and made much of, was as usual, not complimentary, but remarks on the reticence of speech of the Professors who—cannie Aberdonians—knowing the Doctor’s eagerness for dispute, did not tempt him to growl.

On his visiting Aberdeen in 1787, Burns called it “a lazy town near Stonehive;” by which one is reminded of the parson of two little rocky islands in the Firth of Clyde—the Cumbraes—whose weekly prayer was “God bless the mickle and lesser Cumbraes, with the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland.”

If Aberdeen—which had been quietly but very energetically improving itself for nearly fifty years—was first brought into *modern notice* by the proposed introduction of a railway to it in 1846, the real merit of the *re-discovery* of the city is due to Her Most Gracious Majesty and her Consort, Prince Albert, who in their yacht, and accompanied by a fleet of warships, visited it in 1848, on their way to Balmoral, which had been placed at their disposal by Sir Robert Gordon, the brother of Lord Aberdeen. By Her Majesty's purchase of this property, and by the erection of a palace thereon, the glories of dark Lochnagar—once crowned in immortal poetry by Lord Byron—were again materially crowned by Her Majesty acquiring it as her own property. One hundred and thirty three years previous to this, the rebel and rival standard to Her Majesty's dynasty had been uplifted on the Braes of Mar, and now the Royal Family locates itself in the rebel place, and not by the force of arms, but by a loving familiarity and a generous confidence entirely unprecedented, captures every heart, and turns the rankest rebel Jacobites into devoted followers and trusted body-servants, who serve with a devotion which is characteristically faithful unto death, and was freely, frankly, and fearlessly appreciated and acknowledged as such.

After this royal recognition of Aberdeenshire, its capital—the entrance to Strathdee and the principal gateway to the Highland Palace—suddenly sprang into recognition as a new discovery by the fashionable world. Crowds flocked into it and swarmed in the surrounding district; in which the humble hostelries where the service was formerly given by Highland lassies, who—though unadorned, and so would have delighted Wordsworth and all such true poets—had to give place to flunkey-fied male waiters in regulation full-dress and white neck-ties; with an entire absence of the comfortable cosiness, and the natural Scottish "couthiness" which was the distinguishing feature of the inns when Dr. Johnson visited Scotland.

Then, twenty two years after its formation, the British Association, discovering that Aberdeen was possibly a tolerably civilised place, because Prince Albert resided near it and consented to be their President, visited it, and, pleased with their reception and with the profitable results of the large and successful meeting, revisited it in after years.

Aberdeen was then discovered by the Social Science Congress. And now this year we have amongst us the Plumbers' Association, with the Lord Mayor of London; the Carriage Builders' Association; and the body of Librarians—bookmen and book-lovers—which I have the honour to address, and, as a citizen, to offer a cordial and hearty welcome.

While bulking largely in the history of Scotland so long as it was a separate kingdom, it is not much to be wondered at although in early times Aberdeen was very much of a *terra incognita* to the invaders of the country. The Danes found it out, the Romans followed, and after that *oor auld enemies* the English. The last two found the range of the Grampians, or more properly "the passage of the Mounth," a formidable obstacle, but the bleak, cold climate, and the sterile soil still more formidable—far less tempting than the fertile fields of Midlothian and Strath Tay. Around Aberdeen and close up to the houses the low lying lands lay in swamps and morasses. The steep banks and braes, which still bound Union Street gardens and the Railway Station, then outside the city, were thickets of broom and gorse; while for many miles beyond, the soil was invisible, being covered with weather-worn boulders of all sizes, deposited by ancient glaciers. Remains of these may still be seen by those who choose to keep their eyes open, in walls of eight or ten feet thickness to be found as the enclosures of many fields around the city, although for the purpose of macadamising the roads the stones have been materially reduced of late years.

Even so late as 1746 in the maps of the period, Aberdeen is represented as a place of some ten crooked, narrow, and steep streets, while all around it the country was lying waste and barren.

"And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more."

Wolves had at one time swarmed, while Caledonian cattle and wild swine fed and littered in its bosky glens. Amid this howling wilderness there were patches laid out in pasture, where cattle picked up a scanty and miserable subsistence. But for tillage "it girmed a' winter, and grat a simmer," and for cultivation ought to have been let by the

gallon to tenants, so sodden and swampy was the soil. The custody of the royal forest of the Stocket, which extended some eight or ten miles around the city, had, with the reservation of the wood and game, been gifted to the citizens by King Robert in 1313 for an annual payment of £19 5s 7d., which is still paid. But the grant had to be strenuously defended against the claims of usurpers, who looked upon the ground as a kind of "no man's land." For 400 years it lay in its natural state, simply a covert for wild animals; but last century it was largely feued off at rents averaging about ten shillings an acre, and as population increased, the land has been taken up and so improved that it is now worth from thirty to fifty times the value at which it was given off. In these modern times many writers indulge in tirades as to the folly of our forefathers in so squandering the resources of the city at the time, alleging that, had the city rulers only retained their rights, Aberdonians might ever afterwards have sat tax free, but forgetting that by the stimulus thus given to industry they have given a character to Aberdonians of indomitable persevering industry and intelligence which is universally acknowledged, in every colony and indeed all over the world.

Of the wonderful improvements of agriculture in Aberdeenshire, that shrewd observer Lord Cockburn, writes, "I am more and more astonished at the industry and skill of the Aberdeenshire people, in smoothing and drying the horrible surface of their soil. It is the greatest triumph of man over nature, of obstinacy over moss and stones. Talk not of deserts, or swamps or forests to these people. It is the fashion to abuse Aberdeenshire, but our drive here to-day through its large, reclaimed, well cultured and well walled fields, was very pleasing. It is the beauty of utility, the rejoicing of the desert. There is more of the blossoming of the rose in Strathmore, but then they have a far better soil and climate. Theirs is the rose of Nature. In Aberdeenshire it is the Rose of Art."

Of Aberdeenshire farmers it may be safely said—

They were the sturdiest labourers,
 You'll meet in many a mile--
 They tickled up the face of Earth,
 And made her blush and smile.

Contented themselves, and thriving on "the Scottish Kail-Brose" every schoolboy and every Englishman frankly acknowledges that from Aberdeenshire comes the finest, the primest, the fattest and the juiciest "Roast beef of Old England."!

And when, having by their intelligence, by patience and perseverance secured this monopoly of perfection—the Rinderpest (1845) threatened to destroy it, did not the Aberdeenshire breeders set a spirited example to the Agriculturists all over the world, by stamping it out at once, and so proved themselves benefactors to the whole human family!

A mixed race, deriving much of their stamina, endurance, and perseverance from the Norsemen and Scandinavians, the inhabitants of the north eastern portion of Scotland could trace their ancestors far back even into pre-historic times by the monuments they had left behind them. The Standing Stones of Dyce are likely coeval with those at Stennis and Stonehenge; the Maeshowe, and its Runic inscriptions with the Newton Stone, and the Maiden Stone on Ben-na-Chie; the ancient underground Picts houses at Rhyndie, the Barmekan at Echt, the vitrified fort on the Tap o' Noth, and the old chapel on the summit of Dunnideer are all pre-historic, and existed long before the Roman invasion.

The Romans, bent on mere material conquests, found their way across the wild and rude Grampian mountains, and have left some slight traces of their occupation north of them, but recalled by troubles at home, they soon relinquished these, and abandoned their conquests. St. Columba (521), the apostle of the Scottish Highlands, on the other hand, bent on spiritual conquests more lasting than material ones, found his way as far north as Inverness, penetrated Aberdeenshire, and has left numerous traces of his personal presence, and also that of his followers, in tradition, in names of places connecting them with religious worship, and also in the erection of abbeys, monasteries, chapels, and cells, the existence of which are all authenticated by historical records.

How much do we not owe to these pioneers of progress, in the very highest sense! Men who gave up all temporal

enjoyments, and even common comforts in order to benefit all succeeding generations. What a lesson they teach as to the obligations conferred on us by their labours and the duty we owe to Posterity. As Hare in his *Guesses at Truth* puts it—"You who assert that you owe nothing to Posterity . . . are ignorant of your greatest earthly benefactor. Posterity has cast its shadow before, and you are at this moment reposing beneath it. Whatever good, whatever pleasure, whatever comfort you possess, you owe mainly to Posterity. The heroic deeds done by men of former times, the great work wrought, for whom were they achieved but for Posterity?"



CHAPTER XXII.

ABERDEEN :

ITS LITERATURE, BOOKMAKING, & CIRCULATING.

(Continued).

“ Appelles staring long did look upon
The Learning, Policy, and Generous Mind
Of that Brave City, plac'd 'twixt Dee and Done ;
But how to paint it, he could never find,
For still he stood in judging which of three,
A Court, A College, or A Burgh it be.”

William Douglas, 1685.

“ Visible and tangible products of the Past, I reckon up to the number of three : Cities . . . Tilled Fields . . . and Books. In which third, truly, the last invented, lies a worth far surpassing that of the two others. Wondrous indeed is the worth of a true book. Not like a dead City of stones, yearly crumbling, yearly needing repair ; more like a Tilled Field, but then a Spiritual Field : like a Spiritual Tree let me rather say, it stands from year to year, and from age to age (we have Books that already number some hundred and fifty of human ages) : and yearly comes the new product of leaves—Commentaries, Deductions, Philosophies, Political Systems ; or were it only Sermons, Pamphlets, Journalistic Essays—every one of which is Talismanic and Thaumaturgic, for it can persuade Men.”

Carlyle—Sartor Resartus.

IN speaking of the Literature and Bookmaking of Aberdeen, I cannot, I dare not, treat the members of the Library Association as a general audience in which the wisest course is to take it for granted that the auditors know nothing of the subject, and that it is necessary to tell everything *ab ovo*.

My subject being mainly historical, I am pressed down by the thought that I am not at present addressing an audience of common globe-trotters, of mere tourists, or those of the gad-about order, in simple search of new sights, other librarians, and novel experiences. Believing that each of you when seated in your several spheres, whether public or private, are monarchs of all you survey, and that if all the contents of all the multitudinous books in the Libraries

within your reach are not at the instant call of your brains, yet holding your court there, the wise men of the east, west, north, and south, are ready at your call to offer you homage and come with their precious gifts of wisdom, learning, and of bibliographical knowledge, with which we are presently dealing.

As far back as history can definitely speak, or tradition can whisper or suggest to us, we find that Churchmen were the first bookmakers, and in a secluded parish in Aberdeenshire, in an abbey founded by St. Columba, was found "the oldest existing literary document penned on Scottish soil standing at the head of the *National MSS of Scotland*."— "*The Book of Deer*," containing the Gospel of St. John, and portions of the other three gospels, with copies of grants to the abbey, (written in Gaelic) which carries us as far back as the ninth century. The original was found in Cambridge in 1715. Then in the eleventh century we have evidence of charters granted to the church of S. Nicolas in Aberdeen: and long after we have the celebrated Aberdeen Breviary, regarding which it is interesting to know, that in order to get it printed, Bishop Elphinstone (1431-1514), was the means of getting the art of printing introduced into Scotland, and the Breviary was the second work printed by Chapman in 1509-10. When re-printed in 1852-53, Dr. Lee the editor says, there was then not more than one complete copy in Scotland.

Next to the Churchman as bookmakers, librarians must give credit to the Civic Burgh Municipal Corporations; and here, gentlemen, you are on interesting ground. For of all places in Scotland, Aberdeen has, amidst much turmoil by civil war, and loss by fire, managed to preserve the most complete records of civic rule to be found in Scotland; dating almost continuously from the fourteenth century down to the present year. That is during almost the whole period when documentary evidence was possible in the district. Previous to this time, reading and writing being very scarce accomplishments, transactions were largely settled by "word o' mou" and possessions were acquired and held by a strong grip of the sword.

From 1398 to 1884, of the ninety-five volumes of the

Council Register, only one (vol 3), is missing. As a contribution to history, local and general, as a picture of Scottish society, manners, laws, and customs, the Council Register is recognised as a mine of wealth. It has been already tapped, but not more than tapped, by the Spalding Club, who have published two volumes of extracts, while other two were published by the Burgh Records Society.

As Mr. P. J. Anderson states, (and what he states may be thoroughly relied on), the 1537 printed pages of those four volumes is only one thirtieth part of the contents of the register, and that only down to the year 1747. The old Spalding Club had thus ample materials to work upon, but the workers had got tired, and partly owing to the keen religious controversies of the time, and deep, if not loud grumblings against them of making the glorification of one church their main object in their publications, the Club came to an end, leaving an enormous mass of material untouched, with a period of nearly one hundred years of almost unexplored virgin soil. I say almost, because Kennedy in his *Annals of Aberdeen* made use of the Register up to the date of his publication, but in a somewhat careless and unsatisfactory manner, and nothing has been done since.

One good thing done by the Old Spalding Club was that it brought to light the richness and value of our Town Records. Baillie Lewis Smith—who was perhaps the most literary man in the Town Council when he served it at various periods from 1836 to 1877, in all 18 years—made many attempts to induce the Council to at least print their valuable collection of charters, and, by a translation, to give the citizens an idea of the rights which they possessed—but unsuccessfully.

It was my good fortune, when elected to office as convener of the Law Committee, to plead for this before a more intelligent Council, and get them to agree to this proposal. And when the Town Council agree to do anything, the officials may safely be trusted to do it well and handsomely. We had the good fortune to select as editor and translator Mr. P. J. Anderson, the learned, accurate, and accomplished Secretary of the New Spalding Club, and ably seconded by Mr. A. M. Munro of the City Chamberlain's office. The result is a volume which does credit to the city and all concerned in its production.

In this volume there is a complete inventory of the books and MSS. in the Town House, and explorers and enquirers will thus be able to lay their hands on the necessary material for any particular period of history wanted.

It was also my good fortune, aided by the intelligence of the Council, to get another valuable improvement adopted, which makes the Council Register not only more safe, but, in future, much more accessible. Down to 1884, the Register was in MSS., and of course unique. After 1883, on a proposal of mine, the Minutes of Council are now printed and bound in one volume yearly, and all members are furnished with slip copies of the previous minute, and a complete copy annually. Thus the future historiographer of the city annals may have his own copy for handy reference, and thus his work made easier by my action.

In any notice of Aberdeen literature and book-making, the influence of its two Universities naturally has an important place, but treated already by Mr. Robertson, my notice must be of the briefest.

King's College and University was a pre-Reformation one, founded by a Bull from the Pope in 1494, and in the course of the next half-century had sunk into the position of a conventual school, and when Protestant doctrines had permeated the community, Earl Marischal founded a rival institution in 1593. So, as has been well said by our latest local historian in Robbie's *Aberdeen*,

"It is a curious and at the same time a gratifying fact that a very large part of all that is known of Scottish history, at what may be called the period of transition from the traditional to the trustworthy, has been gathered from the writings of men who were connected with the Cathedral Church or with King's College. Take away the writings of Barbour, Fordun and Boece, and the early history of Scotland would have been but the veriest shadow of what it is in reality."

Two Universities so close to each other was a singular phenomenon in so poor a country, and necessarily led to some amount of rivalry, which, if in some respects unwholesome, was highly approved of, and fostered by many of the inhabitants, and notwithstanding the benefits of an extended curriculum in a united institution, the union in 1860 was long keenly resisted.

So eager were Aberdonians for guidance and instruction, that, as a local writer says :—

“ Oor fathers then socht for their bairns
As much o' lear as cud be gi'en ;
Sae Colleges they biggit twa—
Thae braif, bauld men o' Aberdeen.”

But, not content with the “*twa*” colleges, each of which claimed to be a University—with the right of granting degrees—they actually aspired to have three, so keen free-traders were they in the matter of education.

John Farquhar, a native of Crimond in Aberdeenshire, (b. 1751, d. 1826), having acquired an immense fortune in India—he died worth a million and a half—offered to appropriate £100,000 to found a College in Aberdeen on the most enlarged plan of education, with a reservation on points of religion ; for his admiration of the simplicity and purity of the lives of the Brahmins had deeply influenced him. But parliamentary sanction being refused, the scheme was dropt. While singular to relate as showing the strong desire of the natives of the district for education, Sir Alexander Fraser of Philorth obtained, in 1592, a charter for a University and College at Fraserburgh. Parliament ratified the institution in 1597, and Charles Ferme, an Edinburgh regent, was appointed principal. Owing to the troublous times and the hostility of the Earl of Huntly, the institution fell into decay and collapsed into ruin.

These separate and even rival institutions were the seed-bed of bookmakers, of numerous volumes of dry-as-dust Theses, of students and readers, and have largely helped to give a distinct character to the men of the northern counties, helping to make model men. “Talk of the prosperity of your city!” says Channing : “I know but one true prosperity. Does the Human Soul grow and prosper here?”

If, as was said of St. Andrew's university, that it got rich by “degrees,” ours did not, but got rich by benefactions, which, managed by cannie, prudent Scotchmen, developed into useful bursaries, which attracted students from all quarters ; the highlanders frequenting King's, and lowlanders Marischal College. They gave such a tone to the whole district teaching, that pupils from the parish schools could enter directly into the Greek and Latin classes at the Universities.

Mr. Gladstone has said, "It is the glory of the Scottish universities to represent the mass of the people, and this glory has belonged to Aberdeen, even to a higher degree than to its sisters; while the people of the city and county are especially distinguished for force of mind and character." Indeed by means of its numerous educational institutions "Aberdeen has become quite a nursery of Senior Wranglers, of Indian Civil Servants, of Ferguson scholars and Shaw fellows." It still retains its ancient reputation for scholarship, referred to by Clarendon. Of its celebrated "doctors" it was said, in 1640, "*Thes eminent divynes of Aberdeen were either dead, deposed or banished: in whom fell more learning than was left behynd in all Scotlande besyde at that tyme.*"

The two universities in the City created such a demand for books, that, in relation to its size, Aberdeen has from then till now borne a most favourable comparison with any other place as to the number of booksellers maintained by it, and the high character of its readers.

Connected as I was with a bookselling firm which commenced one hundred and ten years ago, the great number, the high-class character, and the large size of the libraries of the district which passed through their hands on the death of the owners was remarkable; and volumes now of the greatest rarity, such as would put Mr. Quarritch into raptures, were constantly appearing in the most unexpected places; not only in the manses of the parochial clergy, but even in the humble homes of peasants, whose highest ambition generally was to dedicate at least one son to the service of the church and give him a classical and theological education. To book-lovers, like those before me, is not the very sight and perusal of a catalogue of old *recherché* books a treat of the very highest kind? but how much more of a treat is it to handle and examine the very books themselves? Then indeed they become personal acquaintances.

Twenty-three years ago it was my good fortune to be asked to give assistance in the cataloguing of a collection of books, the property of a deceased Aberdeen Professor of Hebrew, and the fruit of his indefatigable book-hunting for many years. It proved to be one of the most extraordinary moraines

which any glacier had ever deposited, for the glacier professor, in his extensive travels all over Europe, had collected everything he could lay hold of, and in all out of the way places, buying anything rare, and specially books printed in the place visited, while so eager was he in search of rarities, that he would have travelled a hundred miles for the chance of picking a rare book up cheap. And on his death, in 1870, the collection, stowed away in boxes which had never been opened by him, was brought to the hammer, and this had to be arranged and catalogued.

With little Latin, and less Greek, my early training had given me perhaps a larger acquaintance with old books than any other bookseller in the city at the time. Conjoined with an experienced auctioneer like Mr. Alex. Brown, we had little difficulty with the great mass of material. Speedily and satisfactorily we catalogued the books in the modern languages, but then there were hundreds of MSS., tracts, and volumes in Persian, Russian, Syriac, Arabic, Romansch, and other languages and dialects, quite beyond our power of deciphering their titles or even their language. A brilliant idea occurred to us. We asked the assistance of Professor W. Robertson Smith, then in Aberdeen, and than whom could we possibly have got a more competent person within the bounds of Britain? He most gladly accepted the task; very speedily cleared a mass of the debris, and made short work with many of them. This MS. said he, is a Persian classic "Tooti Nami," the well-known "Tale of a Parrot." Ah, me! how very ignorant we felt ourselves; but after that any unknown thing was always characterised by us as "Tooti Nami," because we knew as much about it as the parrot. But (and this is a dead secret, and as the advertisements say *not to be repeated*) even Professor Robertson Smith was baffled by some of the languages which he had not then mastered, and had to confess his ignorance; and the gloomy prospect of us having to sell these volumes like "pigs in a poke" loomed before us, and was very unsatisfactory. We were in a quandary, stranded, and utterly helpless, when the sharp, quick-witted acuteness of the Professor lifted us out of the bog. "Turn up," said he, "the article 'Alphabets' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and also that in the *Penny Cyclopædia*," and this was done, "Now, then," he said, "we can spell out letter by letter, get the kernel of the book, and can,

at least, give its title. The catalogue appeared; was a source of unbounded astonishment to the citizens, and of their admiration at the learning of the compilers, and it was facetiously proposed in the local newspapers to confer on them the title of "Doctores Catalogorum," which would have been equivalent to dressing jackdaws in eagles' feathers.

How little Professor Andrew Scott, the collector of this library, valued these titles, may be inferred from the fact that when offered the degree of LL.D. by the University of St. Andrews he never replied. Three weeks after being again asked if he would accept, he then replied that "if they dared to dub him so, he would prosecute them for libel."

It is a pleasure to think that by his acquisition of many of these volumes at the sale Professor Robertson Smith's library was enriched, and that they fell into the hands of one who could make good use of them.

As Bishop Elphinstone of Aberdeen helped to introduce printing into Scotland in 1507, so, but a hundred years later, in 1622, Bishop Patrick Forbes helped to introduce the art into Aberdeen, inducing the Provost and Magistrates to offer such valuable privileges to Edward Raban, then at St. Andrews, that he began to exercise his craft as a printer here, and when the man came the time was propitious, for, although he lived in troublous times for Scotland, yet he got Edinburgh work to do (the Book of Canons) in addition to his local work, and the number of volumes issued by him shows him to have been a busy man. (Vide page 72).

Since his time, down to 1859, there has been a regular succession of town's printers entitled to use the city arms, and inheriting all the types and curious old wood blocks cut and inherited from Raban's time.

So far back as 1858 I had issued in the columns of the *Aberdeen Herald* a series of nine articles descriptive of Raban's publications. These having attracted the favourable notice of Drs. Robertson, John Hill Burton, and Grub, I was asked to re-print them, and thought of doing so, decorating the publication, and giving it an antique flavour by the use of the original wood cut borders, the head and tail pieces, which were so quaint and characteristic, and of which, some ten years previous, I had seen two large boxfuls in the office of the printer, Raban's successor. It may be imagined with what grief I heard, and with what deep sorrow the

intelligent printer related, that in the days of his predecessor, the printer's *devils had lighted the office fires with them*. The shock was so severe, that I have felt an old man ever since. The want of my purposed publication has been much more than supplied by that of "*the Aberdeen Printers*," by Mr. J. P. Edmond, who got full liberty to the use of my articles.

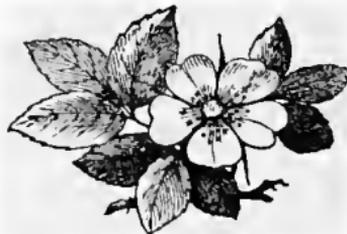
To you, and with my limited time, it is not necessary to even enter on the ground occupied by him. And I simply remark that, while all the volumes issued by Aberdeen printers are valuable to such an institution as the British Museum, yet when duplicates are acquired by them, or by other libraries, these duplicates would be more highly valued and cherished if in their native air, the best known elixir for long life yet known.

Amongst the many Aberdonians whose names are on the rolls of fame, I mention only John Barbour, Hector Boece, John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, Bishop Patrick Forbes, Dr. Arthur Johnson, whose Latin translation of the Psalms is on the continent more esteemed than that of Buchanan, George Jamesone, the first Scottish painter, (with able successors in Dyce, Cassie, and John Phillip), Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury, Dr. John Arbuthnot, the wit in Queen Anne's time, and the friend of Swift and Pope, Alex. Cruden of the Concordance, Dr. James Beattie, Dr. Hamilton, Alex. Chalmers of the Biographical Dictionary, Dr. John Abercrombie, James Gibbs the architect of St. Martins and of the Ratcliffe Library, Oxford, Dr. Thos. Reid the founder of the Scottish School of Metaphysicians, and Dr. John Ogilvie of Dictionary fame. These all stand out singly, and bulk as eminent men, but there are whole families from the place—the Barclays and Burnetts, the Forbeses and Fordyces, the Gerards and Jaffrays, the Gordons and Grants, the Gregorys and Keiths, the Menzies and Skenes, who figure in the annals of literature, and were potential influences in producing and circulating it in their native place and elsewhere. Coming down to modern times we can boast of Dr. Joseph Robertson, of Dr. John Stuart, of John Hill Burton, who has left a successor in Professor Masson, who, along with Dr. Walter C. Smith, still survive; of Dr. George Grub, of the late lamented Professor Minto, who promised to become a star of the first magnitude, and

also Dr. Wm. Alexander, the brilliant photographer and preserver of our local dialect in *Johnny Gibb*.

It is with great pleasure, but in the softest whisper—for, living amongst the men, I am greatly restrained in my otherwise outspoken speech—I mention that, nurtured by the Spartan-like fare of the first Edinburgh Reviewers—by good Scotch oatmeal, and influenced by the Shorter Catechism, we have still amongst us as bookmakers such men—amongst others—as Sir Wm. Geddes, the learned editor of the *Musa Latina Aberdonenses*; Dr. John McIntosh the historian, and a brilliant example of Scottish pluck and perseverance in the attainment of fame; Dr. Alex. Cruickshank, a voluminous writer, but whose modesty has shrunk from publicity or even recognition; Principal Brown; Dr. Cooper of the East Church; and the Rev. Robert Lippe. I might mention others—biographers of Aberdeen Doctors—Apologists of Queen Mary—erudite writers on *Just Intonation*, and a whole host of local poets, but I spare their blushes.

And now both time and space, and also your interest all failing me, I conclude, by saying that amongst the most eminent of modern men, the late Professor W. Robertson Smith worthily maintained the honour and credit of Aberdeen nurture, both in England and abroad; and that shining brilliantly still in our northern firmament, yet educating and illuminating *the world*, by works having to my knowledge a larger circulation than those of almost any living author—have we not still amongst us, and long may he so continue—Dr. Alexander Bain.



CHAPTER XXIII.

“There is one good thing about books, and that is that all the best as well as the worst are still available. . . . It is the misfortune of a prophet to be usually refused honour in his own country, and the fate of many authors to find fame only after death.”

“Silent consolers of the loneliest days
Of sorrow and distress, whose gracious power
Death shed around us in immortal rays
The splendour of the Past : through storm and shower,
Sunshine and shadow, ye are with us still.”

IN the brightest era of English history, 1559-1603, that heralding the dawn of a new world, our “*bright Occidental Star*”—Queen Elizabeth arose, and her memory along with that of our “Most High and Mighty Prince JAMES,” was, for everlasting preservation embalmed within the boards of the very Bible, appointed to be read in churches ; By His Majesty’s special command.”

In those stirring and romantic times when buccaneering had become a profession, owing to the national hatred of the Pope and his pretensions, England got what she needed in order to unite her inhabitants ; the threat of invasion by the Spanish Armada. That roused the country and taught a lesson to Continental nations for centuries afterwards.

It was during the reign of Elizabeth that Raleigh, Drake and Frobisher burst into new seas, scoured distant lands, brought home pearls and diamonds, ingots of gold and silver, and introduced the strange potato plant and the still stranger tobacco from the new Eldorado of America. Then suddenly the English air electrically charged, became all at once brimful of new ideas, which, distilling like the dew, so fertilised the soil that English literature then burst into bloom and scattered around its new fragrance and fertility. Then Shakespeare and Spenser, Lyly and Marlowe, Hooker, Jonson and Bacon, astonished the world with their trumpet-tones of eloquent expression, stamping the era as the Spring-time of literature, and England by her poets “became a nest of singing birds.”

Again in the reign of Queen Anne (1702—1714) this literature in its mellowed ripeness had so permeated and influenced Society as to give to this period the title of the Augustan age of literature. Then, strange to say, the advent of yet another Queen—who has fulfilled the promise of being a better, a wiser, and a happier Elizabeth—was nearly contemporaneous with what may justly be styled the Golden Age of literature; and yet the reason is neither far to seek, nor difficult to find. Just as it is a desirable thing for an active enterprising commercial company at its annual balance to carry over to its credit a handsome sum as a nucleus for future work, so the publishers at the commencement of this century had an immense accumulated stock of old material to work upon, either in the shape of simple republications, or of these, enlarged and enriched with the results of modern research.

The world was indeed greatly changed since that true, valiant, and puissant knight Dr. Samuel Johnson, in somewhat tattered and unknighly garments, went forth, not with lance, but with gray goose quill in hand, and by it fairly tore into tatters the reputation of the elegant Lord Chesterfield and all such sham patrons. For such, the public was now placed in the patron's chair, with the result that the brows of authors were decorated with more substantial tokens of favour than fading crowns of laurel leaves—And it was time, for as an illustration of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* in his day Johnson writes—

Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.

By his repudiation of Lord Chesterfield as a patron, Johnson placed on his Lordship's brow a crown of nettles which stung sharply at the time, sting still, and will continue to sting as long as Literature exists.

The nineteenth century fell heir to a richer, because a far more accumulated inheritance than any of its predecessors. Far back, in the recesses of the past, old monks in ancient monasteries with ample leisure had lovingly preserved the bright thoughts of the Fathers and the classics, and had laboriously multiplied copies in manuscripts. Although

sometimes as their palimpsests show, they, in their dearth of vellum, had tried to cover over golden sentences with mere monkish legends.

But still, though "Memphis, Tyre are gone,
With all their arts; yet classic lore glides on,
By these *Religious*, saved for all Posterity."

When the printing-press began its beneficent work, thoughts were wafted abroad—"with fruitful cloud and living smoke"—like pollen from a pine forest; and waste places were fertilized by living and life-giving streams. "Full many a gem of purest ray serene" was brought to light in the dark and unfathomed shelves of monastic libraries like that of St. Gall in Switzerland, which has past its millennial Jubilee. Here and there, in the gloom and darkness and in unexpected places, sparks of light appeared and shone out all the more that they were shook. Huss, Erasmus, Melancthon, Luther, Calvin and Zwinglius lightened up the darkness and by the power of their burning intellects fearlessly fired the very Bulls of the Pope and brought the Indulgences of Tetzels into contempt.

Then, first in Freedom's chosen home, as might be expected, began the race of English Speculatists. A long list of illustrious authors, commencing with Lord Herbert of Cherbury, 1581-1648, continued by Hobbes, Tindal, Toland, Collins, etc., down to Lord Bolingbroke, 1678-1751, began, as Carlyle says, "to sniff up the east wind as their spiritual diet," and in 1726 taught Voltaire the art of sniffing also. Rousseau, and the French Encyclopedists, did much to clear the ground of rubbish, to cut down the rank brushwood, and by their free enquiry to admit light and air into the recesses of the tangled and dark forest of thought and practice. They, indeed, were precursors of a new era in European thought, and they prepared the way for that tremendous tearing up and trenching of the ground which came to pass in the French Revolution, and which equalled in importance for the intellectual world the discovery of a new continent. If at the close of last century there was not a new heaven, as the Parisians fondly expected, there was in Great Britain, at the commencement of this century, a new earth, full of unbounded promise to young and ardent minds, and more brimmingly full of earnest thinkers and their devoted disciples than in all previous times.

The results, as Grant Allen says, is that "our age is a second Elizabethan. It blossoms out into such flowers of fancy as never bloomed before save then. . . We move in one of the mightiest ages earth has ever seen. An epoch which will live in history hereafter side by side with the Athens of Pericles, the Rome of Augustus, the Florence of Lorenzo, and the England of Elizabeth."

It was indeed a new world since the age when the father of literature, old, blind Homer, "much roving—much enduring," wandered through Greece and its islands, reciting for his living the wondrous story of the siege of Troy in the *Iliad*: since the time when Shakespeare—the fugitive from the wrath of Sir Walter Lucy—held the horses of travellers to the city, and then afterwards became famous as an actor, while his literary productions were as yet unknown to the printer or the public: since the days when for his immortal poem of *Paradise Lost* Milton could only get £8 for the copyright: or when the poems of Cowper lay on the publisher's shelves, unknown and unsought, until *The Task* appeared and created a demand for all he had previously written.

Heralded by our national poet, there then flamed across the intellectual firmament, in the beginning of the century, an outburst of star showers, many of which fell still-born, while some have grown brighter and brighter as Time steals away. For some of them the world was not yet ready. Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth flashed their brilliance across the heavens too soon, were met with ridicule and nicknames, and with criticisms in the highest quarters such as "This will never do," of which criticism W. J. Dawson, in his *Quest and Vision* says, "O Francis Jeffrey! had you but known it, this man (Wordsworth) spake the words that make for your peace and ours; he brought precisely *what would do*; the book bitter in the lips to critics like you, but sweet and healing to the soul of our vexed tumultuous generation; the one message that we most imperatively needed." Authors, indeed, were men who were—

"Cradled into poetry by wrong,
And learnt in suffering what they taught in song."

Others again took the world by storm, and compelling instant attention and admiration, became permanent lights

and luminaries. They lay down one night unknown and obscure, and rose next morning to find themselves famous. Times were indeed changed for authors when publishers waited hat in hand on them, and when Moore received in advance £3,000 for his *contemplated* poem of *Lalla Rookh* before even a line of it was written.

It was in the commencement of this Golden Age that Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) appeared; that "Great Magician," whose teeming fancy, singing of "Ladye love and war, renown and knightly worth," led the whole world captive. Well, truly and worthily was it said of him—

"Brother of Homer and of him
On Avon's banks, by twilight dim,
Who dreamt immortal dreams, and took
From Nature's hand her storied book;
Earth hath not seen, Time may not see,
Till ends his march, such other three."

And if this was said of his poetry, what can be said of his *prose* poems, in which he created the modern novel and eclipsed his own glory? Almost alone, his works were sufficient to have given the present century the title of the Golden Age of literature, and that both for authors, publishers, and booksellers as well.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel appeared in 1805, and its popularity was unprecedented. From that time until 1815, Scott reigned undisputed as the "Napoleon of the realms of rhyme," and some idea of the golden harvest reaped by him for his poems may be had, when in 1814, Constable bought for fifteen hundred guineas a half share of the copyright of *The Lord of the Isles*, of which 44,000 were sold at 25/ each.

When *Marmion* appeared in 1808, a copy reached the British army then encamped behind the lines of Torres Vedras, and every night parties of officers were convened to hear it read and to revel in the new marvel of fiction. And next year, at the battle of Talavera, while his men were safely sheltered from the searching fire of the French guns, and heard passing over them the fierce screaming shrieks of the shells, Sir Adam Ferguson read to his men the battle scene in the poem with marvellous effect. No speech of his, not even the sound of their native bag-pipes; nor the song of *Scots wha hae* could have begot more enthusiasm. The

men cheered lustily, were nerved to do or die in the desperate conflict, and then let loose upon the foe, with the aid of Scott, they conquered.

So much for his poems. When *Guy Mannering* appeared in 1815, Lord Hermand, one of the judges of the Court of Session, was so full of it that when giving a decision in Court, after referring to the book in terms of praise; to the unbounded astonishment of the incognito author, then sitting immediately under him as clerk, he lugged the volume out of his pocket and read some passages from it, as powerfully influencing his decision. How amused Scott must have been at this *outré* argument from a work of pure fiction!

Scott's enduring reputation is evidenced by the fact that an Englishman like Dean Stanley said, that after reading a modern novel, he took a spell at *Guy Mannering* in order "to put the taste out of his mouth." Ruskin's appreciation of his indebtedness to Scott's novels is of world-wide notoriety.

Emulous of his success, envious of his profits, and desirous to sail with the stream, a whole host of romancing rhymsters rushed into print, to the great advantage of publishers, and took as their model the following recipe, according to Delta (Dr. D. M. Moir)—

"Take a fair and love-lorn damsel; a valorous knight of the six-foot club, in black or white armour, with plumes *vice versa*; a fiery-eyed horse that neighs well, richly caparisoned; two thin pale nuns and a bald fat friar; a leash of stag-hounds; an ivied castle, with a moat, draw-bridge, and grim-looking donjon keep, in which place a forlorn captive; warders, grooms, and serving-men *ad libitum*; a dark oak-forest, with a hairy hermit in sackcloth who feeds on wild honey and cresses; a ruined abbey, palpably haunted; and a "Wizard of the North." Throw in, for seasoning, according to current taste, a shipwreck; a storm of thunder, with forked lightning of the bluest; a ferocious murder, and a gorgeous marriage; and, having commingled well, serve up to the public."

The contemporary lists of the time show swarms of these, of which nine-tenths fell flat, and the remainder are now curiosities. All the same their publication kept the printing press busy.

It were well for many authors if, like Scott, they had

prudently stayed their hand and pen when they had scored a success and achieved reputation. His fame as a poet was firmly established,—although Leigh Hunt, and even Hazlitt condemned him,—and has not suffered eclipse, because the great law of the world invariably gives a just verdict. But there was then a whole host of distinguished aspirants following in his steps—Campbell, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Moore, Southey, Coleridge, Rogers, Montgomery, Wilson, Byron, and others had entered the lists as competitors, and formed a brilliant constellation, and Scott, content with his supremacy in rhyme, turned his attention to poems in prose.

And then, just as with each season comes the fitting flower, so in each age comes the appropriate man. Although in after years, before his genius was recognised, Carlyle could cynically write to Leigh Hunt—

“The whole literary world seems to me at this time to be little other than chaos come again. . . . Bookselling I apprehend to be as good as dead; without hope of revival, other than perhaps some galvanic one.” Yet in still later times, when wealth and honour rolled in upon him from bookselling, he ceased to snarl on this subject. Along with the galaxy of authors who gemmed the sky, there arose a publisher who was swift to measure the popularity of their works, and to gauge the vast and ever-increasing extent of the reading public. This was an Edinburgh bookseller, Archibald Constable (1776-1827), who did far more for the encouragement of letters than the most liberal patron of the past; and who, by his bold enterprise and munificence fairly outstripped his boldest English rival—his one fault being that he never acted as a tradesman but as a very Mæcenas; and if Scott was the “Napoleon in the realms of rhyme,” Constable took the same position in the realms of print. He did much to make Edinburgh the “Modern Athens”; and it is also very likely that he did much to inspire Scott with his first dreams of Abbotsford. Not only did he pay what was then considered extraordinary sums of money for every novel which Scott wrote, but advanced him thousands of pounds for forthcoming works of which as yet not a word was written.

Thus for a time, like the tides in the Solway, did prosperity rush on in a mighty stream, to the advantage of authors, printers, publishers, and booksellers all over the country.

The demand for *Waverley* was unprecedented ; shipload after shipload was despatched to London as fast as they could be printed, and one vessel being reported as lost, London was in despair for a time ; and as each novel appeared, the mail coaches groaned under the huge bundles of the unbound sheets, and customers of the Book-Stall could hardly wait until the copies were covered with the drab-coloured boards then used as a temporary binding for all books fresh from the printers.

So far as Scott eclipsed all previous poets and novelists, as far did the *Edinburgh Review*, which appeared in 1802, transcend in merit all the previous organs of criticism, which were simply used as mediums for advertising. As Sydney Smith said, "one great use of a Review is to make men wise in ten pages, who have no appetite for a hundred ; to condense nourishment, to work with pulp and essence, and to guard the stomach from idle burden and unmeaning bulk," and under the master critic of the age it did so. In its fearless criticism, although it sometimes blundered—it introduced the principles of true criticism, and did much to mould the current of national thought. "The subtle analysis, the profound learning, and the scathing sarcasm of the reviewers set them far above the magazine writers of the time ; struck terror into the whole body of poets, essayists, and book-makers, and they were respected and feared throughout the whole domain of literature." Criticism, instead of being left to booksellers' hacks, became a highly paid profession, which tempted into its ranks the best intellects of the day. Sydney Smith, the wittiest man of his century, of whom it is said that "his jokes were sermons and his sermons jokes," much as Dr. Chalmers was said to "be divertin' in the pulpit." Brougham, with his ponderous learning, marvellous versatility, and immense powers of work, who "was sair on his freens an' waur on his faes," and so was therefore "ill to hae and waur to want!" Hallam, Horner, Mackintosh, Scott, and Macaulay, with many other eminent men, were led by Jeffrey, who, if he was sometimes harsh and unjust to living poets—regretting it afterwards—became the acknowledged prince of critics, a terror to pretence and an encouragement to learning and genius. Not only had he singular taste in his selections from the works of the authors reviewed by him, so that whatever was picturesque, solemn, pathetic,

or sublime caught his eye, and was introduced into his article ; but by his own brilliant imagination he invested the driest subject with interest and attraction. Of the steam-engine he says—

“It has become a thing stupendous alike for its force and its flexibility—for the prodigious power which it can exert, and the ease, and precision, and ductibility with which it can be varied, distributed, and applied. The trunk of an elephant, that can pick up a pin or rend an oak, is as nothing to it. It can engrave a seal, and crush masses of obdurate metal before it—draw out, without breaking, a thread as fine as gossamer, and lift up a ship of war like a bauble in the air. It can embroider muslin, and forge anchors, cut steel into ribbons, and impel loaded vessels against the fury of the winds and waves.”

Jeffrey said that the *Review* stood on two legs, one of which was literature and the other politics. Of the last its criticism was indeed bold, and of literature, brilliant and incisive—both far beyond all former precedent, bred from the fermenting ideas of the time, engendered by the New Atlantis revealed by the French Revolution. In the *Edinburgh Review* we have a picture of Johnson’s club, the very quintessence of all that Boswell wrote, condensed into a single paragraph, and startling the world at the time quite as much as the recent electric light discoveries of Rontgen and Swinton. Here it is, “The Club-room is before us, and the table on which stands the omelet for Nugent, and the lemons for Johnson. There are assembled those heads which live forever in the canvas of Reynolds (and in the pages of Boswell). There are the spectacles of Burke, and the tall and thin form of Langton ; the courtly sneer of Beauclerc and the beaming smile of Garrick ; Gibbon tapping his snuff-box, and Sir Joshua with his trumpet in his ear. In the foreground is that strange figure which is as familiar to us as the figures among whom we have been brought up—the gigantic body, the huge massy face, seamed with the scars of disease ; the brown coat, the black worsted stockings, the grey wig with the scorched foretop ; the dirty hands, and the nails bitten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and nose moving with convulsive twitches ; we see the heavy form rolling ; we hear it puffing ; and then comes “Why, Sir ?”—and the “What then, Sir ?”—and the “No, Sir !”—

and the "You don't see your way through the question, Sir!"

Ruskin has enriched the world with inimitable and undying pictures of natural objects; has glorified the minute lichen, the humble moss, and the multitudinous grass; the streams, rocks, hills, mountains, and glaciers of this world of ours. But in his brilliant description he has never done anything finer than this most vivid delineation of the master moving-spirits of the age in the end of last century, in the *Edinburgh Review*. Guided by it, men not only read more than previously, but thought more earnestly, inquired more intelligently, and so began to act more reasonably. Our wonder at the brilliance of this article ceases when we know that it was by Macaulay.

Constable's knowledge of this extension of reading led him to devise a scheme which, when adopted, was eventually to effect the revolution in the bookselling trade which has now made it what it is. All books were then high-priced, and there was an immense majority of respectable British families in whose homes no books were to be found, save what was supplied by canvassers for books published in numbers, and these were profitably issued by Thos. Kelly of London, Blackie, then of Edinburgh, and many successors. It was a rude, rough, and a very expensive way of supplying intellectual food to the community, but in the advancing intelligence of the time it took the place of the pedlar, who, in his miscellaneous stock, had always chap books and broad-sheets for the farmer and his labourers.

Constable, with his experience of the sale of periodicals, said to Scott—

"If I live for half-a-dozen years, I shall make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Great Britain as that the shepherd's ingle nook should want the 'saut poke'! At three shillings, or half-a-crown a month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands and tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands and, ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a half-penny of profit on every copy of which will make me richer than all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were or ever will be, hot pressed! Twelve volumes so good that millions must wish to possess them, and so cheap that every butcher callant may have them if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a week!"

So prescient and far-seeing a prophet was this "Napoleon of the realms of print"! But although "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley," although disaster and apparent ruin overtook him, yet he persevered in his plan, and in 1827 his *Miscellany* appeared, and if not up to his expectations was fairly successful. Ideas, however, like epidemics seem sometimes to be in the very air, and without contact, break out in distant and unconnected places. In that same year there appeared in London the *Library of Useful Knowledge*, under the auspices of such men as Henry Brougham, Dr. Stephen Lushington, Henry Hallam, James Mill, Charles Knight and William Howitt, who thus, but following Constable the Scottish publisher,—“had the honour of leading the way in that fearful inroad upon dearness of the good old times of publishing, which first developed itself in the wicked birth of what the literary exclusives called the *Sixpenny Sciences*.”

Sixty years ago this literary exclusiveness still held sway in the upper classes, who sniffed and sneered at the idea of education for the masses. They had their elegant guinea Annuals, which, under the titles of *The Book of Beauty*, *The Keepsake*, *The Landscape Annual*, *Friendship's Offering*, *The Amaranth*, and many others, elegantly bound and splendidly illustrated, with contributors of rank and fashion, were their very beau ideal of what literature ought to be. They, some of them at least, were inclined to say, with the Dauphin of France, who, when told that the people were perishing with hunger, innocently asked, “Can they not get cheese-cakes?” Sorry fare these Annuals were, and yet in the Book-Stall of the period, during a whole generation, they were sold by fifties, until they were succeeded by really standard books like *Roger's Poems*, the illustrations of which cost the poet £7,000, or like *Wordsworth's Greece*, containing the finest specimens of wood-engraving illustrations at the time.

Nothing shows the tendency of the times more than the fact that all these expensive gift books have been superseded by Christmas Cards adapted for the million! What will come next?

Here and there in obscure places attempts were made to diffuse a cheap and useful literature amongst the lower classes in Scotland. It was in 1812 that Mr George Millar

of Dunbar published *The Cheap Magazine*, of which he was the conductor. It served this purpose locally, and of it was said—

“No more from door to door
The lounging peasant hawked his poisonous lore,
For now subserviant to one virtuous end,
Amusement with instruction thou did'st blend.

But it was before its day, and as yet the age was not ripe for it.

Another better known pioneer publication of pure and wholesome literature in England was *The Mirror*, suggested and commenced by Thomas Byerley, under the *nom de plume* of Reuben Percy, in 1822. It was continued under the guidance of the well known John Timbs, but after the issue of a thousand numbers it ceased, and like a cracked mirror fell into limbo, alias the fourpenny box on a stall.

Yet as intelligence advanced, so eager were men not only for a living, but in the hope of fame and fortune, that Constable's idea was now instantly seized, acted upon, and carried out to a far greater extent than he ever dreamt of. Then Robert Chambers, in 1832, began what “with justice may be styled the people's intellectual savings bank,” in the shape of his *Journal*, followed by the *Penny* and *Saturday Magazines*, and while the last two have long since collapsed, it is to the credit of the conductors of the *Journal*, that sixty years after it shows no signs of decadence, but continues as instructive, fascinating, and successful as ever.

With the rush of new periodicals which then commenced, and which still continues in torrents, began an entirely new era for booksellers. Verily, an age of steam with all its possibilities!



CHAPTER XXIV.

“ He, with his head scarce silvered, bore
A ready credence in his looks,
A lettered magnate, lording o'er
An ever widening realm of books. . . .
The old dead authors thronged him round about,
And Elzevirs grey ghosts from *vellum* graves
looked out.”

WHAT is Poetry? has been a disputed question from the time when Poetry, the first of the arts, began, to the present day. Innumerable definitions of it have been given. Macaulay says it is “the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce illusion on the imagination—the art of doing by words what the painter does by means of colour.”

Coleridge says, “Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to versc,” which he would certainly not have said had he read Jeremy Taylor, or the books of Ruth and Job, and many chapters of Isaiah, or Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*. Ruskin, Carlyle, Chateaubriand, and others, are as true poets as if they wrote in rhyme and metre.

In this free world of outspoken thought, is it presumption for us to offer a definition of Poetry, as the best thoughts of the best men, in the best words, and in the best possible form of these words? and when so given then common things, are made as though they were not common? “The white light of truth, in traversing the many-sided transparent soul of the poet, is refracted into iris-hued-poetry.”

According to Francis Turner Palgrave—who has a strong streak of literary blood in his veins—this highest development of literature, broke out in Britain in four distinct epochs. *First*—In the rather vague Elizabethan period from Wyatt (1503), to Shakespeare and Drummond (1585-1649), in which, and with a language hardly yet modulated and broken into verse, while there was a general uniformity of tone, there was yet a wonderful wide range of sentiment, from native simplicity to wild passion. The writers of the period

were wonderfully great, but as in the shadow of Mont Blanc other hills are eclipsed, so all the writers of the period are dwarfed by the presence of Shakespeare. *Second*—The commencement of our modern style (1620-1700), by the writings of Dryden, Milton, and others—exhibiting the effect of the struggles of the time in politics, religion, and manners. *Third*—The age of bold experiment in the eighteenth century, when writers resolved to discard the authority of the ancients, and began to give their own ideas—Pope and his followers giving the old courtly tendencies, and Thomson, Cowper, and Burns reflecting the spirit of the age of enquiry and progress. And then *Lastly*, he characterizes the first thirty years of this century as the most lavish in excellence of all the preceding periods; ascribing this “to that wider and greater spirit which, through enquiry and doubt, through pain and triumph, sweeps mankind round the circles of its gradual development” and he rather belittles the effect of the French Revolution, and altogether ignores the spirit of free enquiry and independence of thought which it evoked.

But what we are meantime mainly concerned about is, what did it do for Aberdeen and the “Book-Stall”? Jeffrey, Smith, Brougham, and Scott, had sprung artesian wells in Edinburgh, and forthwith the stream flowed through Constable’s conduits all over the land, being conveyed in the old channels to all the largest towns first, and thence percolating all over the country. *The Edinburgh Review* was so much superior to anything that had previously appeared, that, although its liberal sentiments made many a Tory family wince, yet it sold largely, and in all the libraries, and at all the sales of books up to 1850, the early volumes were almost invariably to be found.

When the rival *Quarterly* appeared in 1809, it found much favour in such a conservative place as Aberdeen, and its circulation there was almost from the first double that of the *Edinburgh*, yet sets of it came into the market far less frequently than that of its Scottish forerunner.

And yet, although books were high priced, they created by their interest more readers than formerly. Burns’ Poems and “*Helenore ; or the Fortunate Shepherdess*,” by Ross of Lochlee, were to be found in almost every farmhouse, and at the visitation of the minister it would have been found also, that they could be repeated from memory, at least as

correctly as the *Shorter Catechism*. What Burns and *Helenore* were to the farmer and his servants, Scott's poems were to the more cultivated classes; they created readers whose interest was excited and kept up by the successive appearance of each new poem.

The marvel is that the peasantry of Scotland, reputed as dour, yet certainly staid and religious, should at once have taken Burns' poems to their heart of hearts, and fondly and lovingly cherished them. The purest hearts and the most intelligent of Scotia's sons and daughters were equally captivated by them, and though he did sometimes appear to them to become a little irreverent, yet his sly pawky humour fairly captivated all classes, rich and poor,—high and humble and set them a-rhyming.

The famed Parnassus had surely been transplanted from Greece to Scotland, for above any other country she has reason to be proud of her peasant poets; and that Helicon's harmonious stream flowed gushingly through the land, giving inspiration in a small way to many, is seen in the rather remarkable large number of local poets whose productions issued from the press in the early years of the century both in Aberdeen and all over Scotland. From these it is evident that the stream flowed both wide and deep. True, they might only be rhymsters having little of the divine inspiration of the poet: but the very exercise was culture, the rhymes were a solace to toil, an exercise for wit and humour, for refinement, tending to better things than in the past, and encouraging reading and criticism. So Libraries increased and grew, books were found easily, and booksellers multiplied and replenished the earth. So much so, that although Aberdeen was always well supplied, yet during Mr. Brown's life, the number of booksellers had increased four-fold, the increase having largely taken place during the early years of this century.

And whereas formerly almost the greatest part of a bookseller's stock consisted of old authors, there now arose a race who dealt entirely in new books, and only kept the old authors in the lending library, which was generally an adjunct to a bookseller's business, in order that the learned *leisure* enjoyed too commonly might be turned to some profitable account. Michael Johnson the bookseller of Lichfield (father of Dr. Samuel Johnson) knew the contents of every

book he sold, and by the county squires, the rectors and clergy of the district, was looked upon as a very oracle of learning, and a referee on disputed subjects, by all parties.

The very mixed commodities which Andrew Sheriffs 1780 (see page 13) enumerated as having been sold by him, has continued from his day to the present. The bookseller's intelligence being taken for granted, his advice was sought on all conceivable subjects, and by all classes, so much was his supposed book learning respected. He sold tickets for the State Lotteries, up to 1826, when they were abolished, and he had to give advice as to lucky numbers, or refuse to do so—the miserable man that he was in being subjected to the temptation! Sometimes he became the agent for quack medicines, as the widow of A. Thomson and her two daughters—whose shop window looked right into the entrance to the Townhouse—had to turn an honest penny by selling Spillburn's pills at 5/ a box—which were warranted to cure rheumatism and the measles!

It is a matter of regret, that following the numerous examples around them, the Aberdeen printers, publishers, and booksellers did not, at an early period, form themselves into a guild, like the Incorporated Trades, or like the Booksellers' Society of Edinburgh, which, begun in 1785, and supported by London firms with a small subscription, has so prospered, that the entrance money is now nearly £200, and although they compel their members at sixty years of age to accept a handsome annuity, give an annual grand dinner to their members, inviting all the local literary celebrities to it, and take every year a three days' excursion, all expenses being defrayed, yet they hardly know what now to do with their accumulating money.

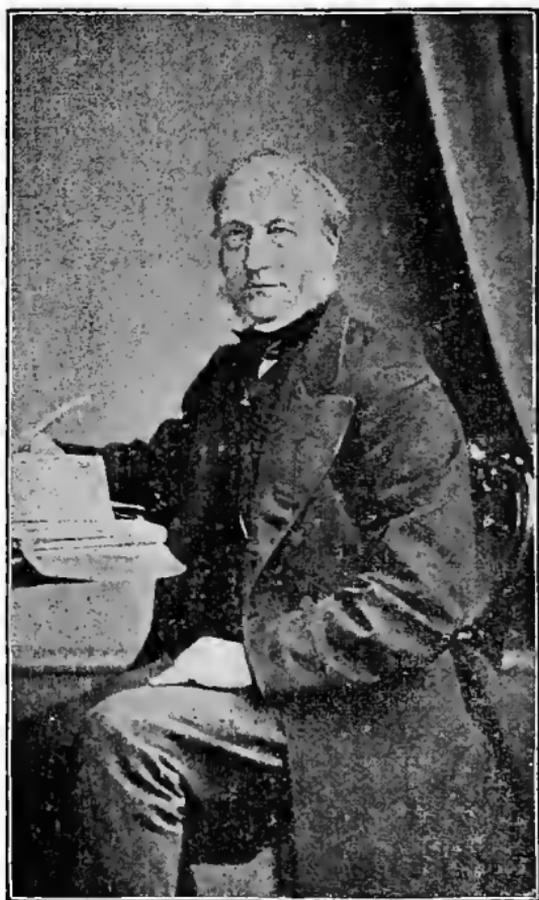
There does not appear to have been amongst the Aberdonians that *esprit de corps* which there might, and should have been, as literary men, and still more so as Scotchmen, for, has it not been said, that an Irishman is happy although he does not know where he will dine—an Englishman is so if he does know this—but a Scotchman, only if he knows where he will not only dine to-day, but also to-morrow.

There seems to have been a considerable amount of the Scottish thistle element about these old Aberdeen book-

sellers—possibly intensified by the antagonistic claims of their two rival universities, and the jealousy existing between them. And as an illustration of this complicated state of matters it may be mentioned that, while Mr. Chalmers had long enjoyed the prestige of being “printer to the [Marischal College] University, yet in January, 1802, Mr. Alexander Brown was appointed “printer to the University!” viz.—of King’s College. It was an awkward position for a son-in-law to be placed in, but with his usual prudence, Mr. Brown never blazoned it abroad, and thus had the satisfaction of being all along on the best possible business terms with the professors of both Universities, and profiting thereby, while the family friendship was not even endangered, because all the printing was done at one common press.

The shrewd active mind of Lewis Smith, who started in business in 1822, impelled him to try if he could not break down the exclusiveness of “the trade.” He was by no means an exclusive himself, and if any man could have welded the trade together it was him. Previous to his day the smaller booksellers got their monthly supplies of books and magazines either from A. Brown & Co. or Angus & Sons. If thus they had to pay some five per cent more than if they had got these direct from London or Edinburgh they saved the carriage and the heavy postage of $1/3\frac{1}{2}$ to London and $10\frac{1}{2}$ d. to Edinburgh. But so free from jealousy of each other were the booksellers that some half dozen of them clubbing together, united in sending their orders on one sheet of foolscap, and saved in postage and carriage. No wonder although Longman & Co. of London cited this as a notable example of Aberdonian thrift and cannieness, and this continued after Mr. Smith had taken up the wholesale business, in the case of books and magazines for which there was no agency in Aberdeen. He was the product of the time, really the first modern bookseller in Aberdeen, who not caring much for old books or ancient literature, was keenly observant how modern literature could be made to pay by its wide circulation amongst the masses, and not merely the classes; and recognising the increasing trade of Aberdeen and the surrounding district, he laid himself out to break down the high prices which were almost—nay, universally,

charged for all bookselling products at the time. Early in his career he formed a valuable connection with J. Lumsden & Co. of Glasgow, who had struck out a specialty in cheap stationery; and later on, he became the Aberdeen agent for the publications of W. & R. Chambers of Edinburgh, which circulated so extensively, that alone these might have fairly



MR. LEWIS SMITH.

sustained an ordinary unambitious agent. Was it, that, misled by the widespread circulation of these, he, in after years, erred in bringing out *The Book of Bon-Accord* in such a shabby

cheap form, that, though he by its publication might have been secure from loss, yet the years and years of toil which the author bestowed on it were never recompensed? It is only of late years that its true value and the real merits of its author have been fairly recognised, and it deserved a better form and dress than it received.

In the olden times—continued down to forty years ago—it was the custom of the Southern publishers to give an annual dinner to invited booksellers—both from town and country—and after this to hold their trade sales at the end of the magnificent dinner—during which all the rarest things which earth, air, or sea could supply—with after this all the temptations in the shape of the choicest specimens of the finest vintage, and the most powerful spirits and liqueurs were presented, when it was naturally expected that the biddings for the books offered, and the articles presented, would be fast and furious.

Vicious though the system was, the prudent, canny Aberdonian kept his head cool amidst the hurricane, and thus commended himself more and more to Mr. Lumsden, who specially favoured and trusted him because he was so evidently prudent, and in consequence gave him special advantages, which he denied to others in trade.

Mr. Smith, then perhaps the youngest member of *the trade* in Aberdeen, was apparently captivated by the good fellowship and *camaraderie* of the booksellers at the Glasgow gathering at Mr. Lumsden's sale, and soon after issued a circular to the other Aberdeen booksellers, proposing that they should form a Friendly Society under the presidency of Mr. David Wyllie, his former chieftain, and as head of the clan. And it was the most natural thing he could do. Angus & Sons, and Brown & Co. had by this time become somewhat fossilized, and by the young and rising generation were looked upon—like the Old Man of Hoy in Orkney, or the stacks on the coast of Caithness—as remnants of a former world, which Jeffrey, Scott, and Byron had entirely swamped and demolished; and now booksellers looked for new heavens, a new earth, and a new world of customers to conquer.

The Society was formed, and the members met together annually in the Lemon Tree tavern on the evening of the 30th of November, when, after a supper such as only Mrs.

Ronald could provide, rules were adopted and were nominally in existence for twenty-four years, when, in 1850, from various causes, from the numerous new entrants into the trade not recognizing any rules or restrictions as to their procedure, from the competition of Southern traders who supplied enterprising traders and fancy goods dealers with books at lower prices than what was supplied by them to the booksellers, but really and principally from the conduct of one member of the trade, who made himself so extremely disagreeable by his talk and conduct, that the Society had no help but to dissolve itself, greatly to the regret of some of the members.

Had there been a regularly constituted Society, with an entrance money admission and ever-accumulating funds, it might have been kept up by the equal interest of all the members in these funds; but it being impossible to exercise any authority or pressure on a member who chose to violate the mutual understanding arrived at, the membership was merely nominal, and the only bond of union was that of good fellowship with his neighbours in trade, and admission to the annual trade supper, to manifest his geniality, and to get little tiffs—which will occur even in the best regulated families, and still more so in mixed societies—soldered up, so that there should be no rifts in the lute, when it was played at the annual supper on St. Andrew's day.

The age of conviviality in Aberdeen (as noticed in Chapter V.) had not quite died out, when, in 1838, the writer—then only an assistant—was taken by Mr. Frost to this annual supper, was introduced, and it was requested that he be allowed in future to act as the representative of A. Brown & Co.—the high honour that it was! It was quite contrary to precedent, only principals being admitted, and could only be asked *ex gratia*, tending as it did to lessen the binding authority of any rules enacted. But on Mr. Lewis Smith's hearty proposal for its adoption, it was cordially acquiesced in by all the members. And thus for many years, so long as the annual reunion was kept up, the writer had the opportunity and the privilege of studying the characters of his fellow tradesmen in their free and easy moments, and learnt valuable lessons therefrom.

It was indeed a splendid school for the study of character. It may be questioned whether any such school now exists—

save, it may be, in committee meetings of the Town Council, when men are really men, and not mere Councillors; in those still more snug and cosy ones of the Incorporated Trades, or possibly even in some private clubs; all which institutions remain as tattered and torn fragments of ancient banners, representative of old times when, and where, men were less ceremonious than is now generally the case.

About this time there was an Inn in the Spital named the Red Lion, which had prominently displayed the arms of the Earl of Erroll, with his motto, "Serva jugum." The waggish Aulton students translated this, not "Serve the plough or its yoke," but "Serve the jug!" and did it to the comfort, profit and satisfaction of the landlord.

"The Lemon Tree" Tavern, kept for ever so many years, at least for full fifty years, by good worthy Mrs. Ronald, bulked very largely indeed in the domestic annals of Aberdeen. Had Burns or Johnson partaken of its hospitality, and been served by Mrs. Ronald, they would have left the city with more favourable impressions, and trumpeted these. Certainly Mrs. Ronald's welcome was kind, but it was a striking peculiarity of hers that, even when very old and very frail, she allowed no guest to leave the house—however unseasonable the hour—without the very touching expression of her own personal kindly farewell in her parting, and for his future. Shenstone has recorded that—

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round—
May sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an Inn."

But why should the traveller sigh at this? If he was such a domestic tyrant as not to find a warm welcome at his own home—if he had one—then surely it was matter of congratulation that he could at least purchase this boon to the bargain. By Mrs. Ronald—

"To every guest the appropriate spech was made,
And every duty with distinction paid,
Respectful, easy, pleasant, or polite,
'Your honour's servant,'—Mr. Smith, good-night!"

The house and its equipments were unpretentious; it was situated somewhat retired from the street—up a small court—next door to the police-office. At that time every police-

man there might safely be reckoned upon as being one of the "Lemon Tree" waiters; each one of them taking quite a paternal care of its guests, and, if necessary, seeing each of them safely and quietly ensconced in the privacies of their own domestic life; or, failing their possession of this, depositing them safely in their own beds—if they could possibly do so. The motherly heart of Mrs. Ronald, who really looked upon her guests as her own bairns, would have been deeply grieved had any of them ever appeared as a culprit in the Police Court. And in those primitive and patriarchal times, when the science of statistics in police courts had not been invented, the kindly police aided her much on the same principle as the gravedigger, who took credit to himself and grist to his pocket, by "happin' up some of the doctor's faults."

But in those far-back days, the hotels and inns were not only civic institutions patronised by the Magistracy, but they were ecclesiastical institutions, considered absolutely necessary for the proper discussion and regulation of spiritual matters, by a more free debate there than was thought proper in an open court.

In 1813, there was published in Edinburgh a pamphlet in 8vo. pp. 26, entitled "*The Synod*, a prophetic poem in twelve cantos: Canto first"—from which we quote—

"The Synod met at Aberdeen,
In eighteen hundred and thirteen,
At ten upon the twelfth October,
All in their perfect senses sober.

.
From Drum's lofty aisle,
Through St. Nicholas pile,
Rang the clatter of feet and of tongues,
And forth to each door,
Full many a score
Went to dinner, digesting their wrongs.

.
And now methinks at four I see
The brethren all in "Lemon Tree";—
For here, they fail not to convene,
Round Ronald's smoking hot tureen."¹

¹ For the benefit of the future Aberdeen Bibliographer, it may be mentioned that this poem was supposed to have been written and published by a Mr. Peterkin, an Aberdonian, and the father of the Misses Peterkin, who kept a celebrated Ladies' Boarding School in Union

It is therefore little to be wondered at, although a venerable and highly esteemed father of the Church—Dr. Jamieson of Old Aberdeen—one who thinks for himself, and, like Dr. Campbell of old, is supremely indifferent to the opinions of others on the especial objects of his study—should on the occasion of his Jubilee Dinner, held quite lately in the Imperial Hotel, have given utterance—in that pawky, humorous style of his, which so tells on his audience, thus—as taken from *Bon-Accord Gossip*, 30th November, 1893:—

“Perhaps the most amusing part of the speech was that in which he referred to the old Lemon Tree Hotel—long since gone—in which all the social functions of the Presbytery were wont to be held. It was, he said, a hotel that had no landlord, but when he mentioned the name of Mrs. Ronald, some of the older generation would remember that she had a name and a favourite name among the clergy. This remark was punctuated with prolonged laughter. [The nickums that they were!] but the following sentences convulsed the company. Clergy, he continued, coming from the country put up at the Lemon Tree, and when the clergy of Aberdeen had occasion to have a dinner they went invariably to Mrs. Ronald’s. She was famous for her suppers. All these details he had given only to show that the Lemon Tree was a respectable place.”

Respectable! ay, that it was! Was it not the houff of the magistrates, and the booksellers? Let alone the clergy, what better certificate could it possibly have had? And yet, although the questions then debated at the Synod, at the dinner afterwards, and at the evening Synod meeting, were of the utmost importance for the welfare of the State Church, yet the writer had then the pleasure of entertaining and keeping away from all these exciting meetings a rural clergyman—a decided Moderate, and a rank Tory—whose vote might have been of much importance at the time, but who was much more fascinated by the opportunity of getting a quiet crack, with the etcæteras, and a stiff battle at chess, to the study of which he was a devotee, than by the settle-

Terrace, and which proved a formidable rival to that of Miss Lambert. Strange to say, the first boarding school for virtuous young ladies in Aberdeen was in the Vennel, which, in the course of time, became the last boarding school for immoral women.

ment of ecclesiastical questions. After numerous encounters, finding that he had the worst of them, he said—"Oo, oo, ay! I see noo that every cock fechts best on his ain middenheid, but come ye oot to my manse, and I'se gie you a thorough thrashin', or I'm greatly mista'en!"



KING'S COLLEGE, OLD ABERDEEN.

CHAPTER XXV.

“Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain ;
Awake but one, and lo ! what myriads rise !
Each stamps its image as the other flies.”

Campbell—Pleasures of Memory.

“Councillors of State sit plotting and playing their high chess-game,
whereof the pawns are men.”

Sartor Resartus.

“E'en Adam found on Eden's ground
No rupture, it is stated,—
No spell to *check* sad sorrow's wreck
Till he by Eve was *mated*.”

AN appointment having been made with the loved and venerable old clergyman mentioned in last chapter—the devotee of chess, and the gamecock of the district in the fascinating study—who, *facile princeps* there, sighed for other worlds to conquer ; at an early hour on a Monday morning the writer left Aberdeon by train, found the minister's man and his gig waiting at the station, and after a journey of some miles across a rich agricultural country, arrived at the handsome and commodious manse in time for breakfast in a Scottish manner.

That over, an adjournment was made to the study, hedged round with books, where it was evident all due preparation had been made for the duel. Although there were no seconds, yet there was no wife and no pretty prattling children to disturb us. The worthy parson was a bachelor, but was an altogether loveable human being—a fit companion for the laird or lord, the adviser of the factor, and the trusted referee of all his parishioners—so much so, that it is recorded of him that

“Well he knew to warn the young
How to shun the snares of life,
Taught them how to live and die,
And bid the fleeting world good-bye.”

Yes! indeed he was good, worthy, and also human, as every man amongst us is, each of us with our own particular failing, unknown to ourselves, but patent to our friends and acquaintances, who, if they venture to frankly tell us of our failings, might soon cease to be friends or even acquaintances.

For the purpose of terrifying him, the writer was now formally told that the most elaborate preparations had been made for the impending serious encounter. That he had not personally called for his stipend—due on the Friday previous—because he was somewhat dubious as to the effects of the Factor's toddy, but had then sent over his man for it—how he stood the toddy was not mentioned: but the writer could not help reminding him of the barber who would not himself shave his customers on Sunday, but always sent his apprentice. Moreover, he said, that yesterday in church he had been particularly easy with his flock, and had given his hearers old sermons and short services (to their great relief and comfort). And that now, on this Monday morning, he felt that he was in grand fettle for a stiff fight with his youthful antagonist. In addition to all this appalling intelligence, he added that, knowing that his opponent did not then smoke, he had provided himself with ample stores of pipes and tobacco, and, said he, "I shall persecute you with fire and smoke, till I conquer you, however late we sit."

The battle began at 10:30 a.m. Dinner interrupted the combat for an hour. Tea was taken in the intervals of the moves. Supper was a mere interlude, and yet up to that time "the old man was beaten by the boy," and his opponent had the advantage as to the number of games won. After that the national beverage, toddy, was introduced, and infused new spirit into the game. The combat deepened, with much fire and clouds of smoke hanging over and concealing the field of battle. In one of his celebrated engagements Napoleon was told that the battle was lost, and that his Generals considered it prudent to retreat, "No, no," he said, "there is still time to win another battle," and he won the second one. Copying his example, the veteran minister continued the fight and puffed his churchwarden pipe with renewed vigour, and with ever increasing smoke, until 3 a.m. the following morning! Long before that time his antagonist had given in—utterly worn out and exhausted. For rest,

he was willing to give up anything and everything, for he was dead beat—and the few allotted hours of rest were no rest at all, but were entirely occupied with the movements of the various pieces on the board, Pawns and Bishops, Knights and Rooks, Kings and Queens, tumbling about in the brain, so that next day the writer was more fit for the Lunatic Asylum than the conduct of ordinary business, and caught himself uttering “check!” more than once.

This was a veritable abuse of a noble game, a violation of St. Augustine’s good old rule, “Moderatio in omnibus,” which certainly included manses and also chess. When the minister was afterwards inclined to crow over the issue of this combat, he had to be reminded that he only secured the victory by the aid of his churchwardens, and thus, that the combat was by no means on equal terms, for his opponent was not cheered and encouraged by the pipes.

Notwithstanding the well-known fact that chess was the favourite game of many eminent men, it was little known amongst Aberdonians before 1850, when the number of players might be counted on the fingers. After that the Aberdeen Club was founded, which met in the County Rooms, and being considered a city institution was patronized by the elite, and gathered together about fifty members, who paid 21/- as their annual subscription. But although the money came in, the members did not attend, and so the club collapsed.

Proposals were then made to the directors of the Exchange newsroom to introduce tables and men, *which were offered to them*, but the answer to this generous offer was that “no swindling or gambling would be allowed in the room.” So dreadfully ignorant were they!

After that the Bon-Accord Club was started, and continued to struggle on for a year or two, when it also collapsed by the non-attendance of members. And then lovers of the game had to depend on chance encounters with friends or acquaintances.

To a meeting of this kind with the Rev. Dr. Beverly and the writer, the Social Chess Club owes its origin in 1859—the distinctive name arising from the members meeting in each others’ houses every alternate Friday, to tea and supper, with a rigid rule as to the plainness of the fare set down, viz. Supper “To consist of an egg to each, and a bit of

fish, or any other thing that may be easily and cheaply furnished at the least possible expense of time or trouble," thus imitating the projectors of the *Edinburgh Review* in the combination of the excellencies of high thinking and plain living.

The original members were the then teachers in the Grammar School, viz., Alex. Beverly, Alex. Martin, Charles Macdonald and John Brebner, with Robert Alexander of the town's public school, and George Walker, secretary. To these were afterwards added William Forsyth of the *Journal*, Rev. Dr. James Fraser of St. Clements, William Barrack, Rev. Robert Gray, Rev. John Massie, James Meston, C.A., Dr. J. Gordon, Old Aberdeen, and the Rev. William Keay of Woodside, all with decided literary tastes and habits. Being gradually formed, and only intimate associates admitted, the Club was a distinct success, and the attendance kept up for many years with ever-increasing enjoyment. If the study of the game has been termed unsocial, this was abundantly rectified at the simple repasts; if, between these, the minds were kept silently in action, at and after supper, sparkling wit rippled us into laughter, which broke into roaring waves, and exploded in convulsions which shook the whole society. Then was the time to get real insight into the character of the members; the press and the pulpit tilting at each other with lively and pungent jokes, some of which were welcomed into the pages of *Punch*, while the dominies, the doctors and the clericals pelted each other with fun, and many of the leading articles of the *Journal* bore the impress of the last meeting of the Social Chess Club. Widely differing from each other in many respects as the members were, no subject was tabooed from discussion, and Forsyth declared that the club was his Cosmos and was brimful of ideas to him.

The writer of the following lines must have been spiritually present at some of these *Noctes*, so truthful is the description :

" I see them in their various places,
 Ilk ane o' them wi' lauchin faces ;
 They sit, ae hour the ither chases
 Nor think o' risin',
 An' wit au' fun ilk moment graces—
 Swift time disguisin'.

Night flew owre fast ; the mornin' wore
 An' by that time wi' mirthfu' roar—
 Nay, even for days our sides were sore
 Wi' fun an' jokin ;
 An' yet we langed for, more and more,
 Anither yokin' "

Much of the Minute book is in rhyme, enriched by contributions from the members. Amongst others Barrack furnishes a latin poem, "Chessiana Clubbia," of which Beverly supplies a clever translation and parody in the Doric Scotch, beginning so—

Oh Aberdeen's a bonnie place, it stans upon the Dee,
An' north o' it the lazy Don gangs wamlin to the sea.
In Aberdeen there's mony a Club an' mony a meetin' fair,
But wi' the Social Chess Club there's nae ane can compare.

Alas! alas! Distant climes, fleeting years, and Death's sharp dart, have unsoldered all this goodliest fellowship of Knights. But the memories of the lost ones rise ever sweet and precious from the recollection of these bygone meetings.

This long digression on chess having been disposed of—certainly not a greater one than what De Quincey continually perpetrated—and we are proud to copy him, if only we could do so in the value of his digressions—we return to the narration of recollections of Aberdeen booksellers and book-selling some sixty years ago.

Gas was then a novelty; and greatly to the relief of the apprentices they were now spared the dirty job of cleaning the oil lamps formerly in use. When not employed in the delivery of parcels, which were then few and far between, as compared with the present, they were kept steadily employed in the folding and stitching of the copy books then uniformly used at all the schools in the city. These were invariably made of two sheets of folio post, folded into oblong 4to and covered with a blue paper, which has entirely disappeared from mortal ken, since their abolition. They were ruled to three patterns. Large text with wide lines, small text with ditto, and a combination of small and middle text, and were sold at 3d. each, with an allowance to the teacher who retailed them to his scholars. They were profitable both to the bookseller and the teacher, and they paid the scholars also, because the then well-known Jeanie Milne in the Netherkirkgate was always ready to swap a stalk of her celebrated candied rock for a copy book, or to give weight for weight of this same sweetmeat for a penny, even if it was of the old Brobdignag pattern. The writer at one time came into a big store of these, and expected to make a fortune by them; but alas! Jeanie Milne died, and copper

declined in value, and he was left lamenting with them. Any good offer will not be declined now, but it must be remembered that a thousand years after this they will be priceless.

Steel pens manufactured in Birmingham by Josiah Mason for Perry & Co. of London, first made their appearance in Aberdeen about 1833, and were sold as curiosities at 4d. each. They had no chance against Duncan's quills, a native product, but gradually worked their way into use in spite of all that the good old conservative Duncan could do to prevent it.

For as Tom Hood writes—

Pleasant are they to feel !
 So firm ! so flexible ! composed of steel,
 So finely tempered . . . fit to give passion breath—
 Or Kings to sign, the warrant stern of death.

Envelopes were absolutely undreamt of in 1830, but some very enterprising person is reported to have used one in 1833, and the fashion spread as fast as fashions do. By 1838 they were in common use and had extended as far north as Aberdeen. The writer, getting hold of some good specimens of envelopes, opened them out, and getting Mr. Macintosh the tinsmith to cut out patterns of them in tinplate, got a shoemaker's knife, and for three years kept up the whole supply of envelopes sold by A. Brown & Co., greatly to the surprise and the gratification of the managing partner. But machinery soon put an end to this little home industry, and for the price then charged for a dozen, the public are now supplied with a hundred.

As has been already mentioned, in these old far-back times the fashionable gifts at Christmas and the New-year were the Annuals, which in their preparation did so much for the process of steel engraving in this country, and the employment of art in the embellishment of books, in printing, illustration, and binding. If the literary matter was not perhaps quite equal to that of a shilling magazine at the present day—let us not forget that many after-celebrities such as Ruskin, made in them their debut in the literary world; that each of the steel plates with which they were adorned, cost from £50 to £100, and that it was calculated that at least £100,000 was paid annually in the production

of the plates alone. They were introduced from Germany in 1822. The first British one, "Friendship's Offering," a small duodecimo, bound in morocco, was published by our original Banff bairns, Smith, Elder, & Co., in 1823, and for nearly twenty years was a brilliant success, and added considerably to the income of A. Brown & Co., who were the local agents of the publishers, and supplied all the North of Scotland.

The idea caught on—it was much too good not to be copied. In 1824 there appeared "The Literary Souvenir," followed by the "Amulet," the "Winter's Wreath," and "The Keepsake." In 1829 there were published seventeen of these annuals, and the publishers of "The Amulet" spent £1200 on the steel plates alone of the volume for the year. Their production greatly benefited art culture in this country, and helped to produce a class of steel plate engravers who have greatly enriched the art-treasures of the world during the middle portion of this century. Possessors of steel plate engravings of this period should most carefully preserve them, for as the art threatens to die out—being now supplanted by cheap mechanical processes—the plates promise to become invaluable. It is something fearful to see these fine old annuals lying in a broker's window, when they ought to be carefully and lovingly preserved in the Public Library for reference.

With the infinite variety of cheap books and showy articles now supplied by booksellers, their gay and attractive shops present a very different appearance to what they did some sixty years ago. It is true that about the month of February a glaring eruption of gaudy Valentines annually broke out in some windows, and lasted for about three weeks, to the great delight of young people; but all the rest of the year, the shop windows presented little that was attractive, save to the confirmed Bibliomaniac. Nelson of Edinburgh had not then developed his taste, but confined himself to unattractive reprints of old and standard theology, as Clark did afterwards. Routledge began much in the same way. Cassell, the coffee merchant, was only in the leafing stage, and did not burst into bloom for twenty years after, when Routledge, and Warne & Co. led the way into modern ideas.

Looking over the old records of the Book-Stall, one is

struck with the demand for theological literature which was prevalent at the beginning of the century. And it seems strange that Aberdeen, situated as it was on the margin of the "Dead Sea of Moderatism," should have been specially known as the best, or one of the best markets for this. George King who began business in 1822, having been previously a book canvasser, and having a brother who was both an intelligent and enterprising printer in Peterhead, had special opportunities of knowing the demand, and cultivating this trade; and he did far more in his day than any other bookseller in its supply. He kept his brother's press constantly employed with large editions of the voluminous works of Erskine, Boston, and other Evangelicals. And how he managed to get rid of them was long a marvel to his brother tradesmen, and a high proof of his acuteness. It was largely effected by a species of barter, exchanging with the Southern Publisher so many copies "of my work for so many copies of yours," and as the price of labour in the North was less than that in the South, George invariably scored a substantial success, and soon acquired both a large and varied stock, which, however, did not tend to become increasingly valuable.

In his day no licentiate of the church could pass, unless his examiners knew that he at least possessed some of these voluminous authors. That he made himself master of their contents, was an entirely different matter, which was only very tentatively touched upon in the Aberdeen Presbytery, but was carefully kept in the back-ground or altogether kept out of sight in the "Dead Sea" presbyteries of Buchan. There the examinations were conducted in their own familiar fashion. A member of one of these presbyteries, being on a visit to Edinburgh, attended with his host, a meeting of presbytery, and in the evening expressed his very great surprise at the number and variety of the questions which were put to an aspiring licentiate, and said, that had these questions been put to him, he certainly would have been rejected. "But," said his host, "the questions were the ordinary ones always put; does not your presbytery ask the same?" "No, no," said he, "our presbytery only asks one question." "One question! and pray, what was that?" said his host. "Well," was the reply, "the question—and for the district you must remember it was a very important

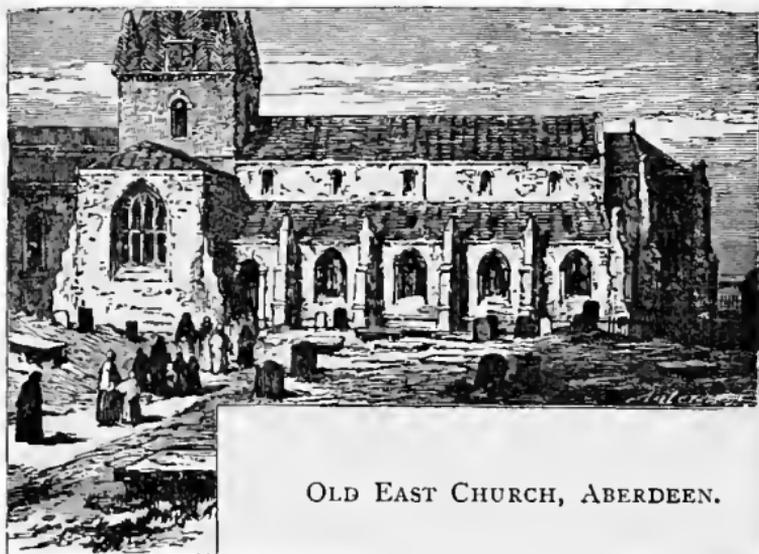
one—was, ‘Is he peaceable in his drink?’” A most important question indeed. So, provided the candidate could show on his book shelves the sermons of Dr. Blair, or Alison, or even the English Churchman, Blunt; still better—for show, if not for use—some dry-as-dust volumes of the Puritan divines, or, best of all, the folio volumes of the Fathers, his orthodoxy was at once taken for granted, and his examiners being afraid to ask him any questions, his license was given, and that with high honours.

Settling down then in his patron-appointed parish, his original sermons, when he gave one, were so truly and obstinately dull that they seemed to shut out knowledge at every entrance. But his cribbed ones were little better, were so profound, and so far above the comprehension of his hearers, that he got a degree from his Alma Mater, was known as Dr. Dry-as-dust, and his preaching elicited the remark from a parishioner “Ma conscience! I wadna presume to unnerstan’ him!”

No wonder then that seceders had strong objections to read sermons, for by the possession of a good collection of these—published so extensively in these old times, clergymen found out a royal road to preaching without the exercise of their brains, or the consumption of the midnight oil. With some fifty or sixty cribbed sermons from a variety of sources, a presentee to a country parish was stocked for the whole course of his ministry. His stock in trade was kept in a pile, and when the uppermost sermon had been delivered it was placed undermost, and so the mill-wheel went sedately round in regular order—save by the substitution of a new one now and then. A Deeside parish clergyman, whose stock seems to have been exactly fifty-two, disarranged the ideas of his flock one year, when there were fifty-three Sundays, for a parishioner who had been absent one Sunday, asking a neighbour at the church door, “What do we get to-day, John? the dog?” (meaning a sermon on the text, “Is thy servant a dog?”) was answered, “Na, min! we got *him* last Sunday.”

If in the blossoming and early fruitage time of his powers a young man put his own brains and best thoughts into these discourses, they became celebrated—were too valuable to be printed—and were generally known as his “Gallopin’ Tams,” which he trotted out on high occasion, to his own

satisfaction and the great delight of those who heard them for the first time. Nay, but in those days when novelty and new ideas were not the rage, and when men got ample time and leisure to "learn, mark, and inwardly digest them," they were all the better enabled to do so by hearing them more than once. But sermons had to be delivered with discretion, and it was a heavy tax on the patience of the parishioners of Udny, when on three successive Sabbaths they were treated by three different preachers to one of their late minister's, on the text, "Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents;" when a parishioner rose and went out, saying, "Deil dwell him! he's dwalt here lang eneuch!"



OLD EAST CHURCH, ABERDEEN.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“Books [in all nooks]! The groaning sofa bears
A goodly store ;
Books in the window seat, and on the chairs,
And on the floor.
Books of all sorts of soul, all sorts of age,
All sorts of face ;—
Black-letter, vellum, and the flimsy page
Of common-place.
All bindings, from the cloth, whose hue distracts
One’s weary nerves,
To yellow parchment, binding rare old tracts
It serves—deserves.
Books on the shelves, and in the cupboard books,
Worthless and rare.
Books on the mantel-piece—where’er one looks
Books everywhere.
Books, books ! the only things in life I find
Not wholly vain.
Books in my hand—books in my heart enshrined,
Books in my brain.
My friends are they : for children and for wife,
They serve me too :
For these alone of all dear things in life
Have I found true.
They do not flatter, change, deny, deceive,
Ah no—not they !
The same editions which at night you leave,
You find next day.
You don’t find railway novels where you left
Your Elzevirs,
Your Aldines don’t betray you—leave bereft,
Your lonely years.”

E. Nesbit, 1877.

TO an old Bibliopole, who yet retains some of his youthful spring-time love of nature, the view here presented by Nesbit rivals in attractiveness the fairest scenes to be seen in this world. With the familiarity begotten by old acquaintanceship, so sacred to a Scotchman, he at once recognises in the assembly some of his old associates, and rejoices to see them in such good company,

in the custody, and under the tender care of the Bibliophile who loves them.

But attractive as the scene is to him, he is sometimes made aware that human nature is exceedingly diverse in its tastes. If there are Bibliophiles—who are lovers of books—and Bibliomaniacs, whose love of books has turned into absolute madness for their mere possession—there are also Bibliophobiasts who are haters of books and dread the very sight of them. Luckily for the progress of the world this class is (except by an occasionally unfortunate mistake) of the feminine gender; and yet, even some of them can tolerate a novel from the circulating library, or a book of fashions, else there would be a collapse in the world of science and literature. But being almost entirely feminine, and generally old, they are bound to become extinct, now that the School Board dominates the country.

Meantime—whatever relief the Millennium may bring—book-lovers, even in their incipient stage, labour under various disabilities, the chief of which is *Home Rule*, which indeed, except in a very few cases, is felt by Bibliophiles, still more by Bibliomaniacs, to be the chief tyranny of the age. The Bibliophile, loving the insides of books, feels his short-lived time all too brief for his acquisition of the knowledge contained in them, and the Bibliomaniac, knowing nothing but their outsides, feels now and then in his rational moments that he ought to know more about their contents and intellectual value than he does.

“ He stands beside his bookcase door
In ecstasies divine
And fondles all his precious store
But—never reads a line.”

The best of these collectors of books have at least the consolation of thinking that :—

“ As we live elsewhere
So do these dear creations of the brain :—
That what I have unread, I'll find, and there
Take up my joys again.
Ah ! then the bliss of blisses :—to be freed
From all the pangs by which through life we're
driven,
With liberty—and endless time—to read
The libraries of heaven.”

It is quite enough to make one wish to be there—to be free from the tyranny of earthly Home Rule, when it interferes with book-buying, and with the prospect of acquiring such an all embracing knowledge as to relieve “the weight of all this unintelligible world.”

Some think that it is one of the woes of this weary world, that ever since the fall, brought about by women’s wheedling ways, the lords of creation, retaining this title, not by mental, but by mere brute force, have nevertheless been so completely brought under the rule of their better halves, as to be in many cases simply their submissive slaves.

In the matter of book buying, and in the opinion of Bibliopoles, the better halves do not deserve their title, but rather the reverse. Whatever it may be in the future, when Girton girl-graduates take a husband as an assistant, and when women, rising through all the intermediate grades of School Boards, Medical Degrees, etc., rise to that of Members of Parliament, certain it is that in the past, and all owing to their inadequate and barbarian training, very few of them were book-lovers. As a luxury they tolerated the circulating library, but they were sworn foes against all purchasing of books by their husbands. This, in their opinion, was a mere waste of money, a littering and breeding of dust in the house, and a reduction of it to Nesbit’s description.

How far a man may go in book-buying when uncontrolled by a better half, may be seen in the example of Richard Heber, a half-brother of the celebrated Bishop of Calcutta, and who died in 1833. He was the possessor of more volumes than any private individual previously known. His houses at Hadnet in Shropshire, at Pimlico, at York Street, Westminster, were all filled with books from top to bottom. And besides these he rented houses in Oxford, Paris, Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent, to hold his ever-accumulating stores. The catalogue numbered 117,613 volumes in 52,672 lots, and by the sale, which brought £56,775, while the books and costs were £77,150, his executors lost upwards of £11,000. Verily he was the prince of Bibliomaniacs. Compared with stars of this magnitude, any local luminaries in the shape of Bibliomaniacs, and in the way of book sales are of small—very small account, of which something may yet be said hereafter.

Here there might arise the question, how far the ever-

widening modern law of divorce might be extended so as to embrace the case of the confirmed Bibliomaniac? For the writer has known some, and mentions at least one noticeable case, where, notwithstanding the ever-present and pressing claims of wife and family, the books bought had to be smuggled into the house under all sorts of possible disguises, so as to conceal their acquisition from "the better half," who was sore pressed to find room for them even in the large house. "The library overflowed all the lower rooms, crawled up the staircase, and covered the walls like an erysipelas," as Sydney Smith said. And, when on her decease, with the then prospect of unlimited indulgence of buying books opened out to him; his relatives compelled him to invest in the lease of a farm for one of his sons, the stocking of which prevented further expenditure on his favourite hobby. Although an aider and abetter of this Bibliomaniac in his purchases, the writer has no qualms of conscience regarding his conduct, for on his death, and on being called on by his family to assist in the disposal of the library, by a judiciously compiled catalogue, and the assistance of a competent auctioneer, the books proved at least as good an investment as the farm did.

Good-wives are not always good judges in this matter of book-buying. As the much respected and genial Dean of the Diocese, the Rev. Dr. Walker of Monymusk, says in his *Memoir of the venerated Bishop Jolly* :—

"Poverty seldom stood between a reading clergyman and books. One well known hard reader, an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile, used always, when he had occasion to go to Aberdeen—nearly 20 miles distant—to walk there and back, book in hand. On one of these occasions his too confiding wife entrusted him with the sum of three pounds, which she had scraped together to buy a carpet. The good man took the money, read his way to Aberdeen, entered an old book-shop, invested every farthing of the three pounds and all the other loose money in his pocket on some tempting volumes, and then walked home again, borrowing eighteenpence at the neighbouring village to pay a man to wheel his books home in a barrow from the carrier. Arrived at home, he felt the full gravity of the situation. He did not dare to face his wife, all-expectant of a new carpet, with nothing but a barrowful of old books! He therefore deposited them in an out-house; then he went into the house and got the dreadful interview over as well as he could, chiefly by judicious silence, saying little about the carpet and nothing at all about the books. These he smuggled into the house volume by volume, so as not to attract attention. He got no more such commissions however."

We have a well founded suspicion that this hard reading clergyman was a constant customer of the Book-Stall where he got the books which suited him. And he was by no means a solitary specimen of his class.

The gentle submissive beings that wives generally are or ought to be, when congenial spirits meet, after the curtains are drawn and lamps are let, they will even go off to bed themselves, but do not object to their servants having to supply "sax fraughts" of hot water for the needed toddy of their lords and masters in the carouse of the long, long night. A Buchan jury of these goodwives happening to meet by themselves, took their husbands through hand in their tattle, and the verdict of precedence was accorded to her, who declared that her husband "was a gweed, weel-tempered, couthie, quate, innocent, daidlin,' drunken bodie, wi' nae ill practices about him ava." Not even the buying of books! What a picture of primeval innocence!

Indeed Scotch goodwives with all their inherent prudence and cannieness, are not good judges in the matter of book-buying. When the husband proposes the purchase of Lamb, and the goodwife assents, she is desperately disappointed that the *Essays of Elia* which she receives, cannot be turned out, roast or otherwise, for dinner; while *Hogg's Tales* are just as difficult to cook, and even if cooked, would prove as unpalatable as a dish of *Pigs' Ears*, which was once set down as the principal dish for dinner to the writer and two very dear old friends and frequent fellow travellers, at Macon in the centre of France.

And yet, really there was some virtue and nourishment even in pigs' ears as compared with what Englishman can present to their customers.

What fearful shams there are in the world was forcibly brought out in the experience of the writer, when he was applied to by a Liverpool solicitor, who ordered, and had supplied to him, the dummy backs of a hundred volumes of the most highly esteemed English law books, all apparently richly bound. They were enclosed in a glazed mahogany case, which was fitted into a door-way in his office, which he desired to conceal, and for which the key was judiciously lost. It cost him £70 for which he might have had a really valuable collection of books, which, with the exercise of his brains, might have made him a learned lawyer, and

opened up to him a way to fame and fortune ; but, the quack that he was, he chose to allow his brains to be empty and his shelves full, and his stupid world, which he had rightly gauged, took him at his own valuation and paid him, as he acknowledged more than £500 a-year for this clever dodge of his. Let it be noted, however, that the prosperity was of short duration, that the expensive habits acquired ruined him ; the infallible verdict of the whole world found him out, when he was then relegated to the loathsome place of a pettifogging attorney.

And as cognate to this temporary conquering career, although not connected with Aberdeen, except that the writer took his final two years' experimental training under him ; let us note, by way of stimulating example, the early history of Wareing Webb, an enterprising bookseller in Liverpool. Brought up in Birmingham, he was apprenticed to Mr. Wrightson, conducted himself in exemplary manner, married his employer's daughter, and was then admitted as a partner. But the young man was ambitious, and desired a wider world than even Birmingham, for the realization of his ideas. Casting about for a proper field to enter upon, he fixed upon Liverpool, the most rising seaport at the time, took a house there, in the best situation, at the rent of £300, letting the upper portion of it.

He had made a close and accurate survey of the wealth and capabilities of the place, and resolved to capture the citizens. He went to London, engaged a first-rate binder with a staff of competent assistants, bought up all the finest specimens of bookbinding then to be had in London, and opened his shop in Castle Street, with such a magnificent display of finely bound books as could not be rivalled or equalled anywhere. All the resources of modern art were lavished on their embellishment. The covers were inlaid with dainty patterns in delicate colours, the edges were tinted in red and gold, and tooled or decorated with flowers and landscapes which suddenly burst into view when the volume was opened. The show was a grand one, and was greatly appreciated by the wealthy merchants and their families, who instantly opened accounts with a man of taste like this. So far well, but when he started a brougham with his own liveried coachman, and drove up and down to his residence at Edgehill, the victory was complete. Here, said

the merchants, is a man whose acquaintance is worth cultivating—as if wealth and position were the only criterion of worth and excellence! Twelve months after, the brougham was quietly dropt, and Mr. Webb settled down into the best bookselling business in the place—the astute schemer that he was! Dr. Johnson in his savage and sarcastic manner—whose highest idea of beauty in England was either the purlieu of Fleet Street in town, a cabbage garden in the country, or, during his visit to Scotland, the inn, whether in city or glen; said that to a Scotchman, the best view in the country was the road to England. And it is quite true in every case where the Scotchman is a genuine specimen, for there, Scotchmen become trumps amidst their comrades. Their successful competition was hateful to the lower natives who reviled them—

“It’s Scottie this, and Scottie that, when ye gang o’er the border,
But heeze the bonnet o’er the hat we’ll haud the loons in order,
Steek ye your nieve, as I wad mine, the dirk is oot o’ date for’t,
And gie them yane for auld langsyne, they’ll aiblins no thank Fate
for’t!”

As Macaulay would say, “Every schoolboy knows” that if a Scotchman enlists in an English regiment he is speedily made a sergeant, if in England he gets the position of a porter he soon raises himself to be first, foreman and then a partner. That is the usual course so long as he retains his national characteristics. If, forgetting the land of his birth with its hallowed associations, he gives up these, then, indeed, and lamentable to say, even more rapidly than the English, he speedily descends into the very dregs of the population.

Like many Englishman in business, Mr. Webb had a sort of reverence for Scotchmen, especially as book-keepers, and would bear from them what he would not tolerate from others. Indeed at the time, 1843-5, every Liverpool firm of any standing had at least one Scotchman as a partner, and no firm was considered complete without its Scotch book-keeper, and an Irish porter. So much for their estimation of national characteristics, with the result that the place swarmed with young men from the north, who while clannishly keeping together, could, like Dean Ramsay’s Scotch gardener, write to their relatives at home, “that though God had not given the English over-much wit or sense, yet for a’ that

they were braw bodies to live wi'." The only rival competitors of Scottish clerks in merchants offices, were Germans with a knowledge of foreign languages.

Rising rapidly in his favour, the writer soon had charge of the keys, and the oversight of the whole staff of employees; was offered a salary of £200 a year, and was promised a partnership if he would remain. But a prospect of the road back to Scotland opened up, and proved irresistibly attractive. Scotland with its home ties, and its heathery hills, with its barren heaths, but its bonnie bonnie burnies: Scotland with its firm faith and its faithful friends, with its early loves and its dearest associations; and with the prospect of enjoying communion with nature—a thing utterly impossible in such a smoky brick-kilny place as Liverpool, where all was artificial and mere money-making was the be-all and the end-all of existence! All this was quite sufficient for the instant rejection of the offer to remain, however tempting it might be made.

The writer felt exactly as young De Quincey did at the age of sixteen, when he made such a piteous appeal to his mother to be delivered from Manchester in 1801. He said—

"In this place trade is the religion, and money is the god. Every object I see reminds me of these occupations which run counter to the bent of my nature, every sentiment I hear sounds a discord to my own . . . Perpetual light is bad; but far worse is that situation where no ray ever enters, but closed instead, and ever-during dark." (Miltonic at sixteen!)

If an English boy, bred in the lap of luxury, could feel thus, how much more must every Scottish mountain child feel his banishment "furth the kingdom";—one who in his early days herded three hundred sheep on the hills of Gartly, from whence he could see the highland hills, and with wondering anticipations of what their summits might reveal, could brood over their romantic associations;—one to whom the bleat of the lamb, the wanton cry of the lapwing, the wild whistle of the curlew, the scream of the hawk, conjoined with the sweet ripple of the burnie, which found its way by merry leaps and hide-and-seek rushes down to the Bogie, formed the very acme of delightful existence.

Nae birk or broom bloomed bonny near the city, and

memory fondly recalled the scenes of auld lang syne, and lovingly dwelt on the fact, that

“The cowslip springs sweet on the braes o’ the Ythan,
An’ heatherbells hing on the banks o’ the Dee,
An’ Don sweetly murmurs midst gowany valleys,
An’ Deveron is edged wi’ the flower and the tree.”

Never—never for one moment has he repented this choice of his, for there are some things which even wealth cannot purchase, and can be enjoyed best—nay even only—by those in a humble station of life, and in a place so favourably situated as Aberdeen and its surroundings. Has not one of our most celebrated native bards sung in deliciously Eden-like strains? thus—

“Oh, bonny are our greensward howes,
Where through the birks the burnie rows,
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,
And saft winds rusle,
And shepherd lads on sunny knows,
Blaw the blythe fusle.”

If human, reasonable beings cannot contentedly live in scenes like these—where the corn grows, and the larks sing; where, on the sandy beach, or the rocky shore, they can see the waves—

“That white-robed priesthood of the sea
That kneel and rise continually”—

where, by copse or hedgerow, by field or wood, by meadow or moorland, all within reach, they can study the ever-changing, ever wondrous and admirable works of the Great Creator; and at night can then commune in books with the master-minds of the whole wide world, so liberally provided for them—will they, or can they, ever be contented? It is much to be feared that theirs is indeed a lamentable lot, and one of their own choosing.

Lord Cockburn, writing from Liverpool to Lord Murray in 1813, says:—“I could not live here with any comfort. Indeed, I do not believe I could live anywhere out of Scotland. . . . In short, I will not live anywhere else if I can help it; nor die either; and all old Esky’s eloquence would have been thrown away in an attempt to persuade me that banishment *furth the kingdom* might be patiently endured.”

This refers to the fact that Lord Eskgrove, in sentencing a convict to this punishment, tried to console him by assuring him that "there were really places in the world, *such as England*, where a man, though out of Scotland, might live with some little comfort."

Well, well! Lord Eskgrove may have forgotten the serious deprivation of the convict from the peculiar Scottish blessings of oatmeal and the Shorter Catechism; or he may not himself have sufficiently appreciated them—but all the same, it is a striking testimony to Lord Cockburn's love of his native land. For he had only then acquired his little paradise of a home, of which Ballantine thus sweetly sings:—

"Bonnie Bonaly's wee fairy-led stream
Murmurs and sobs like a child in a dream;
Falling where silver light gleams from its breast,
Gliding through nooks where the dark shadows rest,
Flooding with music its own tiny valley—
Dances in gladness, the stream of Bonaly."

Regarding Scottish streams of all sizes, whether burnies, streamlets or rivers, the longer one lives the more he becomes persuaded that no untraveller Scotchman has the very slightest idea of the priceless privilege he enjoys in his native land, in the possession of those pure, clear crystalline streams which well out from the bosoms of the hills, or bicker down the corries and glens of Highland mountains. Northward and westward they never contaminate, but add to the purity of the ocean by their influx.

Voyaging between Orkney and Shetland the sail is as it were in ether, giving penetrating views fathoms deep down into the abyss. In shallow parts one can study the domestic life of the crabs, and the flounders at the bottom. In deeper portions the fish are seen in their hunting excursions, and one can fancy them saying to each other with tenfold more reason than the sportsman, "Come, let us kill something;"—for they must live. Far down, crowds of iridescent *Medusæ*, like ladies' parasols in Fleet Street, appear, with long fringes of *tentaculæ* streaming under them, exploring, discovering, and assimilating all that they can lay hold of, for their sustenance. From any height or projecting promontory on the west coast, Seals may almost always be seen many feet under the water, and their playful gambols and graceful

sporting make one of the most delightful sights to be seen in nature.

In a railway journey to London, however, signs of deterioration accompany our progress, especially south of the Tweed. Then every river appears blacker and fouler than the last one. So is it also if we voyage to the south. The very sea is tainted by the sewers which flow into it.

Crossing the Straits of Dover, subjected twice-a-day to the inrush and outflow of the wide Atlantic, there certainly does come a sense, oftimes more than one bargains for, of the value of pure water, if it is accompanied with a powerful inrush of wind.

But on his entry into the Continent if one expects to renew acquaintance with pure water he will be disappointed. Even in Switzerland, as to clearness and purity the Alpine streams, fresh from the glacier's breast, are exactly like the contents of a washerwoman's tub, and only after issuing from the lakes where they deposit their sediment do they equal our Scottish streams.

All over the Continent, water—pure, clear and unpolluted—is one of the greatest luxuries, and has long been so. In 1756 Frederick the Great ordered every captain of his army to provide a modicum of vinegar to be mixed with the water drunk by his soldiers, and the water is filthier now. In the low-lying countries it is practically unknown as a beverage, and is boycotted by all sensible people who care to preserve their health, and by the waiters at the hotels for more reasons than that. "What wine will you take, Sir?" said a waiter at the *table d' hote*. "No wine! bring me a glass of water!" "Water!" said the astonished waiter. "Yes! water, is it not good here?" "Why, Sir," was the reply, "I have never once tasted it, it is much too wet to drink, and even for washing it is considered dangerous unless it is filtered."

This state of matters was known to the writer, and travelling in Germany ten years ago with the late well known and much respected Dr. Beveridge, we found ourselves one day standing in the park at Weimar admiring Goethe's country house, while I deplored its position so close to the black muddy waters of the Ilm. In it he was wont to disport himself, to the terror of the passers-by, who reported that the stream was haunted by a demon. And little wonder, for, after immersion there, he must have appeared demoniac.

Passing onwards, to our great delight we came upon a little mountain stream, dashing down the hillside, seeming, "in its heavenly purity," says a writer, "trying to make atonement for guilt by the sacrifice of itself in the muddy Ilm." Involuntarily, and to the astonishment of his companion and the wonder of some of the natives, the writer took off his hat and gave three cheers in honour of that rare thing, a bonnie burnie, worthy of being Scotch.

Dr. Beveridge so loved Germany with its numerous *dolce far niente* dawdling places, that he was unwilling to hear any fault made with the country or even its streams. As we drew near to any of these he would say, "Now please to moderate the rancour of your ire,—what's the matter with the water?" To which he got the reply, "Just the matter in the water—that must be a large source of income to your professional brethren!" He subsided at once, saying, "Ah! I see you are dangerous!"

But when travelling in the hot steaming plains, where the air felt as if it had been boiled, and so deprived of its oxygen, his companion sung—

"O for a breath of the moorlands, a whiff o' the caller air!
 For the scent o' the flowering heather my very heart is sair.
 O for the sound o' the burnies that wimple o'er the lea,
 For the scent o' the browning bracken on the hillsides wavin' free."

the doctor cordially joined. And when together we penetrated the wondrous recesses of the Hartz mountains, traversed the banks of Heine's much loved Ilse, and ascended the Brocken, we got mountains and moorlands, caller air, flowering heather and bickering burnies to our heart's content.

To save enquiries, it may be mentioned that, although we dined on the summit with a numerous company of Germans in their free and boisterous manner, the only resident witches we saw were in the form of waiters in full dress and clerical neckties, which, of course accounted for the disappearance of the demons which were alleged to frequent the summit.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ Old things may thus be new again,
And as we cleanse off time the rust,
And gently wipe away the dust,
We find the old, new life retain ;
Nay, more ; the Present from the Past
Still groweth, and will ever spring
Into new life and blossoming,
As long as passing time shall last.

’Tis no dead past to those who dwell
Amid the thoughts of bye-past days,
Who thread the oft forgotten ways
Which our forefathers knew so well.
There is a winter, as we know,
That ever passeth into spring,
So voices of the past may sing,
And time’s long-buried roots shall grow.”

BOOKSELLERS’ shops are the most amusing lounges in the world—picture-galleries and promenades they beat all to nothing. They are all to be had in the utmost perfection, or very nearly so, in Edinburgh. And the booksellers themselves are never confounded in my mind with any other class of shop-keepers or traffickers. Their merchandise is the noblest in the world ; the wares to which they invite your attention are not fineries for the back, or luxuries for the belly—the inward man is what they aspire to clothe and feed, and the food and raiment they offer are tempting things. They have whole shelves loaded with wisdom ; and if you want wit, they have drawers full of it at every corner.

Such is the truthful testimony of John Gibson Lockhart (1794—1854)—the critic, novelist, and poet ; the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott ; and for twenty-eight years (1825—1853) the able editor of the *Quarterly Review*—as recorded by him in a now little-read book, *Peter’s Letters to his Kinsfolk*, published in 1819.

And if Edinburgh is thus highly favoured for the intellectual gratification of its citizens, it is equally favoured by

Nature for the gratification of the sense of beauty in its position and surroundings, while the mind, full of historical associations, calls it "mine own romantic town." Of it may be said—"Beautiful for situation, on the sides of the north, with the mountains standing around, and compactly built together." It is almost the unique specimen in Great Britain of two distinct towns compacted and cemented together; one, the product of long past times, verging into ancient history; and one created by a single impulse, the overflowing of the energy which seethed and bubbled up within the contracted closes, the narrow streets, the lofty houses, and the close surrounding walls of the old city, where—

In the olden day the Nor'-loch lay
 Beneath the castle walls;
 And heathy wastes then clothed the crests
 Now crowned with stately halls.
 From the high house-tops, or the many slopes
 On which the city stands,
 One can clearly see the deep blue sea
 With its fringe of yellow sands.

There, away in the north, the spacious Forth
 Lies glistening in the air—
 Where the ships sail by, or anchoring lie
 Like the sea-gulls resting there.
 Eastwards, the Bass with its towering mass
 Stands boldly out to view,
 While Berwick hill lies dim and still
 On the verge of the farthest blue.

Around Forth's rim, half bright, half dim,
 From the east to the western sky,
 Like a girdle of gold with heirlooms old
 The nestling villages lie.
 In sunshine or storms, bold mountain forms
 Surround the city fair,
 And mighty Bens 'mid heathery glens
 Stand cleaving the bright blue air.

The Pentlands green are southward seen,
 In the north the Ochils blue;
 While away in the west where the sun seeks rest
 Ben Lomond bounds the view.
 Dear Scottish land! so wildly grand,
 Encircled by the sea,
 Thy moors and dells, thy crags and fells
 Are dearly loved by me—
 The land of Wallace, Bruce and Knox,
 Brave land of Liberty!

The picture of the worthies depicted by Lockhart is vivid and interesting. You are taken into the booksellers' shops, and the premises and proprietors described in a familiar homely fashion, and contrasted with the famous London publishers of last century—"the audacious hook-nosed Edmund Curll, whom Swift tormented; old Jacob Tonson, with his squint, and his two left legs as described by Dryden; Lintot, with his orange tawny waistcoat;" Dunton, with a host of others.

And it is quite impossible for anyone to rise from the perusal of *Peter's Letters*, *Constable's Memoirs*, and other books treating of the period, without coming to the conclusion that it was indeed very little to be wondered at that Scotchmen should have a "guid conceit o' themselves," and were very fairly entitled to have this; and that it would have been unpatriotic not to have asserted and maintained it firmly and vigorously, as Scotchmen have always patriotically done, sacrificing their own proverbial modesty for the sake of upholding and magnifying their country.

For the Renaissance or new birth of literature which has made this century what it is, if it began in the last century with Cowper (1731—1800)—the poet of common life—and was brought to its culmination by our national poet, Burns (1759—1796): there is as little doubt that the *Edinburgh Review*, which commenced in 1802, was the inauguration of an entirely new era in literature. And here it may be said that but for his connection with it, and (omitting the Shorter Catechism, which, it is to be supposed, he did not adequately appreciate) the Spartan fare which he frankly acknowledged, Sydney Smith would never have been recognised as the wittiest man in England. Why, all his wit was derived from his diet of oatmeal and his residence among Scotchmen, and the many merry jests he threw off against their country may be safely taken as an illustration of the proverb that "nippin' and scartin's Scotch folk's woin'," and that knowing this he indulged in it to please them.

For was it not his own proposition, as one of its originators, that the motto for the then projected *Edinburgh Review* should be—"Tenui musam meditamus avena," which being interpreted simply means this—"We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal." There can be no manner of doubt that, if he had omitted the word "little," and had taken an ample

supply of it—always, of course, *along with its proper accompaniment*—then he would not only have acquired the distinction of being the wittiest man in England, but also that of the whole world.

If Sydney Smith, greatly appreciating the warm hearts and bright intellects of its people, styled Edinburgh “energetic and unfragrant,” this was praise as compared with the “pleasant but detestable” London. If in his waggery he advised Government to persecute the Clapham Sect (Evangelicals), and the Methodists, yet he suggested that a bishop, or at least a dean, might be advantageously killed now and then by a railway collision! His own rising in the world was entirely ignored! Such was his wit.

During the first half of the century, the Scottish metropolis was brilliant with luminaries of learning, and amidst the bright stars of that northern constellation, men who have left their lasting footprints on the sands of time, we need only mention the names of Scott, Wilson, Jeffrey, Lockhart, Sydney Smith, Tytler, Burton, Masson, Carlyle, Chalmers, M'Crie, De Quincey, Hogg, besides a host of others who trod the streets and were familiar to the citizens; but at the annual ecclesiastical assemblies, all the eminent men of Scotland were then gathered together. Under the editorship of M'Laren, Ritchie and Russel, the *Scotsman* was to Scotland what the *Times* was to England. William and Robert Chambers conducted a *Journal* which was and is still unsurpassed for merit and popularity. *Tait's Magazine*, up to its stoppage in 1846, worthily maintained a high place in literary ability, while the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* yet retain this amidst the keenest rivalry. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* and Chambers's *Cyclopædia* still retain their supremacy over all other similar works, and their proprietors mean to retain it.

Yet previous to that time, and subsequent to the Union, Edinburgh had so sunk into the position of a provincial town, that the focussing of the light of these stars in the way of the publication of their works was almost invariably left to London publishers. In almost every department of literature Scottish authors went to London for their publishers; so much so, that these London men began to think they had a vested right in the products of all the best Scottish brains.

Luckily, they did not appropriate Burns. His poems might have been hawked about not only throughout the *Row*, but all over London; for the dialect in which they were written would have been as unintelligible to native Londoners as the language of the Chimpanzees, as noted down by Dr. Garner. How different at present do they value the literature of the *kailyard*! Yet, nevertheless, the early Edinburgh editions bore on their titles that they were "printed for T. Cadell, Jun., and W. Davies, London"—and only after them "for William Creech, Edinburgh." So low had Edinburgh sunk! When in 1770 there was word of Adam Smith going up to London to arrange for the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*, his friend David Hume wrote him, "How can you so much as entertain a thought of publishing a book full of reason, sense and learning to those wicked, abandoned madmen?" So low was his estimation of the English!

The first Edinburgh bookseller who detected the enormous waste to Scotland, and especially to Edinburgh, of the fertilising stream which was being diverted away from it by this practice of publishing was Charles Elliot, the successor in business of William Sands, whose daughter he married.

Mr. Elliot was the first Scottish publisher who bought copyrights. And not only did he purchase them at high prices, but, unlike his fellow-townsmen, he retained them in his own hands, refusing to sell shares even to the London publishers, as had almost always previously been the case; for the publication of a book was then considered much too serious a venture to be undertaken singly. He thus met with much jealousy among his brethren in Edinburgh, and the London publishers were so enraged at him that they entered into combination against him, refusing to keep his books, and this led him to open a shop in the Strand (1784-5) where for ten years he published the best Scottish works of the period, and made for himself name, fame, and fortune. Not only did he stimulate literary men by the prices he paid them, but he produced a new spirit amongst all the printers of Scotland.

Up to that time, and since the publication of the *Aberdeen Breviary* in 1510, under the cruel, blighting, but seemingly inevitable law of competition, the art of tasteful printing had almost disappeared, and every year it was degenerating, be-

cause everything was sacrificed for cheapness. The productions of Baskerville of Birmingham, and Foulis of Glasgow still retained some of the grace and beauty of ancient printing, but the books now issued showed that the race of printers had become little better than the hod-men and bricklayers in architecture—simply carrying out the mean and sordid ideas of the projectors. Charles Elliot was the publisher of the ten-volume edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which, at the time, was considered a vast undertaking. The principal contributor to this work was James Tytler, an eccentric character, described by Burns as “a mortal who, though he drudged about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, and a sky-lighted hat, etc., yet that same unknown drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot’s pompous *Encyclopædia*, which he composed at half-a-guinea a week.” He lodged in a washerwoman’s house, and wrote on a tub turned upside down; and his copy sent to the office was paid for as delivered, the messenger bringing back to him the proceeds in the shape of food. Charles Elliot offered one thousand guineas for the copyright of *Smellie’s Philosophy of Natural History*, and fifty guineas for each subsequent edition, the largest sum ever previously given in Edinburgh for a single quarto volume, and that before a single page was written. After him, Robert Clark, 1825-34, the senior partner of the now famous firm, received so large and important contracts from the London publishers that, after Tennyson’s death, they kept twenty-nine presses at work on his poems. His first great success was in getting the printing of *The Waverley Novels* when A. & C. Black got the property in 1841.

Tytler’s payment did not betoken a liberal master, and it certainly seems a most inadequate return for the services rendered; but it is an apt illustration of this queer world, and its still queerer inhabitants—a thorough falsification of all the rules of political and social economy, as these are proclaimed at present. Had he been paid double, the work produced would likely have been less than a half, and might probably have been reduced to even less than nothing, if that were possible. It was the very paucity of the pay that produced the powerful results, and—melancholy to say—any increase to James Tytler would have been ruinous to him, and very unwise therefore in his employers.

Charles Elliot deserves more hearty recognition from Scottish booksellers—who are simply the freely and popularly elected representatives of the most cultured Scotchmen—than he has yet received. In his day, and by his action, he proved himself—the bright *Northern* star—the shadow of good things to come, and the forerunner of a yet still greater Scottish benefactor—Archibald Constable. “He [Elliot] was tall in person, of a mild, gentlemanly appearance, and was a well-bred, accommodating, and painstaking man of business, enjoying the good opinion and esteem of all the literary men of Scotland,” according to Constable’s description of him.

And, notwithstanding his strong Scottish proclivities, which led him to keep to Scotland what was so peculiarly its own product—the works of its authors (“*oor ain fishguts to oor ain sea-maws*”), he and his family were so much respected that, in 1807, Mr. John Murray of Albemarle Street, the then most distinguished London publisher, married his sister, and so there was thus sent a strong streak of Scottish blood into that very eminent firm of publishers, who were the electric lights of the time. And if the honoured firm has now fallen into the somewhat sere and yellow leaf of autumn—somewhat superseded by the bright summer blaze of Macmillan & Co.—we, Scotchmen, may well retain “*oor guid conceit o’ oorsells*,” and take no small pride in the thought that this firm is fundamentally and essentially a Scottish one; and, uniting English wealth and enterprise with Scottish caution, blooms well, blossoms brilliantly, and yields such a wealth of fair fruitage that it fertilizes, not only their own fields, but the ever-widening fields of the whole world’s literature.

In a still more especial manner should Scottish printers honour Charles Elliot, who compelled them to enter into competition with their London rivals as to the quality of their work; and that they did with such success that, ever more and more, the most acute London publishers are getting their works printed either in Edinburgh or in Aberdeen, with great and satisfactory mutual advantage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“Wherefore set thy mind
The race to know? the generations are
As of the leaves; so also of mankind,
As the leaves fall, not withering in the wind,
And others are put forth and spring descends;
Such on the earth the race of men we find,
Each in his order a set time attends,
One generation rises and another ends.”

Homer's Iliad [tr. Worsley.]

IN 1633, Aberdeen with its population of 8000 inhabitants had only one bookseller, David Melville, to supply its wants in the shape of mental lamplighting.

Two hundred years afterwards while its population had increased to about 60,000—and it had 12 *real* lamplighters, 45 scavengers, 8 day patrol (policemen), and 47 night watchers, there were then thirty-five regular booksellers, besides a number of other parties of whose miscellaneous businesses books and stationery formed a part, yet so small a part, that they were not recognised as being in the *trade*.

Restrictions as to teachers opening schools in the city without permission of the Town Council had become a thing of the past. And the privilege of exclusive trading, possessed by the Incorporated Trades, was being questioned and litigated, and, although their monopoly was carefully preserved by a clause in the Reform Act, yet the old-fashioned and long contrived age of monopoly was practically over.

That monopoly and power was far more extensive than any one, who has not examined their records, can conceive; and is a striking proof of the tyranny exercised, and the rigour with which it was imposed on those who did not submit to the powers that were. Their monopoly of trading was but one thing, but at the present day it would be felt intolerable. Hardly a single commodity came into Aberdeen for sale by sea or land but had first to be inspected by the Deacon of the craft, who *fixed the price*, and could purchase at this price all that the members of his craft chose,

and only after that was the remainder allowed to be sold in the open market. By their courts they regulated not only the conduct of their members, but also that of their wives, journeymen, servants and apprentices, and were largely the police of the period. Over all these they had a whip hand—they could assist the obsequious by loans from their funds, and could punish the rebellious not only by exclusion from their privileges, but also from their charities, for then every craft was its own parochial board, and amongst them they had the control of by far the largest proportion of the inhabitants.

That same Reform movement which the Incorporated Trades so actively promoted, went very much farther than they ever expected or wished, and in 1846, the Act then passed, by one “fell swoop, swept away exclusive privileges and monopolies which they had enjoyed for nearly seven centuries.”

Booksellers having never sought or enjoyed any monopoly, the easy and cleanly trade was open to all and sundry, was largely experimented in by young and old, and was successful or not, mainly according to the intelligence, the active business habits, and the probity of the experimenters. And so far from any of the members of the *regular trade* resenting the intrusion of the smaller fry into the business, it was all the other way; for, being generally, at first, unable to open any accounts direct with the publishers and wholesale stationers, they were found to be convenient outlets for the overplus or faded stock of the regular booksellers. Not only so, but at that time of awakening mental activity, when fresh blood and new ideas were continually welling up, they acted as arteries in the body politic, carrying literature to remote quarters, and so saturating and supplying the circle of their customers, that they induced increased demand, which found its way back as in veins to the source of supply—the increase of knowledge ever demanding more.

Sixty years ago the pushing of business was at a very low pressure in Aberdeen; flowing naturally and simply, and requiring to be tapped for an increase. Now it is at high pressure with superheated steam. Then travellers from southern publishers rarely went beyond Aberdeen, and called there only on a select number of booksellers, some of whom thus had a half-yearly opportunity of making up their

stock, but during the intervening period generally getting their wants supplied by those of their more active neighbours who got weekly parcels from Edinburgh or London; for communication was then both tedious and expensive, generally by sea. As an illustration of how business was conducted, take this one example. A bookseller of some considerable social standing in the city, a most genial and lovable man, as was evident from the numerous cronies he had—and his shop, which was in a central position, was seldom without some one or more of them present; but merry jests and much laughter were the principal commodities in which he dealt, and were far more plentiful than books or business. He had a bit *loonie* for his sole assistant, who had ample time to keep the shop tidy, and to decorate the window with some nice showy coloured and attractive prints. The master kept his regular hours like a bank manager, never being seen at business before 10 o'clock, and after dining with a cronie, strolling from 3 to 6 p.m., and always acting as if the public did not patronise him, it was their fault, and not his. When, however, a small book was ordered from him, he considered it an event so important, that his cronies and neighbours were made aware of it by his enquiries as to whether they had ever heard of this book. And they not being very literary, and he not getting any satisfaction from them, he went off then post haste to the Book-Stall. All there knew instantly on his entrance that something very important to him was on the tapis—his look of deep anxiety showed it at once.

“Do you know such and such a book?” he said.

“Oh yes, it is quite a common book.”

“What is the selling price of it?”

“Five shillings.”

“Have you got a copy?”

“Yes, lots of them.”

“Well! I am so relieved”—and his anxious face relaxed and beamed with pleasure, as he retired triumphantly with a copy under his arm. How such a man ever found himself a bookseller—and how being so, he did not acquire a know-
of his trade, which he practised for twenty years, is simply inexplicable. It is not of such material that successful tradesmen are made. Of all the varied lessons which life gives the opportunity of learning, there is none so easy to acquire as

that of "how *not* to do it." "It requires neither teaching, effort, self-denial, industry, patience, perseverance, nor judgment." Only let a man take things easy and he will very easily acquire the art of failure. Attention to minor matters—falsely so called—is the secret of success, and diligence is the mother of "good-luck."

Irreproachable in speech and conduct, it was no wonder that cronies frequented his shop and *killed his business*. In it the gossip of the town circulated, and many a witty saying and waggish trick originated in the conclaves held there. But if he was not successful in business, he was so in winning the regard, nay, even the esteem and love, of his brethren in trade. And the place to see him at his best was in the Lemon Tree Tavern, with his feet under the mahogany at the Bookseller's Annual Supper. What the Chapter Coffee House was to the booksellers in Paternoster Row, that the Lemon Tree was to those in Aberdeen.

A bookseller, like a poet, should be born not bred: one who, if he does not, and cannot sell his books, should at least read and master their contents for himself—then, whether successful in business or not, he has made a gain of which no circumstances in after life can ever deprive him.

Not possessing the gift of song himself, this man of taste was fond of music, and it is said that on coming out from hearing the Oratorio performed at the Musical Festival in 1834, and meeting Mr. John Ramsay, he was expatiating to him in glowing terms as to the delightful and heavenly performance, when Ramsay, who had all Dr. Johnson's gift of growling, and saying hard and bitter things, said: "Well, well, I would advise you to hear it as often as you possibly can, for there will be no music of that kind in the place where you are going to." This argued a close friendship between the two, for it was a remarkable trait in Ramsay's character that his best friends were always the most severely spoken of. In this respect he resembled Haydon the painter, of whom Macaulay says, "whether you struck him or stroked him, starved him or fed him, he snapped at your hand in just the same way." On the death of Mr. Ross the auctioneer, upholsterer, and paper-hanger, and hence known as "Batter," who left his estate for educational purposes, and at whose table Ramsay was a frequent guest, he, dis-

appointed at the disposal of the estate—composed this epitaph for him—

Beneath these stones lies *Batter's* bones,
 Who died of strong potatoes,
 To beggar's weans he left his means,
 To beggary his relations.

Accustomed to the literary society in the Book-Stall, it was with no small pleasure that the writer shook hands with Mrs. Ronald on his first admission to this reunion, and seated at table made acquaintance with his fellow tradesmen in their hours of relaxation, when "Wit walked the round and music filled the air." And as he was the youngest who attended that meeting, it affords grounds for reflection that he is now the sole survivor of the company then assembled, and in giving these reminiscences he consoles himself for their trivial character by the fact that personal traits of character, even gossip if true, reflects a genuine light, and assists in the formation of a serious judgment.

Lewis Smith (1803-1880) made a very admirable chairman. He was then in the prime of life and had been in business for sixteen years (since 1822). During this time, by his shrewd business habits, he had built up an excellent business, and by his *bonhomie* and social qualities became the associate of the best literary men of Aberdeen. At his shop, if on business bent, or in his hospitable home on pleasure and conviviality, such men as Dr. Joseph Robertson, Dr. John Hill Burton, Dr. Pratt, Dr. John Ogilvie, Dr. Kilgour, John Ramsay, and others were frequently to be met. All these were contributors to his *Aberdeen Magazine*, 1831-32, and it is little wonder that in the *Selections* from it published in 1878, he should quote Macaulay's saying, "that men who distinguish themselves in early youth above their contemporaries, almost always keep to the end of their lives the start which they have gained." Mr. Smith himself was a striking illustration of this. He commenced business at the early age of nineteen, and practically adopted as his rule of business the Breadalbane motto of "Birse yont," or that of another family, "Thou shalt want ere I want." The very essence of activity, his mind resembled a jar charged with electricity which flashed and sparkled at the touch, and gave violent shocks to his brethren in trade by the innovations he

made in the old-fashioned mode of conducting business, especially in the large discounts he gave.

Not repeating here what has been said of him in previous articles, we mention that as the local agent for the Messrs Chambers of Edinburgh, and accustomed to deal with large quantities of periodicals and books, he turned his attention to the wholesale trade. He saw that the Northern counties were in danger of being invaded by travellers from Edinburgh and Glasgow, and stepping in just in time, he forestalled them in the North, and boldly and successfully met them afterwards in their own fields in the South with goods manufactured in Aberdeen. Ruskin's description of the business habits of his own father—"with instant perception and decision in business questions; with principles of dealing which admitted of no infraction, and involved neither anxiety nor concealment . . . and the attention shown in travelling for orders himself," is a very apt description of Mr. Smith's habits.

He was indeed a modern bookseller, an excellent illustration of the changed times since the period when the term Bibliopole implied a knowledge—if not of the contents of all the books he sold—yet at least of the commercial value of all the editions of the old standard classical authors. Old books he knew nothing of, and cared as little for them. In this respect he was in entire contrast to the then proprietors of the Book-Stall. And so when from his high standing in the trade and in society, and from his excellent business habits, he was appointed by the executors of Mr. Frost as joint valuator of their stock, they made an unfortunate choice for their interests, for, greatly to the surprise of the writer, he declared that so little did he estimate the value of their old books, that he would not pay even the cartage for the whole of them. And when the writer, who knew them well, and had seen them standing on their shelves arranged in fair and goodly ranks in No. 71 Union Street, and not as Mr. Smith saw them, huddled together in boxes or lying in heaps on the floor in the confined premises of No. 77—when he ventured to name a price, Mr. Smith looked amazed, thought it far too extravagant, and named a lesser sum, which was of course gladly accepted by the writer.

The former proprietors seemed to hold the opinion, ascribed to Alphonso of Castile, that "Age was a recom-

mendation in four things—old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust, and old books to read,” and with their conservative ideas and habits made no allowance for the changed times, the spread of education, the increased activity of printers and publishers, the production of new and better editions of the classics, and the alteration of public taste as to the sizes of books ; in consequence of which the ponderous folios, the delight of many others than Charles Lamb, had suffered “a sea change,” and were considered objectionable in the estimation of readers. Times were indeed changed since *Friar Jerome*, the creation of the poet Aldritch—

“ thought of those great tomes
 With clamps of gold—the convent’s boast—
 How they endured while kings and realms
 Past into darkness, and were lost :
 How they had stood from age to age,
 Clad in their yellow vellum mail,
 ’Gainst which the Pagan’s godless rage,
 The Vandal’s fire could naught avail :
 Though heathen sword-blows fell like hail,
 Though cities ran with Christian blood,
 Imperishable they had stood !
 They did not seem like books to him,
 But Heroes, Martyrs, Saints--themselves
 The things they told of—not mere books
 Ranged grimly on the oaken shelves.”

Indeed so depreciated had the old folio volumes of theology become—being nearly unsaleable at auctions, that booksellers who had no room to stow them, and auctioneers who could not get proper or even any offers for them at a sale, thought the best way of disposing of them would be to send them all up to the prison, and get the prisoners sentenced to be compelled to read them, and then to be examined as to their contents, for the improvement of their morals and habits, as the monks of old. This certainly would be a punishment equal to that of the tread-mill, as great at least, and producing much more beneficial results, in the way of cultivating the art of reading and morality at the same time “on a little oatmeal.” Times are changed since folios were chained to the walls, and Dr. Johnson’s remark, that “books that you may carry to the fireside, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all,” is worth remembering, and is being largely acted on.

In the collection thus handed over to the new firm, there were many rare and curious volumes which only needed to be properly introduced into society, and thus get the chance of meeting with a sweetheart, who, appreciating their merits, would hasten to secure them for his own possession. There were numerous manuscript volumes—one of Spalding's *Memorialls* complete (which Dr. John Stuart eagerly purchased, and one incomplete) but as the facetious Provost would term it, still more valuable—"an everlasting copy—without beginning or end." As Sir James Stephen says—"What Antiquarian, worthy of the name, would be arrested . . . by distant barriers, when beyond them a whole Harem of Virgin MSS. wooed his embrace, glowing, like so many Houris, with immortal youth and rich in charms, which increased with each revolving century?" There were stately volumes in stamped vellum bindings, the productions of celebrated printers in continental towns, who lived centuries ago. There were books from the presses of the Stephenses and the Plantins, many Aldines with their bookmark of the Anchor and Dolphin; lots of Elzevirs, with the Sphere; some Frobens, with the Twining Serpents and the Dove; and a few of the Venetian Sessa family printers with the Cat and Mouse. The collection was the unsold portion of the many libraries which the Provost had purchased from professors, clergymen, and others in the neighbourhood. And certainly it tended to give one a very high idea of the learning of their umquhile possessors, while the large number of French books spoke in volumes, plainly of that former period, when the French were looked upon as fast friends and allies against "oor auld enemies" the English.

Mr. Smith's abhorrence of "rubbish" like this stood the writer in good stead mentally, and very materially. Infected by the spirit of the times, of which Mr. Smith was a revolutionary and go-ahead exponent, the writer saw that if the Book-Stall was to keep well to the front in the race with modern requirements, it was necessary to get rid of this old stock, to make room for new articles in demand. And the demands of that time and of the present day are so multifarious and so exacting, that booksellers had then to choose between dealing either in old books entirely, or discard them altogether—even libraries had to be given up, being swamped by Mudie. So, by judiciously allowing a few bargains to

Bibliomaniacs, and by informing others, there was soon a swarm of collectors buzzing about the Stall like bees round a hive, with the result that there were more volumes sold in six months than had been sold for the previous twenty years—greatly to Mr. Brown's astonishment and gratification, for he sorely grudged to see the condition in which his old favourites were kept, being simply looked on as lumber. After greatly gratifying many local book-buyers by the bargains they got (one such, the Rev. Mr. Agnew, then of the Free East Church, sending numerous large boxfuls of them to fill the shelves in his father's splendid library at Lochnaw); supplying some budding licentiates of the church with folios, the very sight of which would deter any Presbytery from a severe examination; furnishing an English clergyman with a series of folio volumes of the Fathers in stamped vellum, which, he said, ought at least to secure him a Bishopric; giving Archibald Courage—a genuine specimen of a last century bookseller—his pick, and keeping a few beautiful specimens of typography and binding as show articles, the last of the 30,000 volumes were sold to dealers at sixpence a volume. And so ended "the revolution settlement" in the Stall.

But even this clearance did not free the stock of much of what was felt to be heavy encumbrances, and was taken over as such, owing to the great change of opinion produced by the changing times. There were huge bundles of books in quires, that is in their naked sheets, only fit for waste, and there were boxfuls of books in boards, some representing the crushed hopes and blighted aspirations of unsuccessful authors; superseded editions of school books, dictionaries and treatises, the fragments of an earlier world; and sermons once so popular, that the district was already saturated with them, the wreckage of a past tide,—the unsaleable accumulation of upwards of half a century.

The grocer can always mix his goods and thus get them off his hands. The draper with an overstock of fashionable dresses can afford to sell them next season as petticoats, etc., but books will not mix with others, and the bookseller—credited by budding authors with unlimited powers of forcing off his work, and raising him to fame and fortune—is as powerless to command the flowing tide of popularity as King Canute with all his courtiers—or Mrs. Partington, with her

mop, was to stay the Atlantic. And when the tide has ebbed, and left the stranded debris as lumber on the shelves, the bookseller has to employ the tobacconist, the butter-seller, or the trunk-maker to clear them off—for they would not burn.

Of some books of which there were hundreds, although copies were freely offered at very low prices, the sales might amount to only two or three per annum, but by sending a few copies to book-sales, the simplicity of book buyers was shown by their frequently selling for double that at which they were offered in the Book-Stall.

Amidst the "rubbish" which Mr. Smith declined to look at, were boxfuls of bound volumes of a *Defence of Church Establishments* by Dr. C. J. Brown, both unsaleable and unburnable, bulky and burdensome. During the controversy in the Free Church on the proposed union with the United Presbyterian Church, Dr. Brown was twitted with having changed his expressed opinions as given in this volume. With great nobility of character and candour, he at once admitted the authorship, and added that of no act was he now more ashamed, and that long since he had seen and felt the publication to be one of his youthful follies.

This was quite enough for his resentful antagonists, and caused instant enquiry for the long-lost, dead and buried book. The stock was soon found out, and a well-known Laird in the west, whose purse was at the service of the reactionaries, became the purchaser from the delighted vendors of three hundred copies, which were gratuitously distributed post-free all over the country and specially in the Highlands.

The intended spiteful proceeding did no harm to the author, and did much good to the owners of the Stall. But it produced the very opposite effect from that intended by its distribution, softening the hearts of the recipients and making them more willing to follow Dr. Brown in his changed views. The sale-day of this white elephant has always figured as a red-letter one in the Book-Stall calendar.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ Merely a round of shadow shows—
Shadow shapes that are born to die ;
Like a light that sinks—like a wind that goes,
Vanishing on to the By-and-By,
Life, sweet life, as she flutters by
‘ Minishing, failing, night and day,
Cries with a loud and bitter cry—
· Everything passes, passes away.’

Who has lived as long as he chose ?
Who so confident as to defy
Time, the fellest of mortal foes ?—
Joins in his armour who can spy ?
Where’s the fool, will, nor flinch nor fly ?
Where’s the heart that aspires the fray ?
His battle-wager ’tis vain to try—
Everything passes, passes away.”

WHEN, in 1805, Scott began his novel of *Waverley* ; or, ‘ *Tis Sixty Years Since*, his intention was to carry the minds of his readers back for two generations, and to make them live and breathe in the stormy troublous period of the last Scottish rebellion of 1745.

Waverley was the fiction of his story, but *Sixty Years Since* was the reality. And this reality, carried out in scenery, in characters with their words and actions, so saturating the story and dominating his narrative, is so apparently real, that his creations have acquired an earthly immortality. Monuments are but poor memorials, being ever acted on by the elemental and inevitable tendency to decay and destruction, so are all paintings, and that in spite of the utmost care, which does so much to preserve them. One of the masterpieces of the world, Leonard da Vinci’s, The *Cenacolo* (The Lord’s Supper) in Milan, in which the face of our Saviour—so full of grief, yet also so full of infinite tenderness and pity, has never yet been equalled in painting—has been retouched again and again, and is evidently scaling off from the stucco wall, so fast, that

in a few years not one touch of the original artist will remain. And in spite of all the care which can be bestowed on them, Turner's magnificent pictorial creations, which are to be seen in the National Gallery, in Abbotsford, and elsewhere—with their glorious tints of colour, and their brilliant dreams of a light, which "never shone on sea or land," but were only conceivable in a highly poetic and artistic mind, are all fast fading, and touched with the tooth of Time, threatening to pass away, and become the merest "shadow of a shade."

" Art builds on sand ; the works of pride
And human passion, change and fall ;
But that which shares the Life of God
With Him surviveth all."

Generations of mothers and nurses sow seeds in infantile minds, which last while life endures, and spontaneously spring up in the succeeding race. Blind Homers and Highland bards carry on the warrior's traditions from age to age, powerfully influencing and moulding the minds of their hearers.

But when these fleeting and airy words—potent indeed for a generation or two—are embodied in books, then, indeed, nothing here below is so imperishable. For the solitary infants who were lulled to sleep by the nursery rhyme, the old ballad or the fairy story; for the rough retainers who thronged the Baron's hall, and were stimulated to doughty deeds of arms by the song of the minstrel—were now exchanged for a wider audience—that of the whole wide world, and the words were now engraved on tablets more lasting than brass; and ever as the centuries roll on, time writes no wrinkle on the forms and faces of the characters so vividly depicted in *Waverley*. Even now, and for us Baron Bradwardine still inhabits Tully-Veolan; for us, fair Flora MacIvor yet touches her harp with skilful gentle fingers, and sings her Jacobite songs to generations who respond not; for us Colonel Gardiner is still reading the service at the head of his regiment; Bailie Macwheeble is even to-day dancing a highland fling and tossing his best wig out of the window; and Prince Charlie lives to us in all the grace of his youth, untouched by the sottishness of his old age.

With the prestige which Scotland presently holds in the

Empire ; with its premiers, cabinet ministers and Governmental officials ; with the eager desire of English, American, and even Indian millionaires to secure the smallest domicile, a deer forest or a grouse-shooting estate in the country, and the anxiety felt and expressed by the most distinguished men to claim kinship with any of its clans, we are too apt to forget the greatly changed relations between these now, and those subsisting one hundred and fifty years ago.

The benefits of the union of the kingdoms in 1707 were not all on one side. Truly, as Lord Cockburn says, "many a bright feather would be plucked from England's wing, were the Scotch part of its plumage withdrawn."

This was particularly pertinent of late and is still ; when the saying of the Scotch gardener at Kew is true : 'Bein' far awa frae hame and amang the English I fin' nae great faut wi' them ; but I maun say that for gardeners, schoolmaisters, ministers or statesmen, or in fac' for onything needin' head-wark, they maun aye come to us i' the north.'" As to schoolmasters hear what Ruskin says—when at the age of fifteen he went to the school of the Rev. Thomas Dale at Peckham, "I carried my old grammar with me and in a modest but surely justifiable pride expecting some encouragement and honour for the accuracy with which I could repeat, on demand, some hundred and sixty pages of it. But Mr. D. threw it back to me, with a fierce bang upon his desk, saying (with accent of seven-times heated scorn)—'That's a Scotch thing !' These four words contained so much insult, pain and loosening of my respect for my parents, love of my father's country, and honour for its worthies" that he lost evermore the respect of his distinguished pupil. During all this century Scotland has supplied the English with the most popular Grammars, and at present with the most popular literature.

When Edward I. placed in Westminster Abbey the coronation stone taken from Scoon, he was helping to fulfil the old tradition, that wherever that stone rests the Scots would possess the dominating power. Sir Charles Dilke has recorded his wonder that the popular name of Britain abroad is not Scotland, so numerous are the Scots in every outlying part of the British Empire. So also Sir William Besant declares that it is owing to the influence of John Knox (with the Scotch etceteras) that wherever the pilgrim turns

his feet, he finds Scotchmen in the fore-front—premiers in every colony, professors in every university, preachers, lawyers, editors, mechanics, everything, and everywhere.

No doubt but that by the Union the smaller and poorer kingdom benefited materially by the closer alliance with the wealthier one; gaining by slow degrees, with much effort on one part, and with great reluctance on the other, a more perfect amalgamation than was at first contemplated. But no doubt also, this more perfect alliance educated Englishmen. During last century Scotland had been deprived of its independence, its nationality, and its parliament, and these had all been drawn to England, and Scottish members had to reside in London; and so Edinburgh lost much of its prestige as a capital, and had to submit to become a provincial town, to the manifest loss of the country by the absenteeism of its influential men. What was Scotland's loss was England's gain. But mark the result. When in 1762, greatly to the mortification of the English, Lord Bute—a Scotchman—became the Court favourite and the First Minister of George III., acquiring the position, as has been said, by his abilities as a whist-player—the English courtiers immediately got their eyes opened as to the dangers which might arise if these Scotchmen might supplant them in the royal favour. And so Bute was hated with a rage of which there have been few examples in history, and, says Thackeray, was the butt for everybodys' abuse.

Then when Wilkes by the publication of the *North Briton* drove Bute from office, local influence raised such a storm in England against all Scotchmen, that for nearly fifty years they were almost excluded from all the principal offices of Government. The jealousy of the *predominant partner* was excessive, and broke out in loud language; and amongst other manifestations of this jealousy there was published *The Prophecy of Famine: a Scottish Pastoral*: by the Rev. Charles Churchill, 1731-64, who gave currency to the general opinion, describing Scotland thus:—

Far as the eye could reach no tree was seen,
Earth clad in russet, scorn'd the lively green.
The plague of locusts, they, secure defy,
For in three hours a grasshopper must die.
No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
But the chameleon who can feed on air:

No birds, except as birds of passage, flew ;
 No bee was known to hum, no dove to coo,
 No streams in amber smooth, as amber clear
 Were seen to glide, or heard to warble here,
 Rebellion's spring which through the country ran
 Furnished with bitter draughts the steady clan.
 No flowers embalmed the air, but one *white rose*,
 Which on the *tenth of June* by instinct blows—
 By instinct blows at noon, and when the shades
 Of drizzly eve prevail, by instinct fades.

And so on ; but that this was rapturously received by the London public in all its laughable extravagance, and in its pungent satirical slander and falsehood, only shows the crass ignorance of the English, their hatred of Lord Bute and his country, and their dread of another Jacobite rising ; and this ignorance and prejudice continued long. Even in 1752, after a residence in Edinburgh, Goldsmith could express himself, " Shall I tire you with a description of this unfruitful country, where I must lead you over their hills, all brown with heath, or their valleys scarcely able to feed a rabbit ? Man alone seems to be the only creature who has arrived to the natural size on this poor soil." But this was no small praise, and not without merit was the training, which three years after enabled him to travel on foot over the Continent as far as Padua, and returning through France without a shilling in his pocket. Arriving penniless in England, he feelingly describes it as a country, " where being born an Irishman was sufficient to keep a man unemployed." Dr. Johnson himself said to Miss Burney, the authoress of *Evelina*, " My dear ! what makes you so fond of the Scotch ? I don't like you for that—I hate these Scotch, and so must you—make your hero what you will but a Scotchman."

And Dr. Johnson's hatred of the Scotch was shared by others, for during last century Scottish Students who attended Oxford had hard times ; were treated unkindly, and as they thought unjustly, so that several students, like Adam Smith, thought the best prospect in England was the road back to Scotland.

All this, and especially in the light of the present time, and with the well-known pendulum-like vacillations of the English mind, is sufficiently amusing to be worth recording. But even although it had been truer than it was, Scotchmen would not have been the true-hearted lovers of " *puir auld*

Scotland" not to have been resented and contradicted. Hear the Shepherd of the *Noctes*. Scotland, says he, is "No sae naturally poor's it looks like, sir. In the Kerse o' Gowrie the sile's fifty yards deep—a fine rich broon black mould, that shoots up wheat and beans twenty feet high; and even in the Forest, what wi' the decay o' great auld aik-trees, and what not, there's sic a deposit, that in diggin' wells, you hae to gang doon amaist to the verra centre-pint o' the yerth, afore ye can get quit o' the loam, and jingle wi' yer pick again' the grevvel. The Heelans to be sure's geyan stany—perfekly mountauneous a' thegither—but there, sir, you hear the lowing o' cattle on a thousan' hills—and the river-fed glens (naturally puir indeed!) arena they rich wi' the noblest o' a' craps?—craps o' men, sir, (to say naething the noo o' the snooded lasses) that, 'Plaided and plumed in their tartan array,' hae frichtened the French oot o' their senses time and place without number, and immemorial, frae Fontenoy to Waterloo?"

Passing without notice the other creations of Scott's brain, which illustrated the history of the world during a period of nearly one thousand years, and brought his readers into living and vivid contact with all the phases of the ever-changing society, and giving them such an acquaintance with history as no previous generation had ever acquired, and not only dispelling the ignorance of the English, but crowning the land of his birth with a lustre and a glory which ever since has grown brighter and brighter—we pass on to relate the effects of his publication of *Waverley*.

'Tis sixty years since Scott died. Before his day, as has been well said, "it was a period in the world's history when the wheels of time, not impelled by steam or driven by electricity, ran slowly along ruts of sweet old-fashioned leisure and had not begun to break and burst into flame with the speed of modern energy. There was leisure to grow wise and shelter to grow ripe. The imagination had time to absorb its materials, and a large nature had space and time to develop its powers."

For whatever Great Britain—but still more, for whatever Scotland is, we are greatly indebted to Scott, who led the way into the kingdom of old-world romance, and taught his generation and those coming after him history and human nature at one and the same time. Such has been the habit

of the best teachers of humanity in all ages. At this period of the world's history, to tell us that fiction must be tabooed as a mark of degeneracy, is to scorn and outrage the teaching of the last eighteen hundred years both by parables and their precepts. There are books and books, and as Lord Bacon says, "some are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention." The wide outcries for the best hundred books to possess and read is a most valuable testimony to the world's wants for a royal road to wisdom. But human nature being so widely diverse as it is, no such road has as yet been discovered. For educational purposes the most valuable book is certainly the most interesting one to the reader at the time. And we quite agree with Sir Arthur Helps, who says that "a man never gets so much good out of a book as when he possesses it." So let us—

"Make knowledge ample as the air we breathe,
Its influence free as is the breath of heaven—
As He whose rain and sunshine all beneath
Unstinted share: so let soul-light be given.

Nor grudge Romance's quaint beguiling mask;
Let truth the masquerade of Fiction wear,
To ease the toil-worn labourer at his task,
And with the charm of Fancy, banish care.

Spread wide the historic page to ardent youth,
With liberal hand, to mankind give the right
To drink deep draughts from wells of purest truth:
Hasten the coming time: Let there be light!"



CHAPTER XXX.

“My immortal ambition is to live in the libraries and liberties of my native land.”
Christopher North.

“Consider what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries, in a thousand years, have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“Hast thou e'er seen him at a sale of books?
How very, very knowing were his looks!
How solemnly he said 'a penny more!'
How gravely turned the treasured volume o'er:
'A rare edition this!—I know it well—
If known by others, it would surely sell
For ten times more—but half-a-crown is plenty
For such a work—prized but by cognoscente.'”

John Ramsay, Aberdeen.

IT has been previously mentioned that Provost Brown was long and frequently said to have been the first to introduce the selling of books by auction about 1791, and fifty years constant attention to the subject, and the study of all the usually quoted authorities, had failed to correct this erroneous but often expressed—uncontradicted—and so apparently true opinion.

But as the finding of a fossil in a particular stratum may change the received history of the world's formation; the discovery of a new planet may throw fresh light on the order and harmony of the universe; so a new fact may at once alter and dispel all pre-conceived ideas in the department to which the fact belongs. How truly one of our most celebrated poets, with rare wealth of language, sings:—

'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
 Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
 Of ages ; to what straits old Time reduces
 Frail man, when paper—e'en a rag like this
 Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his !

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
 His station, generation, e'en his nation
 Become a thing, or no thing—save to rank—
 In chronological commemoration ;
 Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank—
 Or graven stone found in a barrack station—
 In digging the foundation of a closet,
 May turn his name up as a rare deposit.

Some of our many interested Book-Stall readers have evidently been rummaging their repositories, and amongst them one rising Bibliophile, who, while passing many books through his hands, yet retains a sense of the value of what are often thought unconsidered trifles, as unworthy preservation, such as an old song, an old almanac, or an old catalogue of a sale of books. Yet listen to what Leigh Hunt writes—"A common auctioneer's catalogue of goods and chattles suggests a thousand reflections to a peruser of any knowledge. Judge, then, what the case must be with a catalogue of books, the very titles of which run the rounds of the whole world, visible and invisible ; geographies, biographies, histories, loves, hates, joys, sorrows, science, fashions, and eternity !" No real lover of books ever looks on a catalogue of books but with interest—still more so if it is a very old one. The place of sale, the date, and the possessor, have all an interest for him : the books of the period—how many of them are known by the reader—how many have disappeared from general use, and are only preserved in large libraries, and how many have sailed down the stream of time with ever-growing reputation, and to possess which, the collector of first editions would travel far and pay much. Looking over such a catalogue the reader puts crosses against dozens of books, and says—Oh ! that I were the happy possessor of these !

Our friend sends us two little pamphlets which have evidently been carefully and lovingly preserved, and in the eyes of some people the preserver would be looked upon as a benefactor to his species, equally with him who makes two

blades of grass grow where formerly there was but one. We also give him hearty thanks. The first is :—

CATALOGUE of BOOKS. To be sold by Auction in Marischal's Hall, *Aberdeen*: The Sale commencing *November 8th, 1762*, at 5 o'clock, afternoon.

The BOOKS are mostly new, and all in good condition, and may be seen any lawful day before the Auction.

N.B.—As the Books are all intended to be sold off, they are to be entered low, and no Decoy-Duck.

Catalogues are to be had at the Shop of Robert Farquhar, Bookseller in the Castlegate, *Aberdeen*.

[12mo pp. 30.—840 lots in six nights' sale.]

For a notice of Farquhar see page 73. His father died in 1753, and it seems not improbable that this sale was held on his son's retirement from business. The expression of "Decoy-duck" argues a smart, wide-awake man, with a knowledge that "it is a wicked world, my masters."

The second is more pretentious :

A CATATOGUE of CURIOUS and VALUABLE BOOKS, containing, amongst many others, a complete collection of the most Valuable and Scarce Editions of the Greek and Latin Classicks, Fathers, etc., being the Library of the late learned DR. ROBERT POLLOCK, Professor of Divinity and Principal of *Marishall College*, which will begin to be sold by Auction, In *Marishall's Hall, Castle Street*, on *Monday the 18th of November, 1765*.

BY ALEXANDER ANGUS AND SON,

By whom commissions will be punctually executed. The Sale to begin each Night at Five o'clock.

[12mo pp. 56. There are 1728 lots numbered consecutively. Eighteen nights' sale, and the books are assorted in sizes, and with the exception of classics without the place of publication, but generally with dates. On the back of the title there is announced, as "Just published, price one shilling, The TRIAL of KATHERINE NAIRN and Lieutenant PATRICK OGILVIE for the Crimes of Incest and Murder." In the High Court of Justiciary, on the 5th, 12th, to the 16th days of August, 1765.]

This catalogue gives an excellent idea of the books considered necessary by a literary man of the period, and leads to a higher conception of Alexander Angus, the founder of the business; and we note, that in 1779, the firm had a circulating library, which in 1790 had 3384 volumes, and also that in 1792 they printed Spalding's *Memorials of the Trubles in Scotland, A.D. 1624-1645*. Proposals were made to

print it in 1765, but it did not appear until 1792. But regarding this edition, it is stated in the preface to the Bannatyne Club edition, that—

“A MSS. copy, belonging to Sir James Reid of Barra, in Aberdeenshire, was at his death purchased for £5, by a bookseller of Aberdeen with a view to publication. This design was accordingly commenced; but without taking the trouble of comparing the MS. with any of the other existing copies [and they were numerous], and without submitting it to any examination whatever, it was placed sheet by sheet in the printer's hands; and so far as the workmen were able to decypher the MS., forthwith printed; with no alteration, except in the orthography. Neither did any correction of the press take place, but what the printer himself chose to exercise.”

This carelessness sufficiently accounts for its many errors and defects. The edition was reprinted in 1829, by George King, in one vol. 8vo.

If scant justice was done to Angus & Sons previously, we can only say, as White of Selborne said of Nature—but which is equally applicable to the facts of history—“there is endless room for observation; yet investigation, where a man endeavours to be sure of his facts, can make but slow progress; and all that a man could collect in many years would go into a very small compass.” However, by all means let there be light—and may it go on increasing. It is with pleasure that we relight the old candle, and place it in our present lantern. Here it will light the way for future explorers.

After this was written a valued friend, whose choice collection of books and valuable stores of information have always been freely placed at the service of others, who has rooms in his house which might be described as Thackeray describes one of his—

“This snug little chamber is crammed in all nooks
 With worthless old knicknacks, and silly old books,
 And foolish old odds, and foolish old ends,
 Crack'd bargains from brokers, [rare] keepsakes from friends,
 Old armour, prints, pictures, pipes, china, all crack'd,
 Old ricketty tables, and chairs broken back'd :”—

has sent us for inspection a still more interesting catalogue, which appears to have been the auctioneer's copy. It is interleaved, and has in it the orders received for the books, and the prices which they brought.

A CATALOGUE of Scarce and Valuable Books ; being the LIBRARIES of several gentlemen deceased, including the Physical Library of the late Doctor Alexander Irvine, and Duplicates of many very scarce Books, from one of the most capital Libraries in this country.

Consisting of about Four Thousand Volumes in History, Antiquities, Voyages and Travels, Architecture, Mathematics, Dictionaries, Natural History, Divinity, Law ; a most elegant collection of the Greek and Latin CLASSICS, and a great variety of the best FRENCH and ITALIAN authors ;

Which will begin to be sold by Auction in *Pitfodels Hall, Castle Street, Aberdeen*, on Monday, February 19, 1781. [Commissions carefully attended to].

Catalogues to be had (gratis) at the shop of A. ANGUS & SON, Booksellers, Aberdeen, or of J. WALKER, Auctioneer ; who will carefully execute commissions from the Country, or for those in Town who cannot attend.

[12mo. pp. 78. 2257 lots in 22 nights' sale ; with a notice on p. 78 that an appendix to this collection will soon be published, consisting chiefly of Odd Volumes, Curious Pamphlets, &c., &c.]

An examination of this catalogue reveals the fact that of the 2257 lots, 282 were folios, 281 4to's, and the rest 8vo, *et infra* ; that 558 were Latin or Greek, 65 Italian, 6 Spanish, 4 Dutch, 15 Hebrew, and 232 French, making one-third of the books in the Library in foreign languages.

The auctioneer received commissions for 410 books, from 81 individuals, and the list of these last century book buyers is not without interest of its own. That Aberdeen had not as yet lost its ancient reputation as a learned place, a veritable land of Goshen for books, and a training place for scholars, is evident by the attention which the sale excited. Orders were received from even distant London, amongst others from the sagacious Mr. Peter Emslie, who was a great linguist, an entertaining companion, familiar with the most distinguished men of the time, the friend of the historian Gibbon (who in 1794 died in his house) ; and who kept up his character as a learned Bibliopole by ordering twenty books. Several booksellers in Edinburgh recognised its importance. Gordon & Murray order 30, Wm. Creech 16, John Bell 16, and Wm. Dickson 8. The then very enterprising firm of Morison & Son of Perth, who published

largely, and issued an *edition de luxe* of Thomson's *Seasons* (one of the first of the kind in Scotland) ordered 20. And it is a pleasure to add, that although the prices realised would now be considered absurdly low, books going then for pence which would now bring shillings, and others for shillings which would now bring pounds, yet the southern booksellers had to say then, as they have had to say frequently since, that at a sale of books the Aberdonians were hard to fight and difficult to conquer.

Our townsmen stood to their guns as they always do, when they can see and handle the books they wish to possess. And here let executors and trustees suffer a word of warning from one who has had some considerable experience in the disposal of the libraries of deceased persons. That is, that they can commit no greater mistake than to send these to the south for sale. Here, in Aberdeen, there are so many individuals who have inherited the love of a library from their ancestors, that they prevent the formation of syndicates of traders, who combine against any outside bidder, and oust him from attending the sale, and to keep the ring to themselves they afterwards resell the books amongst themselves, and divide the profit, or even share the loss, for it pays them in the long run to do so.

At this 1781 sale the local book buyers were well represented. Of the Professors, Dr. Jas. Beattie (who had a good library) ordered 2 books, Dr. Bannerman 3, Dr. Campbell 13, Dunbar 16, Ogilvie 27, Skene 19, Ligertwood 6, and Hamilton, (the absent minded) 1. There were literary Baillies then, Baillie Andrew Burnett of Elrick ordered 9, James Cruickshank 1, David Cargill (senior Baillie that year) 2, and James Paul 4. With the exception of one clergyman, Rev. Mr. Greig of Stonehaven, who orders 10 books, the clergy do not figure largely. It is likely that with their small stipends and prudential habits, they would attend the sale personally. But the lairds figure largely, and according to the old fashion are designated by the name of their estates, and that alone—for such was the fashion of the time. There are offers recorded by Hallhead (Gordon) who orders 19 books in a most Scotch-like fashion, for he frequently adds "if reasonable," Premnay 5, Countesswells 1, Fraserfield 1, Auchleucheries (Gordon) 7, Craigellie (Shand) 6, Friendville (Mitchell) 3, Pitfodels (Menzie) 5, and

all his are church books ; Drum (Irvine) .1—he had already a large and fine library. In 1792 J. Boyle issued a catalogue of books to be sold by auction on 8th November.

Another word of warning may not be amiss, *viz.* :—that if it is unwise to send libraries to be sold away from Aberdeen, it is equally so to sell them in country villages, or at the residences of the late proprietors. Take two examples. One, that of a famous library in a country mansion, gathered together regardless of expense, by an ardent collector, in which, amongst many other things, there was a collection of astrological and alchemical books, tracts, and MSS., so unique that its fitting resting place was the British Museum. At great expense the library was sent to London and sold, when it brought less than was offered by an Aberdeen bookseller, as the books stood on the shelves.

Another example was that of the extensive library of a deceased county clergyman, collected during a long life, which the writer had to catalogue and prepare for sale. He strongly advised that the sale should be held in Aberdeen, but the trustees, mostly brother clergymen, thought this most unwise, objecting to the expense, and urging that it would prevent his parishioners and *themselves* from buying some volumes as a memorial of him. As there were several thousands of books, the sale ought to have occupied a week, but had to be finished in an afternoon. Several Aberdeen booksellers attended, and as the books had to be put up in lots, they purchased almost the whole library, the parishioners, if they did want a volume, did not get it, and the trustees had to purchase from the booksellers the volume they coveted, at the price of the whole bundle in which it was included.

Considering the small chances of life there is in a book, the smaller in a pamphlet, and the least of all in a catalogue—the three catalogues now noted are very valuable, the last specially so. All are worthy of most careful preservation. That a man is known by the company he keeps, is an old adage, but still more is his character shown by the books he *buys*, and makes his bosom companions, to solace him in his loneliest hours.

By a careful study of the last catalogue a new and a true revelation of the characters of the numerous local men who gave orders for their purchases might be made. Meantime

these catalogues are now noted, for in the words of Theodosia Trollope—

I hound me this volume, and said it should be
 A shrine, and a home where the past meets me,
 And the most evanescent and fleeting of things
 Should be lured to my temple and shorn of its wings
 To adorn my palace of memories.

.

In the morning we meet on a mountain height,
 And we walk, and we converse till fall of night,
 We hold hands for a moment, then pass on our way,
 But that which I've got from my friend of to-day
 I'll place in my palace of memories.

“It is a good thing to read books and it need not be a bad thing to write them, but it is a pious thing to preserve those that have been written.” To dwell with books is to live with the Immortals, and this was Roscoe's consolation when in 1816 he had to part with his library when he said—

As one who, destined from his friends to part,
 Regrets his loss, yet hopes again erewhile
 To share their converse, and enjoy their smile,
 And tempers as he may, afflictions dart,—
 Thus loved associates ! chiefs of elder art !
 Teachers of wisdom ! who could once beguile
 My tedious hours, and lighten every toil,
 I now resign you, nor with fainting heart—
 For, pass a few short years, or days, or hours,
 And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,
 And all your sacred fellowship restore,
 When freed from Earth, unlimited its powers.
 Mind shall with mind direct communion hold,
 And kindred spirits meet to part no more.



CHAPTER XXXI.

“The more I think of it, I find this conclusion more impressed upon me—that the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it saw in a plain way.

Ruskin.

THE story of *Dauneys Slaughter* (*alias Downie's*, for they are the same) has been long familiar to Aberdonians.

So much so, that in this century it has given place to a proverbial saying here, that if anything is done in a company which cannot be found out, then all present are “airt and pairt in Downie's slaughter.” And as a confirmation of its truthfulness and accuracy, we have it recorded in print in 1825—so circumstantial in its minute details of persons and place—but not of time—that it is somewhat difficult to doubt its truth, and still more so to disprove it. Especially is it so, when, in the memory of living persons, a green mound in a hollow to the north of Belmont, called “Downey's Howe,” has always been confidently pointed out as the last resting place of the slaughtered Sacrist, and the loons were long in the habit of crying out to the students, “Fa killed Downie?” But the students, not being able to answer, the question has been raised, “is this story true?” and we have been asked to raise it in the hope of solution. And so in spite of our own sentimentality on the subject of books with unhappy endings, we insert the story as first narrated in 1825 in *Things in General*, page 15 :

“Now this Dauneys was precursor to my grandfather in the office of Sacristan, to the terror of the students, against whose snow-ballings and other tumultuous and unseemly sports he did lift up both his voice and his cudgel—each of which was terrible in its way. Nor was this all: for when, at the close of day, the students would go towards the banks of the Don—as well to study the rising of *Capella* and the flow of *Berenice* her hair, as to take the longitude of *Andromeda* and the elevation of the *Pole*—then would he watch diligently, lest they should aberrate and wander from the

paths of celestial science, and hold dalliance with the young damsels who do attend and labour at the mills and manufactories in these parts ; and if he did find any of them so wandering and so dallying, then did he not only come upon them with his cudgel, but did report them to the Regents, and publicly in the area and the hall, so that they were sorely bruised and beaten both in the outward and the inner man. Against these his laudable efforts towards the preservation of virtue, regularity and decorum, the grumbings of the students were frequent, though private ; and often did they take counsel together how they might put their revenge into execution. Howbeit they were for many years restrained as well through fear of Dauney, as through suspicion of each other.

“ One season, however, when the supreme judicature of our Lord the King had come into the county for the punishment of all manner of offences (saving in the matter of Venus, which in right and in practice belongeth to the Kirk and the upholding pillars thereof), then did the students remember the virtues of Dauney the sacristan. When Robert Welsh, the finisher of the transgressions of all persons who be committed to his charge (who brought a certificate of his moral character from some northern presbytery, when he was inducted to his office, and who went sorrowing at the lack of employment), had made his fatal tree fair and clean by rinsing it in the balsamic waters of the Denburn—when the judges of the land had come into the city in gorgeous apparel, and with the sound of trumpets—when the magistrates had gone forth to meet them with their wigs newly combed and powdered, and the halberts of their attendant guards made bright of the grindstone of Peter Gow the blacksmith—when the sheriff of the shire had gone forth, girt with a great sword, instead of the book and ink-horn of his usual calling—when the judges had ascended the awful bench, and the jurors, according to the original nomination of His Majesty’s solicitor, had sworn a great oath, and entered their box—when His Majesty’s advocate for His Majesty’s interest had indicted, and demanded the pains of the law upon a sore offender, James Massie—when the case had been stated, proved and argued by the bar—when the jury had returned their verdict of “ guilty of wilful murder,” committed upon the bodies of three pullets, the property of Bailie Broadface,

while in the act of harrowing the seeds in the "kail yard" of the said James Massie—when the awful sentence of the law had gone forth against him, that he should be "transported to *England* for life"—then did the great men retire to the Lemon Tree, there to eat flesh and drink wine, for the refreshment of their bodies, and the renovation of their minds, after these, their important services to their country.

"Among those who did assemble upon this memorable occasion were the Principals and Regents of the King's College—nothing loath to fare sumptuously without cost; and barely had their rearmost file entered the Gallowgate, when an awful tragedy began to be enacted in the college. The students, to the number of twenty, came round Dauney the sacristan, and laying violent hands upon him, constrained him to enter an apartment, wherein was erected the mimicry of a court of justice, with all its concomitants. At the bar of this mimic court was Dauney arraigned and tried, and found guilty of tyranny in his office; and for that (like as other tyrants have been, and may or should be) sentenced to be beheaded.

"No sooner had this sentence been pronounced, than they blindfolded Dauney and led him (he, the while, striking lustily with his hands, and essaying to make light of the matter), into another apartment, where having bound his hands behind his back, they took the bandage from his eyes, and he beheld with horror, the preparations that had been made. The walls of the room were hung with black, and the floor was covered with the same. Here stood a great block, and fast by it one of the strongest of the students, trying against his finger the keenness of a great axe; there stood a vast basket of sawdust and a tub of water, and beside them another student with a towel in his hands. A doomster approached the astonished Dauney, and told him that, as he had but a few moments to live, it were wise in him to employ them in preparing for eternity, in which he would have the assistance of two in canonicals, who at that moment entered the room singing a psalm. In vain did he threaten, in vain did he remonstrate, in vain did he wheedle and tell them the whole must be a jest.

"The doomster pointed in silence to the index of the clock, which was but five minutes from the hour; the executioner tried the keenness of his axe anew; and he with the towel

began to scatter sawdust around the block. It was then that the heart of Dauney died within him, and he was fain to drop on his knees, and implore the aid of those in canonicals. Then did he confess the number, and enormity of his own sins, among them were those for which he had caused the students to be most grievously afflicted.

"Swift flies the wing of time when its progress is towards the gallows. The index pointed to the fatal hour, he was laid upon the block, his face was covered, and the covering of his neck and throat was removed. Then did he who held the towel, dip the same in the tub of cold water, and smite therewith upon the neck of Dauney, who uttered a groan and expired.

"The Principal and Regents having been abundant in their feastings and their cups, returned; but ere they returned, the court with all its paraphernalia had vanished; the students had gone about their own ways, and the corpse of Dauney lay cold and stiff in the middle of the library without wound—the key, marvellous to relate, being found in his own pocket. The circumstances of his death transpired; but so true to each other were the perpetrators, that their names and numbers rest unknown to this day."

The bibliography of the story is fully given by Mr. P. J. Anderson in *Scottish Notes & Queries*, March, 1888, page 162, as follows:—

See *Things in General*, by Robert Mudie, London, 1824; *Aberdeen Fifty Years Ago*, by James Rettie, Aberdeen, 1868; and *Life at a Northern University*, by Neil N. Maclean, Glasgow, 1874. *Who Murdered Downie?* a travesty of the story, by (Andrew Halliday?) with the scene laid in *Marischal College*, appeared in *Household Words* for 24th August, 1852, and 16th February, 1884; and the *Schoolmistress* for 10th April, 1884. See also *Murder by Jest*, in *Beeton's Boys' Own Magazine*, vol. 3, page 250.

While in the same number of *Scottish Notes & Queries*, a correspondent, signing himself Stalione, says—"I have read another account, said to have been a death-bed confession of one who was "airt and pairt" in the slaughter, which corroborates the account given by Moody. Unfortunately I cannot recollect where the latter account is to be found."

In this age when athletics, both mental and physical, are so much cultivated, we suggest a paper race for this valuable document, which would be important evidence.

There is an old and well known proverbial saying, that

“a rolling stone gathers no moss,” which, like many of the Delphic oracles, may be read in more ways than one, and is generally taken as it suits the circumstances. But it does not follow that a rolling story may not gather such an amount of moss as to conceal its truthfulness, and entirely to alter its value. Some old boys of the present age, who in the days of their youth were not tortured with crams and exams, can yet remember how gently and wisely they were taught invaluable lessons, and how Scottish prudence, caution, and circumspection, were instilled into their young minds, by fictitious stories inserted in their school books. One such never-to-be-forgotten story comes back to memory as pat to the present occasion, viz. :—John Byrom’s narration of the man who was reported to have vomited three black crows, and which, traced back to its origin, turned out to be, that the man had said he had vomited *something as black as a crow*. The story had not only gathered around it moss, but also feathers. Discarding thereof all the subsequent stories, because in the process of evolution they became covered with moss and clothed with feathers, we, in the previous pages, have given the original story for the first time as narrated in the volume entitled—

THINGS IN GENERAL : being Delineations of Persons, Places, Scenes, Circumstances, Situations and Occurrences, in the Metropolis and other parts of Britain, with an Autobiographic Sketch, *in limine*, and a notice touching Edinburgh. By Laurence Langshank, Gent. London, 1825. 12mo. pp. 294, on which page is printed “End of a first volume.”

And undeterred by the knowledge of the fact that the truthfulness of the story has been endeavoured to be expiscated without success by various highly talented individuals, we proceed to give—what they have not given—the grounds of doubt on the subject, as taken from this queer, quaint, curious, clever, and now very scarce volume.

It seems to be concluded that the author was one Moodie or Mudie, a student in King’s College. Whoever he was, in the autobiography (123 pages), he says, that he was born in Monymusk, was the son of the sexton and beadle there, had as his grand-father the sacristan of King’s College, who was the successor of the now immortal Daunev.

That by the strenuous exertions of the laird and the minister (Dr. Darklanthorn), he got a bursary of twelve

pounds at King's College, to which he journeyed with introductions to the chief and captain of the Professors (Dr. Pangloss), his interview with him being amusingly related. That "his manners being soft," he was mocked and beaten of many of the students, specially by one great boy, who seems to have been the bully of the place; (evidently William Carnegie, the future Town Clerk), who called him "Queentra Sannie," but whom he smote with his fists until he begged forgiveness. And here (p. 124) he tells with evident relish, the story of the clerk's journey to Glasgow, with his introduction to Bailie Nicol Jarvie, (given by us in Chapter x.)

Having passed through the Art classes, and entered on the Divinity course, he then tells how he fell into a scrape with Nancy Cattanach, who, the gipsy that she was, instigated by a knowledge of his softness, fathered a bairn upon him, and in spite of his protestations of innocence, this fama barred to him the presentation to a kirk, and he was disowned and discarded by his own relations. In this dire extremity he was befriended by William Kennedy, our city annalist, who made him his clerk and amanuensis. While in his employment the shooting and dining excursion to Skatterrow (related in Chapter x.) occurred, and the wicked wags fixed on the innocent Mudie as the sender of the express message of Kennedy's house being on fire; upon which he got his dismissal, instead of being shot in a duel.

After this second disappointment to his hopes of employment, he went to Montrose, where he spent three years "with pleasure and not without profit, disporting himself alternately with the pestle, the pharmacopeia, and the muse." While here he had as a fellow apprentice the afterwards celebrated Joseph Hume, the Radical M.P. and political economist, "a young man" he says "who was my senior; and who has since profited of his own skill, of Mammon, and of Hymen, and risen to much note in the land." They two, it is stated, had an unlucky escapade in an attempted body-snatching, which did not succeed, and came to a ludicrous termination for both of them. "Nor was it long," says the author, "ere he betook himself to the land Ophir," (Hume went to India in 1797), and shortly after this Mudie went to Edinburgh, hoping to get a medical degree for the dainty sum of £13 6s. 8d.

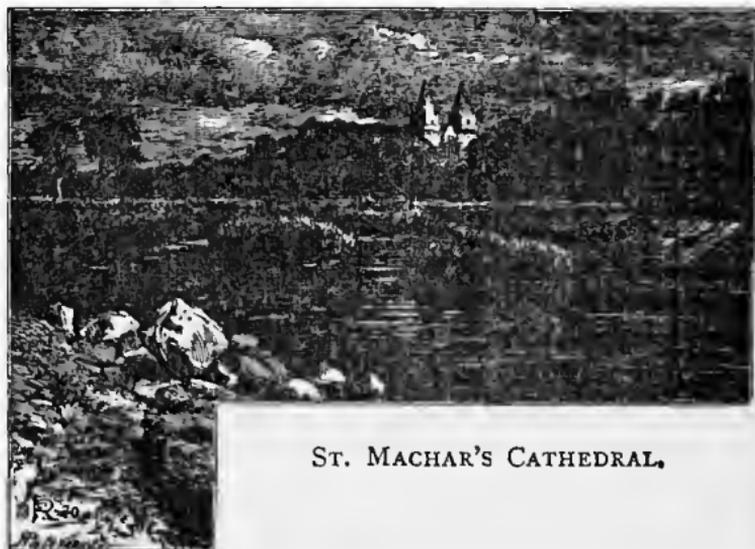
He entered the classes and vividly and pungently describes the professors (indeed, all through the book, his delineations of character are the vital—unforgettable parts). But the horrors of the anatomy classes proved far too trying for a youth, who frankly admits that “his manners were soft.” His descriptions of the scenes witnessed are gruesome and sickening in the extreme—for undoubtedly he has the gift of language. Rather than be a resurrectionist—rather than mangle the bodies of the guilty, delivered to them, or those of the good, stolen forth from their graves—rather than witness the heartless manner in which their remains were treated, and hear the unseemly jests of his fellow students,—especially when the body of Nancy Cattnach was laid upon the dissection table, he abandoned his fees, willingly gave up all the gains and the glories of Galen, and resolved that, come what may, he would much rather follow the occupation of his worthy father the sexton, and hap up the dead in their graves, gently, kindly, and decently—the good soft soul that he was!

His autobiography ends at this stage, and he proceeds to narrate his experiences as a tutor in several families, and describes several Edinburgh characters in a racy manner. Essaying to write for the periodicals, he is brought into contact with Blackwood and Constable, and hears from the last, of the great Rhadamanthus, who was *Jeff*; an eloquent orator, *Harry*; the historian, *Mac*; the mighty man of fiction, *Wattie*. But his lucubrations being rejected, with some experience in anatomy, he, in disgust, cuts up Edinburgh society, its lawyers, parsons, moderates, and high-fliers, Tories and Whigs, and betakes himself to the great Metropolis, sailing from Aberdeen in a smack, and giving a most vivid account of the voyage.

Arrived in London with all his chattels in a pillow case, and passing through Wapping, he was so set upon by the dealers to purchase, that he took to his heels, and the cry of “stop thief!” being raised, he was arrested by a policeman and carried before Alderman *Greatpaunch*, one whom he says was a man of more bowels than bitterness. Telling his story, the worthy Alderman acquitted him at once, spake kindly to him, invited him to his mansion, and engaged him in the tuition of his whole family. No wonder then that *Things in General* is fulsomely and wittily dedicated “to

the Right Worshipful SIR GILES GREATPAUNCH, Alderman of the ward of —, and some time Lord Mayor of the City of London."

And now Mudie's trials being over, and revelling in clover, he is disposed to rest and be thankful. Having abundance of leisure, he indites his ideas of John Bull, his wife and daughters, of the corporation and its feastings, of parliament and its members, of churches and chapels, contrasting the bishop and the minister. Adding as a finale, that what he has written is but a foretaste of what he knows, and that if the brick pleases the public, the Babel from which it is taken shall be presented to them in due season. How Mudie amply redeemed this promise, will, as Clerk Spalding says, be seen after, and we shall proceed to show.



ST. MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“We flatter our noddles that there is as much fun concocted annually in Aberdeen as there is in all Scotland put together.”—

John Ramsay, 1830.

“The cleanest corn that e’er was dight
May hae some pyles o’ caff in ;
Sae ne’er a fellow creature slight
For random fits o’ daffin.”

Burns.

“How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite ;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white ;
How genius, the illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
I sing : if these mortals the critics should hustle,
I care not, not I,—let the critics go whistle !”

Ibid.

GEOERGE DAWSON (1821-1876), the eminent author and lecturer, says : “the great consulting room of a wise man is a library”—the solving place of perplexities ; where he “can commune with the wisest souls that God has blest the world with . . . Whatever be my perplexity or doubt, I know exactly the great man to call to me.” Happy man ! for this knowledge of the exact man to call is indeed the most felt want of ordinary men who seek to acquire knowledge.

Amidst the multitudinous books, and the multifarious knowledge which the centuries have accumulated, the subjects are few and far between, on which articles, pamphlets or volumes, have not been published. But the difficulty is to find the needle in the hay-stack, the precise place in which to find the coveted information, and which, to be useful, must be found on short notice.

So, if we shower down blessings on Free Libraries, especially Reference Libraries, yet still more are thanks and obligations due to the intelligent Librarians who act as guides to the labyrinth in which one might wander on forever ; the steam which sets the engine in motion for your

special benefit, and brings all its vast and voluminous information to aid enquirers, for as one of our most eminent literary men says of such, "what peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me are here spread out!"

It is one of the glories of the present day (and amidst the bitter party strifes raging at present, we need some consolation), that Aberdeen, with its old literary reputation has acquired such Librarians as it possesses—men ready to dispense all their accumulated knowledge to thirsty souls, and eager to help all who apply to them in their studies—guiding the streamlet to the thirsty ground, or *vice versa*, the thirsty souls to the streamlet—whether they be the classes or the masses.

Heartily acknowledging our obligations to them, by their forwarding the results of their research, and the proofs of it, the information received may be condensed thus:—

Robert Mudie (1777-1842), is not mentioned by Chalmers in his *Dictionary of Eminent Scotchmen*, where his name might naturally be looked for. *Irving's Dictionary* (1881), gives only fourteen lines to him, which may be accounted for by the fact that there were by that time so many eminent Scotchmen, that it was impossible to do justice to them all, without encroachment on the limited space of our little world. Yet, notwithstanding the opinion of the historian Buckle, it is believed by many Scotchmen that the race will bulk much more largely amongst the eminent men of the future heavenly world, than they do in the very imperfect annals of the present sublunary one. But information regarding him may be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1842, part ii., 214-215; *Anderson's Scottish Nation*, iii., 212-213; *Hannay's Life of Dr. Chalmers*, i., 22, and appendix H; while the latest is in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxxix, 264-265.

Since this notice was written, we find in Dr. Bain's *James Mill: a Biography*, 197, that on the 28th Decr., 1821, Zachary Macaulay—father of the celebrated historian, wrote to Mill, asking him to find out "an intelligent person . . . some alumnus of a Scotch University, who can turn his hand readily to any common topic of public interest, who is in want of employment and to whom a moderate salary would be an object." On this letter Mill adds in pencil "Mr.

Mudie—was educated at Aberdeen—co-conductor of the *Dundee Advertiser*—Reference to Dr. Barclay—and to Mr. Ross of the *Times* Office—Editor and principal writer in the *Caledonian*, a sort of collection of essays.” Now, either Mr. Mill intended to compliment Mudie, and satisfy Macaulay, or he had the idea that all to the north of Edinburgh was included in Aberdeen and the *twal miles aroon it*: for at no period of Mudie’s early life do we find time for his education in Aberdeen, and the circumstances of his parents would have been an entire barrier to his being sent from home for his education. Mill must have been one of many who thought all clever men came from Aberdeen.

Condensing these notices, we find that Robert Mudie was born in 1777, in a village six or seven miles north-east of Dundee; was the son of a weaver, and after receiving the simplest rudiments of education at the country school, plied the loom, until being drawn for the militia he served as a soldier for four years. From infancy he had an insatiable desire for knowledge, and with an undaunted perseverance in acquiring it. And, heaven helping such as help themselves, he managed to get access to many books, and by his great quickness of apprehension, and with an unusually retentive memory, he thus contrived to acquire an almost universal knowledge. So much so, that on his discharge, he opened a school in the south of Fife, in which school, certainly the most earnest and diligent scholar was the teacher himself. Under such a master he acquired skill in drawing, in arithmetic and mathematics, facility in English composition, and wrote verses with ease and fluency.

Happy scholars! to sit under one who taught that knowledge of which he was so eagerly in search himself, one who trained them to search, and taught them to teach themselves on the plan of a Mutual Instruction Class.

In 1802 he was appointed Gaelic professor, and teacher of drawing in Inverness, and although he knew little Gaelic, he soon made himself proficient, and filled the situation satisfactorily. Some years after he was appointed Drawing master in Dundee Academy, filling the situation for ten or twelve years—became associated with R. S. Rintoul—afterwards editor of the London *Spectator*—in promoting Reform—entered the Town Council, and published a novel, “*Glenfergus*,” Edinburgh, 1819, having previously become a pro-

fessed worshipper of the muse, by publishing *The Maid of Griban*, in verse, Dundee, 1810.

In 1820, he went to London as reporter to the *Morning Chronicle*, and in that capacity came to Edinburgh on George IV.'s visit (1822), which he described in a volume, published in the same year, as "Things in General."

He was a voluminous writer, and is credited with the authorship of about ninety volumes. He redeems the promise given in *Things in General* by publishing *Babylon the Great*, a description of London in 4 vols, 8vo.

His extensive knowledge may be inferred from the wide range of subjects on which he wrote and which were published, such as *The Earth*; *The Sea*; *The Seasons*, 4 vols; *Nature*; *The World*; *Man*; *The Animal Kingdom*, etc., etc., down to *Pinnock's Catechisms*. He was an able writer, an expert compiler, an acute and philosophical observer of Nature. Contributing largely to the periodicals for his means of subsistence, he acquired great facility in writing, and was known to have thrown off a volume of the *Seasons* in eight days. With all his acquirements, industry, and perseverance he was constantly in poverty, and exhausted and worn out, he died in 1842, at the age of sixty five, leaving a widow of a second marriage in poor circumstances. He was one other example of the ill recompense which the world sometimes gives for talent and industry spent in its behalf: it does not give the author bread enough while he is alive, and grudges him even a stone when he is dead. For one author by profession in the earlier part of the century there is now a hundred, and readers are multiplied a thousand fold—yet authors at the present can write—

"Wasted frame and pallid lips.
 Hope has long since spurned our fare;
 On a wild carouse of crusts
 Now we entertain Despair.
 Struggle on—'tis not for long—
 Write and starve that men may laugh;
 We shall leave this garret soon,
 When Death takes us on his staff."

We desire to add a stone to his cairn by this notice, and to say that he deserved to have been born in Aberdeen.

But now, what about this so-called legend of the slaughter of Dawnie or Downie; so artfully, ingeniously, and circum-

stantially told by Mudie that it has become as rooted and grounded in the minds of many citizens as gospel truth. After much inquiry and thought, having taken the unnatural spectre by the beard, and asked it "What, and whence art thou?" without getting any reply, we have come to the conclusion that the story is not even legendary—is entirely fabulous, and in all probability owes its creation to that clever wag Sandy Bannerman, and that if it is the poorest history, it is a bit of the richest romance. The story was never heard of before 1825, and is then made to appear as having occurred some forty years previously. It is incredible, if not impossible, that a whole generation should have passed without the knowledge of such a startling event in the small and compact community! Saving the accurate delineations of character and of the locality in the autobiography of Langshank—alias Mudie—there is not a particle of truth in it. Mudie was not born in Monymusk—neither he nor any of those mentioned by him were ever students of King's College; no proof can be adduced that Mudie was ever even in Aberdeen, the proof is all against it. No sacrist of the name of Dawnie or Downie ever held the office; the only person of the name connected with the Universities, was the librarian of Marischal College, who died in 1663. No connection between the spot recently called "Downie's Howe" and the fictitious sacrist was ever heard of until the story appeared; nor, even supposing the story was true, can any possible reason be given for the burial there. According to the story the body was left cold and stark on the floor of the library—could his relations or the professors allow him to be buried like a dog? Incredible!

Having thus, we trust, fairly settled the apocryphal character of the story, if it is asked how could Mudie have acquired that marvellously minute acquaintance with the place and the people as shown in the story, which has won such conviction as to its truth? we explain it thus. Mudie, like all young men of talent in those days, was an ardent Reformer, and, as such, was the intimate associate of Rintoul of Dundee, and Joseph Hume, with each of whom Sandy Bannerman of Aberdeen was hand-in-glove, as is well known. Naturally there were frequent meetings of these parties, all the more pleasant and pregnant because, according to the then recorded laws of the time, they were

considered to be conspirators, and were actually liable, as the law then stood, to be charged with the crime of high treason in venturing even to advocate a change of government and policy. Bannerman, the rejected of the Aberdeen Town Council in 1812, in consequence of his liberal sentiments, came of an old residential family, and he had thus a most intimate acquaintance with the place and its people. He was brimful of fun and frolic, and his fertile fancy lent ample embellishment to his stories. There can be very little doubt but that all the local touches both of places and characters in Aberdeen, which Mudie gives, came from the mint of Sandy Bannerman, for *his* well known butts are always found as the victims of Mudie's wit. These stories, heard by Mudie, would lose nothing by being transplanted into his retentive memory, and aided by his vivid fancy this story became clothed, not only with feathers, but with wings, upon which it has soared to the present day, and been taken seriously. Indeed it has been taken so seriously, that since this explanation appeared in the "Book-Stall," the writer has been assailed by various correspondents for his heterodoxy and his *higher criticism* regarding it. The sum and substance of all these very woman-like correspondents, is the assertion that *the story is true*, and that they will continue to believe it even although it is told differently by each narrator! One of them triumphantly refers to the testimony of the prophetic Dr. Cumming of London, who in *The Millennial Rest*: chapter xx, *The Death of Death*, relates it, and proceeds to *moralize* and *improve* on it. But all he says is, that he heard it in 1836—eleven years after it was in print. Had he asserted its truth, it might be replied, that its truthfulness was on a par with his own profitable prophecies regarding the coming end of the world, while at the same time he took a lease of his house for a considerable period beyond that which he had fixed for the end of all things.

In return for his rejection by the Town Council in 1812, as we have previously said, Bannerman roasted them in the *Chronicle*, boiled them in the Harbour Board, and along with Joseph Hume stewed them in the House of Commons. Did the Magistrates out of their good nature subscribe for twenty copies of a "Treatise on Dancing," for the sole pur-

pose of patronising and encouraging the Tory author, Mr. Francis Peacock of Villa Franca, one of our worthiest and most respected citizens, yet, Sandy Bannerman, a devotee of the saltatory art, and a brilliant and accomplished exemplar of the same, ridiculed them thus in rhyming couplets—

“ For they hae coffed a score o’ buiks,
 On dancing ilka ane ;
 Tho’ folk in sober guise wad trow
 Their dancin’ days were dane.
 Now bob for bob, an’ loup for loup
 Forenent the cham’er door,
 Grave Magistrates will rax their legs,
 Fan their sederunt’s o’er !
 Ere twa three houts their win’ will fag
 An’ puffin’ come instead ;
 Nae wonder they’ll be soon dane out,
 For dancin’s nae their trade.”

Bannerman was a veritable fountain of fun, and let nothing escape him. When by a severe storm the pier, then in course of erection, was demolished, he lets his idea be known in a rhyming ballad, saying in it—

Our pier can neither firmly stand,
 Nor sober habits learn.
 For why?—the stones that it compose
 Are all from *Dancing Cairn*.

It was his delight to play mischievous tricks on the city officials ; and not excepting the architects, he was the most designing man in the place in carrying out these tricks.

His two favourite butts were Carnegie the Town Clerk, and Kennedy the City Annalist, and many a barbed arrow did he shoot at them, as has been already shown. On one occasion Carnegie had occasion to consult Ex-Provost Brown, and entering the “ Book-Stall ” got closeted with him in his own private room, leaving his celebrated Hougomont stick lying on the shop counter. This stick, a memorial of Waterloo, was an especial favourite of his, and was the terror of all porters, bakers or messengers carrying burdens, who dared to intrude on the pavement. There being no policemen in those days, every official, from the Provost down to Simon Grant had to act, and that at once, not only as guardians of the peace but also of the proprieties. Then

woe betide the baker with his head basket, or the porter or messenger with his burden who dared to walk on that sacred paved portion of the street specially reserved for the Tories and the Gentry. If the intruders did not scuttle off into the street at once at the sight of the Clerk, they were brought to a full stop by his familiar and oft-used racial oath "— your blood, Sir?" and a threatened application of the Hougomont stick, which immediately brought them to their senses, and a full realization of the enormity of their offence—interfering with the comfort and peace of mind of the Town Clerk.

This valuable stick, the representative of force, and thus the then symbol of authority, the Clerk in an unthinking moment had left behind him. Surely he thought in an interview with such a good peaceable Tory as Provost Brown, it could not possibly be required, but—he had left it unguarded. It is in unguarded moments that mischief lies, and that Satan finds his fit opportunity. Sandy Bannerman had been following him, and seeing him enter the "Book-Stall" went in, but finding him already closeted, and seeing the well-known and highly prized stick, left immediately, carrying the stick with him, unnoticed by anyone. The interview over, the Clerk came out, but, where was his precious stick? Bannerman's call having been mentioned, suspicion was instantly aroused, and by the volley of oaths uttered, Bannerman's blood might have been raised to a temperature far above super-heated steam. Several days elapsed, when lo! the stick arrived by the mail from Edinburgh, with a note from Bannerman, saying that while in Edinburgh he had met the stick stalking on the pavement, and recognising it as Carnegie's—confirmed by seeing some grains of hair powder on its head, he had captured it, and sent the precious symbol back to its rightful owner. But he forgot to pay the carriage, and the ire of the Clerk being roused, he d—denounce—d Bannerman's blood, which evidently relieved him very much. A volley of oaths being in those days a well known sedative prescription much in use.

Another townsman whom Bannerman delighted to torment was our Annalist, William Kennedy. While he was preparing the Annals of Aberdeen for the press, the following advertisement appeared in the *Chronicle* of 5th October,

1817; and there cannot be a doubt but that Bannerman intended it as a practical joke on the historian:—

In the Press, and will be published on Monday, the 7th, in One Volume, 8vo. And to be had of all respectable Booksellers. Price Three Shillings.

A HISTORY OF ABERDEEN

From the first foundation of the City, before the Christian æra to the commencement of the Harbour improvements, containing a full and particular account of the aboriginal inhabitants, their dress, agriculture, religion, manufactures, and commerce. With notes, critical and explanatory. Much interesting intelligence will be found in this volume. The civilized state of Aberdeen two thousand years ago will be fully proved; the date of its very earliest settlement will be ascertained; and the period when salmon made their appearance in the rivers Dee and Don; and when Granite, Gravel, Grouse, and Heath were first introduced into Aberdeenshire. And among the many facts, concerning which our historians have been hitherto silent, the following must prove of no small interest to the antiquarian reader, and the fair sex in general, viz. :—

Visit of King Fergus the first, 330 A.C., 1st of the 112 Olympiad, and 421 from the building of Rome—Dinner with the Magistrates on Brose—Departure South—Cross the Dee at the Ford (no bridge)—Drowned at Carrickfergus—Town Council in Mourning, &c., &c.

Arrival of Julius Cæsar—Encampment on the Broad Hill—Nuptials of the Standard Bearer 10th Legion—Toga Romano—Bowl Road and Bay of Nigg—Cæsar sets sail—Strikes on the Bar, &c.

A. D. 82—Tacitus and his Father-in-law Agricola made Burgesses, 7th July, o.s.—Great Bell of St. Nicholas cracked by the impetuosity of the Ringer—Dispute whether the Romans or Scotch Highlanders introduced the Philabeg—Referred to Mrs. Tacitus, then drinking Tea with the Provost's Lady, &c.—Her decision was politely given in favour of the Celts—March of the Roman Army by the Causeway post road after the battle of Galgacus—Baggage carts refuse to pay Toll, and proceedings thereanent—Halt at Craiglug Brewery, &c.

Adventure of St. Palladius, coming from Fordoun to preach for St. Ternan in the West Church (he being grievously afflicted with the Toothache)—Assaulted on the Crying Crosshill by Red Beard the Robber, who was swallowed up quick for his sacrilegious attempt, *vide* Red Beard's Well even unto this day.

Anno 1050—Lady Mabeth entertained in the Trade's Hall—Macduff returns from England—Lands at the mouth of Don—Borrows the Town's Muskets to besiege Dunsinnan Castle, &c.

Anno 1236—Council convened and determin to sen Charles Waddle, The Town's Clerk, wi' a *Propine* Dunlop Cheese to our Souerin Lord, King Alexander; and to the Queen's Hieness—The Skin of the Phoca lately killed at the Loch of Strathbeg, wi' six pounds Corianders and Cassia Buds, Troy weight—The King

being at this time severely smitten wi' the Piles, and drinking the waters at Pitcaithly Wells.

Anno 1287—Baliol's Coronation Robes—Helmet and Sword—Address to King Edward presented at Westminster; with Ten Kits of Pickled Grilse by Baillie Cadogan—The Baillie knighted—Battle of Falkirk—Alarm of the Citizens, &c.

Anno 1314—Bannockburn—Illuminations—Triumphal entry of Robert Bruce at Justice Port—Visits the Quarries of Dyce, Dancing Cairns, and Kupperstanes—Grants Charter—*Facsimile*—Plays Golf, and presents the Club with certain *Pila de Aurata* i.e., Gilded Golf Balls.

SHIP BURNT FOR HERESY.

Anno 1525—This year the King's Hieness Letteris Patent, cam down to Sir John Rutherford, Knight, and the Laird of Pitfodells, "Commanding thame sharplie to luke for and mak strict "inquisition after all such as favord the deadlie errors of Martin "Luther, or had his Buiks in possession, and accordinglie haen "found his Buiks and Latin *de indulgentiis* aboard a forreign "ship, whos Master Skipper was called Hans Dondersturm, "then past him and his men to the knowledge of an asize. Bot "he takin his great oth, that neither he nor his crew cunzeit "Latin, quhilk wel appearit." And the package being marked Glass, keep this side uppermost, "they were assoliezt. Bot in "respect it was seen neidfu to make an example, the schip was "towet out and brunt in the Bay as a Heretic—the Townsmen, "Friars, and Nuns of St. Catherine wondering upon her. On "this chance Bishop Dunbare was verie wroth, and said he could "ill expect his bonnie Brig of Dee to stand wight wi' a blessing, "when they were infashin' sic damnable heresies at the water's "mou."

Extract from a Memorandum Book in the hand-writing of King William the Lion, lately discovered near Tyrebagger Toll Bar—The leaves fine vellum, oaken boards, and silver clasps, with the royal initials V.R. under the crown, finely engraved, now in the author's possession. In the year 1282 it appears that this pious Prince had not unfrequently been seduced by the allurements of bad women; and that his practice had been after such lapses, to make a solemn vow of abstinence from the whole sex for six months; but of this date he resolves to punish himself by fasting, forsaking his *best Friends*; long and solitary walking, sea bathing, and corporal punishment. His former punishment not being well approved by the Queen Higness, nor the Maid of Honour, Dame Elspet C. . . .

Many curious documents will be also given, throwing new light upon the History of the Alfred of Scotland—King William's reconciliation—Anecdotes of Poir Provost Davidson who fell at Harlaw; St. Macarius, and Adam Donald the Prophet of Bethelnie, with a Table of Weights and Measures during the reign of Robert Bruce, and several choice Scotch Melodies; making the whole a more interesting work than has ever yet been published.

Early application is recommended, as but a limited number of copies are printed.

N.B.—The latitude and longitude of the city has been calculated anew, which was rendered necessary by the changes effected by the recent earthquake.

This is perfectly delicious, especially the anachronisms! It answers Dryden's excellent description of wit, which is as variable as a lady's dress,—

“A thousand different shapes wit wears,
Comely in thousand shapes appears.
'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admired with laughter at a feast,
Nor florid talk which can this title gain
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.”

And readers familiar with the *Roundabout Papers* will at once recognise it as one origin of Thackeray's *Sketches of his Travels in the Gorilla country*, in *Two Papers I intended to write*, only, it was written subsequent to the appearance of Du Chaillu's volume, while this one, was published previous to Kennedy's *Annals*, which mightily adds to its wit.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

“To gather up the scattered rays
Of wisdom from the earlier days—
Faint gleams and broken like the light
Of meteors in a northern night—
Betraying to the darkling earth
The unseen sun which gave them birth.”

Whittier.

TIMES have greatly changed since the days we have been describing. Many men have gone over to the great majority, and many once well known firms are amongst the things that were once here, and are now *non est*. As Jeffrey feelingly writes to his friend Cockburn—

“19th August, 1827.—It is sad to have no more talk of times older than our own, and to be ourselves the vouchers for all traditional antiquity. I fear too, that we shall be less characteristic of a past age than those worthies who lived before manners had become artificial and uniform, and opinion guarded and systematic. However, we must support each other, and continue to be amiable among our juniors, if we cannot manage to be venerable.”

To get a proper idea of any man it is necessary to see a faithful portrait of him. Man being “the proper study of man, human portraits, faithfully drawn, have of all pictures ever been the welcomest on human walls.” And no wonder, for—

“These are they who governed men
By the sword or by the pen—
Who through good or evil fate,
Shaped the fortunes of the state,
Framed its creeds and laws, or bore
Its flag to many an unknown shore ;
Fought many a fight on sea or land,
Or moulded realms by wise command.
Where beneath the Indian sky,
For some strong guide the nations cry ;
In lands where deeds, not words, have sway,
Where men can rule—and men obey.”

The desire for immortality, and the dread of annihilation

after death being instinctive, it is common to humanity to wish to preserve from utter oblivion the forms and faces of those loved or revered by them. So strong is this feeling, that the hall of Holyrood Palace, 150 feet by 24, and 20 feet in height, contains a series of portraits of Scottish Kings, ranging from Fergus I., 350 B.C., down to the end of the Stewart dynasty. These were all painted by a Fleming—James De Witt, and the contract with him, dated February, 1684, still exists. By it he was bound to paint one hundred and ten portraits in two years (more than one a week), he supplying canvas and colours, while government undertook to pay him £120 per annum, and, *mirabile dictu*, to supply him with the "Originalls," which were furnished by a selection from the Edinburgh caddies or porters of the time. This was in imitation of older dynasties, for in the Council Hall of the Doge's Palace in Venice, amidst a line of seventy-two portraits of their rulers, there is placed an empty frame with a black tablet, and the inscription, "Hoc est locus Marini Falethri, decapitate pro criminibus," thus dooming him to infamy and annihilation at one and the same time.

But in the interests of humanity the wisdom of this is to be questioned; for the old axiom that "there is no faith to be put in faces," is one against which our whole human nature instinctively revolts, and almost continually acts. We feel loath to believe that the human face divine bears no traces of its Maker and of his Image. Fallible human nature, subjected to ever present temptations, may stray from the path of rectitude, may err, and may stumble without obliterating the fair lineage, or even eclipsing the heredity; but we are warranted, by analogy, in looking for some correspondence between the outward and inner man, when good guidance on our part may be invaluable. Generally however it will be found, that whenever the heredity is tainted, passions, guile, or crime, paint themselves with an indelible stamp on the open countenance, so that children, the most acute and divinely taught observers of character—far more reliable even than dogs, which, good or bad, take only after their own kind—read it at once. Miss Stirling Graham of Edinburgh, as related in *Mystifications*, in writing of her wonderfully successful personations remarks: "The cleverest people were the easiest mystified. Indeed children and dogs were the only detectives."

So that it is to be regretted that the portrait of Marini Faethri was not preserved. It would have been a most valuable study, and a photograph of it would have been useful in that most interesting album kept in the Police Office by Chief Constable Wyness, who, by his continual study of it, reads the character of every one he comes in contact with.

If, as in some cases, he failed to bring conviction to the mind of the presiding Baillie in his court, and luckily, as we think, in Aberdeen, he is not the prosecutor, as is the case in some other places, yet, baffled though he was by the compassionate leanings of the Judge, by the want of sufficient reliable evidence, or by the technicalities of statute law, as announced by the Fiscal, yet no Baillie could deny that he had and has a very wonderful knowledge of human character, and that, if the real culprit escaped punishment once, he very soon afterwards deserved—and got it.

So much seems necessary to be recorded in favour of that instinctive judgment all human beings form of each other, through the study of phsiognomy, coupled with a modicum of phrenology; admitting that neither of them have become exact sciences. But surely these are infinitely more reliable than the *cross-my-loaf* judgment of the wandering gipsy, so much still believed in by the ignorant, or the palmistry, the finger marks, the caligraphy, or the specimens of the hair submitted to the inspection of the quacks, who pretend to fix the character and the career of the possessors.

Here is yet another specimen of the wit and waggery which formed a large and important constituent of the air in which men lived in those far back days. Then men had more leisure, so much more indeed, that to prevent their brains from rusting they were in a manner obliged to concoct and carry out elaborate jokes in order to grease the wheels of Time, and to make the world spin more merrily. Methinks some can yet say—

“I hear them still unchanged, though some from earth
Are music partal, and the tones of mirth—
Wild silvery tones, that rang through days more bright
Have died in echoes, yet to me they come
Singing of boyhood back, the voices of my home.”

The following *jeu d'esprit* comes from the archives of one,

whose "great routh o' nick-nackets," is made freely accessible, and who, if the genial Dean Ramsay was long the only known Dean in Scotland—has also long been known and esteemed the only Dean in Aberdeen, and been addressed as "Very Reverend."

"Book-learned and quaint, a virtuoso hight
Uncommon things and rare *are* his delight."

It is an elaborately got up document in the true legal style and on fine vellum, with the seal of the Earl of Kintore in red wax attached, and runs so—

SUBPCENA.

For General JOHN BAXTER, D.M., 1829.

By JAMES ANDREW SANDILANDS of Cruives, Perpetual President of the Little Club, and the Subscribing Members of that Convivial Institution.

WHEREAS, much inconveniency and trouble have been occasioned to the Perpetual President and Members of this select Society by reason of the necessity which has hitherto existed of procuring by means of special invitation from the respective members thereof the attendance in the jovial sittings of the Club of John Baxter, Esquire, heretofore a Captain in His Majesty's Land Forces, but now a Proprietor of a Tenement in Belmont Street and a General in the Devil-making Department of the useful art and sublime science of Cookery. To remedy, therefore, so great an Evil, the said John Baxter is hereby ordered and required to attend properly equipped for the execution of his office, and prepared with stewing pans, pepper cruets, and sauces necessary for the discharge of his duty at all the convivial meetings of the Little Club, at the place and sharp at the hour specified in the printed Circulars which will be regularly forwarded to him by the Perpetual President without any other or further notice. Or to transmit to the aforesaid Perpetual President in due time, couched in proper language and legible penmanship, a satisfactory excuse for his absence, in case he chanced on any occasion [to] be prevented from attending in his place.

With certification that if he fail he will himself be played the Devil with.

Given at the Royal Hotel in Belmont Street this Tenth day of April, Eighteen hundred and twenty-nine years.

JOHN FORBES.
A. BANNERMAN.
A. MORRICE.
AL. BANNERMAN.
GEO. SANGSTER.
THOS. BANNERMAN.

J. A. SANDILANDS, *P. P. L. C.*
ALEXR. LYALL, *V. P.*
JA. BLAIKIE, *Secy. L. C.*
A. HAY.
BASIL FISHER.

What wild wags they were in these days! The title of their convival institution was in itself a joke, because so far from being "Little," the members were, as compared with their fellow citizens, veritable sons of Anak amongst them. But this dreadful document, with its awful and terrible threat, was not intended as a joke. For although it was issued in April, it is dated on the tenth and not on the first. As will be shown it was one other illustration of the truth of that wise old Scotch saw, that "Feels and bairns shudna play wi' edged tools."

The "Royal Hotel" in Belmont Street was the residence of Mr. Sandilands, which stood on the site now occupied by the Congregational Church. In the area in front of it there were a number of wire covered enclosures containing a collection of pigeons, bantam fowls, golden pheasants, and rare birds, a perfectly delightful "Zoo" for the boys of the period. And whenever Mr. Sandilands, invariably accompanied by James White, took his walks abroad, his tall form then standing out like a steeple in the crowd, he was followed by several small dogs, fine and rare specimens of the King Charles breed, which were greatly admired and coveted by the citizens. From his tall stature, Sandilands got the name of the "Panorama": and it was affirmed, that on one occasion when entering an exhibition where a giant was one item of the show, his entry-money was refused, and he was told "they never charged professionals."

To the loonies of the time the whole establishment in Belmont Street, its owner, with his associates, were objects of admiring wonder and mysterious awe. In hushed whispers, and with bated breath, the bigger and knowing schoolboys would tell their younger companions that a club—*whatever that was*—met there, and continued their sittings so long that the town was asleep and mortals the sweets of forgetfulness proved. That although it was generally called "Little," its real name was the Hell Fire Club; that frightful orgies took place in it, in which animals of various kinds were sacrificed, and turned into skeletons, and demoniac shrieks and wild unearthly laughter were heard in those dark and dismal midnight hours, when all good little loonies were asleep, or ought to be: when thousands "of two-legged animals lay in horizontal positions; their heads all in night-caps and full of the foolishest dreams."

One story in particular made our very flesh creep, especially as its truthfulness—like the myths of the Grecian constellations—the legends of the Rhine shores—or the grave of the murdered Daune—could be verified by something visible and tangible to us, quite enough to dispel all doubts in confirmed believers. One Saturday symposium had, as we were told, been prolonged until after midnight—the mirth had been fast and furious, loud and uproarious, and when the natively strong stirrup cup, or *doch-an-doris*, had been at last administered, the company left and wended their several ways. Amongst them was our old and now familiar friend Carnegie, and as his trusted companion and protector he had his Hougomont stick with him, which, as he stoiterated homewards, he tried hard to “*set wi cannie skill*” to keep him steady, for he found the ground very unsteady, and the very earth appeared to wobble in its orbit.

It was that great and original discoverer, Robbie Burns, who first recorded that “the wee short hour ayont the twal” was the favourite revelling time of witches and warlocks, of bogles, kelpies, cutty sarks, and of numerous other infernal agents whose name is Legion.

“ Hags, who at the witching time
Of murky midnight ride the air sublime,
And mingle foul embraces with the fiends of hell.”

And verily, but for the guardianship of his stick, the clerk might have then been seized and spirited away by some of the more earthly and corporeal members of this legion. As it was, he plodded doggedly along in his progress westwards, towards his new residence, No. 257 Union Street (now No. 373), to which he had recently removed from the dark and dingy precincts of Exchequer Row.

But ever more and more, as the night air told upon him, he became painfully and increasingly conscious that he was followed by a dark and mysteriously arrayed personage, who in the black and gloomy night appeared to him to have a suspiciously striking likeness to the current representations of his Satanic Majesty himself, with his conventional horns and hoofs. This frightful, hideous idea, once entering his mind, grew upon him, and became continually more alarming as the footsteps drew ever closer and closer.

“ Like one who in the darksome night
 Doth walk in fear and dread,
 And having once turned round, walks on
 And turns no more his head !
 Because he knows a frightful fiend
 Doth close behind him tread.”

His terror so increased that as he drew near to his own door he made a rapid rush up the steps, and with the aid of his guardian stick, got safely inside the door. Not however without a serious struggle, in which *Hougomont* came out triumphantly victorious, as it deserved to do. For according to the Shepherd in the *Noctes* “ Clottie’s a great cooard and wull never hae courage to face ” Christopher North’s crutch or Carnegie’s stick.

All readers of the accounts of the battle of Waterloo remember the remarkable circumstance, that when in the battle, the Château of Hougomont was closely beleaguered by the French, and set on fire by them, the flames became suddenly extinguished on their contact with a wooden image of the Virgin placed at the entrance to the chapel, in which lay the wounded British soldiers. More than once the writer has seen this image *in situ*, and never looked upon it, nor thought upon the coincidence, and the reverent belief it has since excited, with scorn. Quite the contrary, for deep, deep down in the very heart of hearts of the savage and the civilised human being, unless the latter has become suddenly dazzled and temporarily blinded by the electric glare of science, does there not dwell a deep and abiding sense of the supernatural !

Carnegie’s stick must surely have come from the same tree, for it saved him also from fire. By its aid he escaped ; but what might have been his fate may be partially inferred from the fact that the hissing hot hand of the fiend, instead of clutching the clerk, fell upon the granite jamb of the doorway, and left upon its white surface an indelible and abiding representation of the hand—most invaluable to students of palmistry—of “ Auld Hornie himsel’.”

There for many a year and day the “ Deil’s hanniwark ” remained unmolested during the whole lifetime of the clerk, and that of the occupancy of his sister. All through that lengthened time, like a pillar of salt, it afforded ample opportunities for loving, Christian, godly parents, giving

their children serious lectures, earnest injunctions, solemn admonitions, and even death-bed warnings, against late hours, deep potations, and any dealings whatsoever with the powers of darkness. And there it might still have remained, had not the late respected and revered Dr. Keith, on his purchase of the property, determined that he would have nothing to do with any of the works of darkness, and that he would utterly and entirely exterminate all marks of any Devilish doings on any property of his.

Great research and much ingenuity was expended by him as to how best to do it. If he did not officially consult the Presbytery it was because the question was more material than spiritual, but after a consultation of members it was resolved by him that he should employ a true blue, old and original Presbyterian and Free Church mason, who was anxious to gain his knightly spurs in a reputed encounter with the very Prince of Darkness himself. The mason proved himself a practical man, discarding all spiritual influences. *Aqua vitae* or even *aqua fortis*, bell, book or candle incantations he would have nothing to do with, but the Moderate man, that he was, in a perverse generation, he betook himself to the arms of the flesh, and by his own and the arms of his employees, he tried laboriously and painfully to pick out from the stone the marks of the fiery fingers of the Prince of Darkness thereon imprinted. It is in the deepest melancholy, and with the profoundest sorrow, that we have to record his non-success, all the more regretful because it was the temporary triumph of matter over mind. A little splatch of hornblende in a little granite block, to the little world concerned, proved a little stumbling block for the time, and there it still stands, though somewhat shorn of its original size. It is worthy of careful preservation.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

“Valuable information is often widely scattered, and is frequently found in out-of-the-way places where it may not be expected.”

“Who has not some treasured letters,
Fragments choice of others' lives,
Relics, some of friends departed,
Friends whose memory still survives?
Touched by neither time nor distance
Will those words unspoken last,
Voiceless whispers of the present,
Silent echoes of the past?”

BY Act of Parliament, 1891, Old Aberdeen, Woodside, and the village of Torry were included within the boundaries of the city, making the present area of the municipal burgh of Aberdeen 6,602 acres, or fully ten square miles in extent.

The ancient civic Corporation of Old Aberdeen—*Parthenopolis* as Professor Blackie styled it—thus became absorbed in the larger community, and the Provost of the old and venerable place took his seat as a Councillor in the extended burgh. He brought with him the Provost's chain and badge of office, and which, with good taste and generosity, he has presented to our Art Gallery, where it is to be seen.

The medal is in a graceful oval form, with the arms of the Aulton on the reverse, “a pot of lilies with three salmon crossing fretwise,” with the burgh motto, “*Concordia res parvæ crescunt*,” which mixes well with *Bon-Accord*. On the obverse side it bears the following inscription:—

“FROM HUGH McLEANE OF COLL, ESQ., WHO REPEATEDLY SERVED THE OFFICE OF CHIEF MAGISTRATE IN THE CITY OF OLD ABERDEEN, 1784.”

And thereby hangs a tale, which, as a reminiscence of the old times in Aberdeen, and so coming within the wide sweep of these papers, we may be allowed to record.

Francis Colman, brother-in-law to the celebrated William Pulteney, afterwards Earl of Bath, was in 1721 the British

Minister in Vienna, from whence he was transferred to Florence. While there he had a son born to him, George Colman, 1732-94, now known as "the elder," who bulked largely in the literary annals of last century as an author, a translator of Terence in blank verse, and of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, and also as a successful dramatist; producing some forty dramas of merit, some of them keeping the stage to the present day; and brought out while he was manager either of Covent Garden or of the Haymarket.

His son George "the younger" 1762-1836—a petted and precocious child, accustomed to the best literary society of the age, had as a child of five years of age sat on Goldsmith's knee, and to the horror of his father slapped the Doctor's face, and only escaped chastisement on his intercession. He was sent to Winchester School, and there had as companions, Cumberland the dramatist, Warren Hastings the statesman, and Lloyd, Cowper, Churchill, and Bonnel Thornton, representatives of various phases of poetic art. Desirous of giving his son a liberal education, young Colman was ultimately, amidst eminent contemporaries, entered at Christ Church, Oxford, that he might acquire good manners, if not learning. But Oxford had not then recovered from the torpor in which it had lain from the beginning of the century. If Bishop Butler, Gibbon, and Bentham could say that a residence at Oxford was barren and unprofitable; if Adam Smith could severely criticise the studies, and say that the negligence of tutors and lecturers was better than their vigilance and assiduity, for thus he got time to read deeply, widely and wisely what proved beneficial to him; if the clever Sydney Smith thought the time wasted at Oxford, and if Francis Jeffrey wrote that "nothing was to be acquired there except praying and drinking," the negligence of the masters and tutors at that time simply meant ruin to Colman. For as the twig is bent the tree will grow, and having been accustomed to much license and freedom at home, and free admission to the theatres in London, he found Oxford and its studies intolerably dull. And as characteristic of the egregious little puppy, when suddenly metamorphosed into a man with the regulation queue, he "presented himself to the Vice-Chancellor in a grass-green coat, with the be-powdered pate of an ultra coxcomb."

He got into a bad set of companions "young barbarians"

became idle, dissipated, and extravagant, rebelled against authority, was if not ringleader, at least *airt and pairt* in every row, and so outrageously wild that it was said—

“There was a young Colman of John’s,
Who set at defiance the Dons,
He cut morning chapels,
And flung rotten apples
About the quadrangle of John’s.”

He thought nothing of posting up to London and spending the night in Bohemian revels, instead of burning the midnight oil and studying in his own furnished chambers in College.

It would be allowing the young scamp far too much ingenuity to credit him with an escapade like this as his own original discovery. The practice was not uncommon among the students of both universities, most of whom were the sons of wealthy fathers—some of them indeed being scions of the nobility. And it is related that one student, having one night been seen by his father in a London theatre, and confronted with his parent, with the coolest effrontery he denied his parentage, and, to the profound astonishment of his own father, gave him the cut direct, alleging that his name was “Smith,” and that he had never previously set eyes on his alleged parent. Enraged beyond measure, the father, at the close of the performance, posted down to Cambridge, arriving in the small hours of the morning; but, to his bewildered astonishment, found his young hopeful—even at those untimely hours—painfully poring over a page of Greek roots, at which he said he had been engaged for hours. The scapegrace in the theatre—evidently destined to become a celebrated ministerial *charge d’affaires* at foreign courts—had instantly realized the importance of the interview; had left the theatre immediately, and engaging a coach and four, with large tips to the drivers, had managed to reach Cambridge a full hour before the arrival of the enraged parent, who, like a celebrated ancient prophet, came to curse but remained to bless.

Grant Allen has said that “the wining, and dining, and the throwing of oranges,” at fellow student’s heads, is the most important period of life. Had he only added the escapades of nocturnal flights to London theatres and town

and gown rows and scimmages, he would have exactly described the life of young Colman in its sowing springtime.

Some men, indeed, like Wilberforce, seem to have come out unscathed and unsullied from the pollution. While at St. John's College, Cambridge, it is said by Sir James Stephen that "his companions were hard-drinking, licentious youths, whose talk was even worse than their lives. His teachers did their best to make and to keep him idle." Pitt also passed his course of study at Cambridge as a model student, *sans reproche*, and when he took his degree, did not take leave of his college, and then and afterwards "steadily avoided every species of irregularity." Indeed for want of a better, the favourite taunt of his opponents of all classes was that Pitt lived a cleanly moral life all his days.

The wild doings of his son could not be altogether hid from his literary father, who learned that the very superficial discipline exercised was quiet insufficient to restrain the Bohemian tendencies of his own boy—inherited largely from himself. He was disappointed as to the discipline exercised in the English public schools. If Oxford could not curb the superabundant spirits of the young cub, what was to be done? The educational resources of England were found wanting, and to the English parent the Continental supply was then objectionable on many accounts, if not considered closed at the time.

Colman, senior, in his translation of Horace has these lines—

“’Tis this, then is the duty of a father
To make a son embrace a life of virtue
Rather from choice than terror or constraint.
Here lies the mighty difference between
A Father and a Master. He who knows not
How to do this, let him confess he knows not
How to rule children.”

It is likely that the parent had omitted to bend the twig while it was young and pliant,—it is certain that by the time his son was entered at college, the twig had grown wild, and so rampant, that his father's best laid scheme of education for him went sadly agley, and some other place and plan would have to be tried. As Quiller Couch says—"In Oxford and Cambridge alone were found these immemorial nests of life-long leisure, the occupants of which succeeded

each other like rooks in a rookery, where the tall elms tell of centuries of undisturbed repose and inviolate prescription. Individual birds were often laughed at, it is true; but collectively they shared in the respect which was paid to the system as a whole." But respect either for the system, or the individuals, was totally wanting in the minds of young Colman and his associates, and could not be engendered by *terror or constraint*. So his father felt himself *constrained* to take very strong measures,—so strong, indeed, that not one Englishman out of a thousand could have then been found to agree with him as to the wisdom of his proposed remedial discipline. To almost all Englishmen at the time, Iceland, Siberia, Kamtschatka, and Scotland were almost synonymous with Botany Bay—only fit residences for convicts.

We say "almost all Englishmen"—because it is certainly somewhat singular to find that at this time, when Scottish Judges were banishing criminals "furth the kingdom," that is, to England, there should have been found a number of English students in our Scottish Universities. Some of them indeed may have been of the *ne'er do weel* order, waifs banished furth their country, not by the magistrate, but by their parents, for a season and a trial. If this did not cure them they were then taken home again, and their parents were then sorrowfully obliged to let them *dree their weird*. Scotland indeed had no monopoly of prudent, loving parents, who were anxious to preserve and perpetuate the fair bloom of uncontaminated innocence and the budding manly traits in the minds of their sons, and gladly allowed them to try the power of their wings, and the strength of their principles amongst strangers, for many cadets of noble and wealthy English families, like Lords Seymour, Petty, Russell and others, were drawn to Edinburgh by the fame of its university professors, and, as we shall see, Aberdeen had a share.

Meantime, Colman the wise man, like Jamie Fleeman the fool, both agreed that *desperate diseases require desperate cures*. Colman, Senior, was determined to find out, and that, if possible, within the kingdom, some chilly hyperborean region where men were pure and women were chaste, where the inhabitants lived in primeval innocence, without theatres, or apples, to tempt them; but were mainly materially fed by

oatmeal, and spiritually, by the *Shorter Catechism* and the *Confession of Faith*.

After a study of all the Gazetteers then extant, he came to the conclusion that this unique country was Scotland, and further research revealed to him the fact, that although Aberdeen was even then on the high road to ruin by its advancing prosperity, yet, contiguous to it there was an old-fashioned, primeval village called "Old Aberdeen," which apparently answered all his requirements. No doubt he did the best he could in the circumstances, and reasoned with himself that if Old Aberdeen did not *Scotch* his son, nothing else could possibly do so.

We, Aberdonians, may safely assume that from some old and as yet undiscovered progenitor, Colman, Senior, must have had Scotch blood in his veins, for he was not only prudent, but had actually a large amount of the *canniness* which so particularly characterizes the race. He made all due enquiries, and entered into formal negotiations as to his son's lodgment and expenses with one of the highest authorities of the place, the Sub-principal of King's College, Dr. Roderick Macleod, who, for the long period of sixty-seven years was a leading and ruling power in the place, and who figures as such in Kaye's print of "The Sapient Septemveri," 1786.

And so, in 1781, in consequence of his misdeeds, young Colman was banished to Old Aberdeen, being carefully escorted thither by a friend of his father. Of this journey he gives a vivid account in his "Random Records," 2 vols., 1830, to which we are indebted for some of his reminiscences of his place of banishment.

Like all Englishmen at the time, his prejudices against Scotland and Scotchmen were extreme. The country was represented to him as being a Lapland, and the inhabitants, if not heathens, were Puritans, which, to Colman, was quite as bad, if not even worse. For his beau ideal of a dwelling place was of the very latest modern fashion—a place where there were neither morals nor Sundays, and where if the Creed might be long, the Decalogue was short. Like Rudyard Kipling's hero, his desire was expressed by—

"Ship me somewhere east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there are no Ten Commandments, and a man can raise a thirst."

His journey north, in which he begins to perceive that people may actually live—out of England—is amusingly written; but his progress northwards is marked by his increasing depression of spirits, as he thinks on the tyrannical supervision of every word and action of his by the Sub-principal of King's College, who, in his fancy, had become invested with all the attributes of a veritable despot whom he feared and naturally hated.

His fears were soon dissipated. He found his guardian, "Rory Macleod," as he was familiarly termed, a genial, human, even humane man as to the peccadillos of the ordinary students, John David Perkins and a Mr. Earle, who were conjoined with Colman. In their case, beyond regulating the monthly allowances of money received on their account, there was not the very slightest attempt made as to the exercise of discipline or supervision of any kind,—a state of matters which greatly rejoiced the English students, accustomed as they were to the stricter code of the English Universities, where every student had to have his hair cropped and powdered to a block pattern, and to be dressed according to rule. The cultivation of good manners over good morals, and the glorification of matter over mind were the objects aimed at.

Beyond seeing his *protégé*, Colman, safely domiciled in a lodging-house along with his two English companions, each of them with a male servant of his own, "Rory" took no further charge of them, and they were left in the actual garden of Eden (see page 50),—for they were left entirely to the freedom of their own will, according to the definition of the *Shorter Catechism*. The other professors were equally subservient. Professor Dunbar, who taught Greek and Mathematics, "hoped he would have the pleasure of seeing Colman at his lectures," and promised that he would make his lectures "sae entertainin' that if he only cam' ance, he wud-na be able to stay awa'." Colman did attend for a few mornings, but afterwards totally deserted, and on being taxed with this desertion when he applied for his certificate, impudently replied that "he had not been entertained!" which reply would have cost him at least rustication—or even expulsion—in England, but was here ignored.

Evidently Professor Dunbar did not, like Dr. Chalmers at St. Andrews, "burst into the dry fields of geometry, like

a meteor lighting up those arid plains till they blossomed like the rose.” But he burst into print, being the author of *Essays on the History of Mankind*, &c., which was commended by Dr. Robertson, and even by Dr. Johnson. And Sir James Mackintosh, one of his pupils, says of him—“I shall ever be grateful to his memory, for having contributed to breathe into my mind a strong spirit of liberty, swelling the heart with animating consciousness of dignity, and creating the exquisite enjoyments of self-honour and self-reverence.”

These three English students produced quite a sensation in both Old and New Aberdeen. They were considered aristocrats, and they kept up the character in great style. Their college uniform, not of vulgar scarlet cloth, like those of ordinary students, or town sergeants, but made out of the finest velvet, they turned into hunting coats of the newest London fashion, and created quite a sensation among the local tailors, and the dandies of the period. Arrayed in these brilliant garments, they came over from the Aulton and paraded the “plainstanes” of the new town like turkeys or peacocks with their tails spread, and to the utter discomfiture of all youthful rivals attracted universal attention and admiration—were the cynosure of all ladies’ eyes, but what was mostly valued by them, of all the young ladies’ eyes.

And so, according to the opinion of an old and very wise philosopher, who attributed every event in human history to the influence exercised by women, and declared that men were merely their puppets, only can the fact be reconciled, that within a few weeks of Colman’s arrival in Aberdeen he was asked by Provost James Jopp to meet him and a few friends in the Town-hall, and was then and there elected a Burgess of the “Braif Toon,” the high honour that it was—his immediate predecessor having been the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson.

At the hospitable table of the Sub-principal of Old Aberdeen, young Colman must have met with the best company of the place. Amongst others frequently invited there, was the Provost, Hugh McLeane, the laird of Coll, an island of the Hebrides. Hearing him addressed as Coll, which he thought a little too familiar, and wishing to show him respect,

he addressed him, "Mr. Coll, will you do me the honour to drink a glass of wine with me?" This was met with a stare of astonishment, and without recognition of any kind. Colman repeated the invitation, but without eliciting the slightest notice. Asking his neighbour if McLeane was deaf, he was then informed "that he had greatly offended the Laird by ca'in him Mister," and was informed of the Scottish fashion. Hastening then to repair his error he attacked the chieftain for the third time with "Coll, allow me to hob-nob with you?" "With all the pleasure in life, young gentleman," roared the mighty Coll—relaxing his features; and thenceforward Old King Coll was condescending and even attentive. Colman wonders whether the proprietors of the islands of Muck, Eigg, and Rum were so addressed.

No doubt they were so, for at a dinner table at Newburgh, in Foveran, the writer heard the tenants of the farms of Monkshill and Pitscaff addressed as "Monkie" and "Scaffie," and was naturally shocked.

Many other wild escapades of Colman and his two English companions, who, with the aid of their stalwart servants came over to New Aberdeen (and went about there as cocks of the causeway) for the express purpose of thrashing those bullies who were jealous and envied their popularity—of the rows they got into, and their breaking of windows, etc., etc., are frankly narrated. If they did not live their old boisterous lives in England they made it breezy enough in the sleepy "Aulton," and frequently raised the wind in a stormy manner in the new town. They had learned that there was a possible chance of their being "banished to England" if they made their present place too hot for them, and they did all they possibly could to merit this most desirable sentence, and to the great astonishment of their own advocate tried to bribe him by the promise of double fees to secure a conviction. But if they had little principle, they had behind them a powerful Principal, whose influence prevented their designs, and kept their noses at the grindstone—such as it was.

While resident in Aberdeen, Colman printed and published in 1782, under the title of *The Man of the People*, a boyish satire on Fox the statesman, in which he admits that Fox was "blackened as black as the devil himself." He was

afterwards heartily ashamed of this juvenile production, (which must, however, have greatly pleased the Aberdeen authorities) and he strenuously endeavoured to suppress it ; so that it has become one of the rarest of rare books, and much coveted by the collector of curiosities. Let local readers keep a sharp look out for it, and when found, present it to the Free Library, where it will be carefully preserved.

During the winter session of the University, when the grindstone of the classes went regularly round for five months, Colman and his companions had—coupled with the convivial parties of the period, and occasional private rows, or public ones between town and gown—quite sufficient material to make “life worth living,” without any wailing on their part. But the enforced leisure of the seven months vacation was a trying time to them. They had not the supreme felicity which so many of their companions enjoyed, of going back to their own dear homes with their sacred associations ; to the lowly thatched cottage in which they had been reared, with their beloved God-given relations ; or to engage in the intellectual or manual occupations, which more than supplied their small wants in the way of sustentation. And Colman tells that one year he made an exciting and adventurous tramp to Leith, in order to see the races there, and of the dangers he encountered, and the shifts he had to make, in order to escape the numerous pressgangs which then scoured the country, seizing every one whom they could lay hold of.

In his after days Colman admits that he benefited by his enforced residence, dating from that period his love of letters and his knowledge of human nature. Was it one effect of his training in the Presbyterian place, that when in later days he became the deputy licenser of plays he was considered to be puritanically severe in his censorship of the dramas which he had to read and license ? It is not unlikely, for—

“As we wax older on this earth,
Till many a toy that charmed us seems
Emptied of beauty, stripped of worth,
And mean as dust and dead as dreams,—
For gauds that perished, shows that passed,
Some recompense the Fates have sent :
Thrice lovelier shine the things that last,
The things that are more excellent.”

It would however be an entire mistake—as great as that made by the historian Buckle when he took his ideas of Scotland from Chambers's *Annals*—if readers supposed that Colman and his companions fairly represented the students at King's College, whether Scotch or English. If to him with his Bohemianism Old Aberdeen seemed a place of banishment, there were in 1781, other English students there like Robert Hall of Leicester, and Charles Burney of Greenwich (the afterwards celebrated Greek scholar) to whom the place was indeed the Garden of Eden, or as one of the Elysian fields. While the Scottish students, oft times scant of cash and sometimes actually of oatmeal, eschewed Colman and all his deeds, they felt far more inclined to follow the leadings of *Jamie Mackintosh*, who was a student then; by copying him, if they did not acquire his knightly spurs and his world wide reputation, they at least acquired honourable and useful positions in society, and solid and substantial livings, ecclesiastic or scholastic.

James Mackintosh, from the neighbourhood of Fortrose, came to King's College with a dangerous reputation, for as an Aberdeen professor, while on a visit, heard that his name all over the country side was synonymous with “a prodigy of learning.” And of such, cannie Scotch folk are inclined to say, “Jist bide a whilie afore ye craw; wise bairnies dinna aye turn oot wise men!”

Moreover he had such a propensity for turning his thoughts into rhyme that the fellow students getting word of this, dubbed him “the poet Mackintosh.” This he strongly repudiated, but all the same he admits that when his effusions were submitted to the learned Charles Burney (son of the musical composer, author of the *History of Music*, etc., etc., and father of Madame D'Arblay) who was then finishing his term at King's College, he was “intoxicated with the praise bestowed,” and with the advice that “I should go on and might do well.”

Does not this judicious criticism show the beneficial effects of a residence in Old Aberdeen. Had Jeffrey only enjoyed this training, he would never have been guilty of the criminal blunder of characterising Wordsworth's effusions as “This will never do!”

But his intoxication at this praise did not last long. He not only repudiated the title, but he gave up the practice,

having adopted it as many sensible men do as simply a useful exercise in the command of language. It was beyond his power, however, to repudiate the title of "*inter studiosus facile princeps*," which Principal Jack (a then fellow student) says was accorded to him by general acclaim.

The wise young man that he was, his conceptions of supreme felicity were moderate. His beau ideal was "to be a bookseller in the capital, conceiving that no paradise could surpass the life spent amongst books, and diversified by the society of men of genius." There is an old Scottish proverb which says "Bode a silk gown, and you will get a sleeve o't." Mackintosh got not only the gown but also both sleeves.

It does not require the acumen of an Adams or a LeVerrier to predict that if two superior planets are in one solar system they must mutually attract each other. Hall & Mackintosh not only fell into each other's society, but into one orbit. They were as inseparately connected as Castor & Pollux. Linked arm in arm as they traversed the streets their class-fellows would point them out and say "there go Pláto & Herodotus." In their honour a society was formed named "The Hall & Mackintosh Club," and the devotion of the members to study may be imagined, when we learn from Mackintosh's autobiographical sketch, that "we met at five o'clock in the morning to read Greek in the apartments of Mr. Wynne, a nephew of Lord Newburgh, who had the good nature to rise at that unusual [winter] hour for the mere purpose of regaling us with coffee," Blessings on him! even if he did go to bed afterwards, and did not matriculate. He at least served his day and generation!

Surely to all Aberdonians by birth or adoption, this sketch by Mackintosh of his companions and intimates is as delightful as an old world photograph projected on the white screen of the present. For here we have presented to us clear, life-like pictures of the men of old, moving in the best local society, and the main factors in the formation of current opinion. All the more welcome, because by the long lapse of time and the gathering clouds of oblivion, the men have become simply shadows and mere names to us. Professor Leslie, he says—taught little more than the rudiments of Greek—"more would have been useless." Dr. Dunbar, the author of *Essays on the History of Mankind*—com-

mended by Dr. Robertson, and even by Dr. Johnson "was worthy and liberal minded." William Jack—afterwards Principal—perhaps, as much influenced as influencing; became noted in the Reform days for his advanced opinions and was a thorn in the flesh to his brother professors of the hereditary stamp.

By heredity, by birth and connections Mackintosh was both a Tory and a Jacobite, and so was considered safe against all modern, innovating, democratic ideas; for the race from which he sprung were not given to change. To their intense disgust he renounced his family creed, and became one of the most ardent and advanced Liberals of his day; and did so in consequence of the educating influence of the University which was considered the Oxford of Scotland! He says that the lectures of that most ingenious and accomplished recluse, Professor Ogilvie were heard by him with pleasure; thus foreseeing and forestalling the expressed opinion of a whole century afterwards, when Ogilvie's merits have only begun to be recognised.

It was by intercourse with men like these that James Mackintosh formed his opinions: which in 1791 made him known to the whole world by his publication of the *Vindica Gallicæ*; the most powerful piece of reasoning in answer to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, and in favour of liberty which had appeared, or did appear.

In the Central Alps, on one side overlooking the chestnut groves of the Val Bregallia, and on the other the romantic valley of the upper Engadine, there stands a mountain from whose snow-clad summit spring three rivers, one finding its way through the Danube into the Black Sea, another through the Po into the Adriatic, while the third, the noble and celebrated Rhine, finds rest in the German Ocean. They seem fit analogues of some human lives—of students who, whatever may be their after careers, draw their strength from one common source, their training at one university.

Of Colman, who living with the idea of life being "all beer and skittles" only helped to produce such. Of Hall, who began the day at five a.m. with coffee and Greek, and spending the after hours in study, meditation and debate, produced *Discourses* which are still classical. And of Mackintosh, who became one of the most profound thinkers

of his age both at home or abroad, was held in the highest esteem in France; and as Macaulay says, one from whom scholars and statesmen loved to receive the lessons of a serene and benevolent wisdom; one who had spoken, acted, and lived history.



CHAPTER XXXV.

“Forth from his mansion, just at ten o’clock,
Struts the learned Banker, like a turkey cock,
Burly and big ; behold him sail along,
Wit in his wink, and wisdom on his tongue !
Through Silver Street he steers for Golden Square,
Soon Diamond Street proclaims his presence there !
Then Union Street must feel, in all its stones,
The heavy burden of his beef and bones !
Here—let us mark him as with look profound
And solemn gait he clears the granite ground
Right to the Bank—the scene of all his labour,
Where Willie G—was once his drouthy neighbour :
Famed Greece and Rome may jointly claim his nose,
His cheek is red—the cause you may suppose ;
His mouth is but a so perforation
Through which to dole the frequent long oration !”

SUCH is the picture of “An Old Aberdonian sketched from Life,” by John Ramsay (1799-1870), preserved and handed down to us by the loving care of his literary executor.

It is not only an excellent specimen of Ramsay’s versification, but a vivid portrait of a well known citizen, whose portly figure is preserved to us in Hay’s *View of Castle Street*, along with some other notable men of the period. And as this print is getting increasingly scarce and valuable, and a whole generation, including all the characters represented, has passed away, it may be worth while giving the names of those parties who figure in the picture.

Commencing then at the left hand side we have the portrait of Provost James Hadden, then old, venerable, and after the storms of life, highly honoured. Approaching him we see James Hardy and Alexander Fraser, two of the Town-house officials. Then the tall figure of James Sandilands of Cruives (*vulgo*, the Panorama), arm in arm with his henchman, James White, and accompanied by his favourite dogs. Behind him we have Jas. Johnston of the Aberdeen Bank—the subject of Ramsay’s sketch. Next, making his way to the Athenæum, Provost James Milne, with his

attendant officer, Simon Grant. Then the well known figure of Sergeant Shaw of the recruiting force, a familiar form on the Plainstones. Engaged in earnest conversation, we next have the group of Dr. Joseph Robertson, who had by this time made his mark, and secured a place in the Rolls of Fame; the very portly form of Ignatius Massie, at one time an auctioneer, but latterly manager of the Gas Works, celebrated amongst the laughter-loving citizens for his vaunted claim of the discovery of—as it turned out on his trying to trot it out to some citizens and strangers—a most remarkable echo on the Dee, opposite the Devanha Distillery. Proud of his discovery, which he thought was original, he took this company to the site, and placing himself in the proper place shouted out—“What are you doing there?” when to his own immense astonishment, and the surprise of his companions, which produced in them convulsions of laughter, the reply came back, clear and distinct, “Fat’s your business?” There are other and grosser versions of the reply of this very remarkable echo (*alias*—some bird-nesting boys on the opposite bank), but for a short time the city was nearly submerged by the waves of laughter which penetrated and flooded every convivial party, and made itself felt up and above the mahogany tables. Along with these two, and almost rivalling Massie in his portly dimensions, is to be seen the portraiture of James Adam, the editor of the *Aberdeen Herald*, a most potential factor in the formation of Aberdeen opinion at the time.

Next to this group we find a representation of the tall, handsome, and decidedly distinguished form of Sir Alexander Bannerman (knighted in 1851), and as “birds o’ a feather flock together” he is appropriately represented as discussing the affairs of the nation with an equally high and elevated man, Sir Michael Bruce of Scotston, who as his senior in rank and dignity is represented as on horseback—of the order of *Equites*.

Next to these two, and business-like as was his wont, is depicted the smart, active, life-like form of John Angus, the Town Clerk, on his way to his place of business in the Town-house. Then after him we have the full face and form of Councillor William Philip, of broad and free speech notoriety, whose pithy sayings set many tables in a roar then,

and in their laughter-producing results promoted digestion, and thus helped to prolong the lives of many citizens.

Philip is represented as being appealed to by a woman with a child in hand ; and herein there is a quaint stroke of humour, which, keenly appreciated by those living at the time, and conversant with the characters, caused some earthquake explosions of laughter, which quickly reverberated from Footdee to Kittybrewster and Rubislaw, arising from the narration of this and other stories which would now be considered extremely improper. Braving this, however, we venture—in illustration of the manners of the time, to narrate one story of many, and the least objectionable. In 1836, when Marischal College was rebuilding, there was talk of the removal of Greyfriars' Church. And a Council committee, of which Philip was a member—along with the minister, Mr. Abercrombie Gordon, perambulated Justice Street with its infamous closes, in which justice was of the Jeddart kind—and also some of the neighbouring localities, but without success, as to finding a suitable site. After two hours travel or travail, Philip fairly wearied out, turned to Mr. Gordon and blurted out, "Noo, sir, whaur the h—I will we gang till neist?" Curious, is it not? Had a profound thinker of the present day asked "Where in Hades shall we go next?" it would have been considered very proper, as referring to the moot question of preaching to "the spirits in prison."

Alongside of Philip, with his hands in his pockets, and looking a very unconcerned spectator, stands John Hay, the publisher of the print. Next to him walks Sir Alexander Anderson, arm in arm with Sir Thomas Blaikie, both evidently discussing the contemplated city improvements. And last of all—Henry Paterson—a bold and daring speculator, who, as the rumour ran, manured his fields with bank notes—is seen ascending the steps of the new bank, then only in course of erection.

This print of Hay's marks an era in the pictorial representation of the place. Gordon's early delineation deals only with stone and lime. Irvine introduces a very little of the human element, but his alleged portraits were those of so obscure a character that they have almost faded from remembrance. Nasmyth's human figures are generic not specific, may be faithful as to costume, but do not pretend

to portraiture. Seton's *Castle Street, 1807*, shows types of the ordinary characters of the time, giving prominence to an alleged portrait of John Ewen, but which, when compared with the miniature by A. Robertson in 1804, is not recognisable, unless he has greatly changed in the short interval. There is also given a representation of the Rev. Mr. Alcock, the then parson of St. Paul's; and in the foreground may be seen Robbie Welsh, the last hangman, claiming his perquisite of a fish out of every creel brought to the market. And in all the views in Wilson's *Delineation* the human element is conspicuous by its absence. For the first time Hay connects in one view the spiritual agencies and their material results—the creators and their creations; and thus it is invaluable, because it is a work of genius.

Eighty years has entirely revolutionized the art of portraiture. At that time the commonality had to be contented with black silhouettes of their friends. Now every half-penny newspaper is full of sketches of all characters who have acquired, or aspire to notoriety. These representations are of all grades of excellence, as to conveying an idea of those represented, and cunning artists with keen eyes and facile pencils have a new world of art opened up to them. Many of these rude and rough sketches convey a truer idea of the characters represented than the most costly engravings, and truthfulness being the criterion of excellence, are valued accordingly. And they have this advantage over speech, that they speak a universal language and need no translator.

So it is with all our local historians since Spalding lived and wrote. He was, in a small way, our Aberdeen Herodotus, without any pretensions on his part, but simply to tell all he knew and all he heard. In his *Memorials* he does not deal with only dry details. Every page sparkles with scintillations from the life and humanity which ebbed and swelled around him, and all events, great or small, are regularly recorded, because he was the very mirror of his time.

Kennedy's *Annals*, with great pretensions, is but poor history, and the style is dry as dust. Thom is a good condenser of what was put before him. For the chapter on *Literature and the Arts* we are indebted to John Ewen. The research shown by Robertson while worthy of the highest praise, proves him to have been a better quarrier

than a builder ; it is a mine of diamonds. William Robbie's *Aberdeen* deserves high praise, and forms interesting reading.

We cannot help thinking that if Robertson and Ramsay had been brayed together in a mortar, we might have had a brilliant and worthier history of Aberdeen than we have. Both had antiquarian tastes, but in regard to the current life of the period in which he lived, Ramsay, the *bon vivant*, mixing more in society than Robertson, knew Aberdeen in its various phases better and would have made it more picturesque.

Take this for instance of Ramsay's writing of a more modern period than Robertson touched :

“ The Shiprow branched off eastwards into the Narrow Wynd [see page 76], of which the south side was removed in order to complete the south side of Union Street, ultimately terminating with the Athenæum Buildings. The north side of Narrow Wynd stood many years after the south one had been removed, until the new Municipal Buildings were projected.

The shops in this row, although neither roomy nor convenient, were much sought after, and yielded the Corporation a considerable revenue. In one of them, which was occupied by the Messrs. Angus, booksellers, there was a sort of newsroom, where several well known citizens used to while away an hour or two, interchanging political and local gossip. There might be seen the elephantine form of Fiscal Low, with ponderous but shapely limbs—fattest and kindest of men. In not a few cases did his merciful nature attemper the murderous severity of the law in his day. That tall, splay-footed figure in top-boots, queue, and head be-powdered into rivalry with the driven snow, while not a speck is to be seen on any part of his vestments, is the Town Clerk. (He generally wore a claret-coloured coat with brass buttons). He looks awfully authoritative : but softish in his horn. He is a favourite butt of his waggish familiars, yet hath he far more gumption than it is his good fortune to get credit for.

The paunchy little man in plgtail, powdered poll, sorely pitted face and keen eyes, who heaves and pitches along on right tiptoe, is Kennedy our annalist, an enthusiastic and laborious, if not quite trustworthy digger into local antiquities. Another antiquarian appears in the long-remembered form of Professor Stuart, conspicuous for a club queue, economical black straw hat, and cork leg. The tall, handsome, frank-looking young man is familiarly known as Sandy Bannerman, a noted reformer, arrant wag, and addicted to practical jokes.

The brothers Angus were both characters : the elder taciturn and pceevish, the younger brusque, outspoken, and the object of his brother's perpetual objurgation

At page 75 mention is made of a manuscript having been picked up, in 1813, on the floor of the shop of Angus and

Sons, which was so libellous that it dared not be printed. But copies were secretly made of it, and circulated, with the result that it raised such a storm in the city, that from that day to this, now more than eighty years ago, this manuscript has been so carefully concealed, that it became as precious as a stuffed specimen of the Dodo, or the egg of the Great Auk.

As an illustration of the ferment caused by the secret circulation of this manuscript, we insert the following advertisement which appeared in the *Aberdeen Chronicle*. And calling attention to its terms, to its peculiar phraseology, and to the repetition of the charges made against the parties said to be libelled, we leave readers to judge whether the advertisement was not inserted by the author or authors of the manuscript in order to whet the appetite of the public for a sight of it. It certainly looks like a travesty of justice.

“DEFAMATION AND REWARD.

WHEREAS, About three weeks ago, a Letter was thrown into a Bookseller's Shop, inclosing a Paper, entitled *The Book of the Times*, containing two Chapters, in the style of Eastern Ancient Writing, purporting to point out “the wicked of the City, those whom they tormented, and their punishment foretold,” And wherein, either by direct implication, by Christian or Surname, by gross personalities, by opening old sores, by distorting the *figure of beauty*, or by *blackening the face of wisdom*—several Gentlemen are accused of self-conceit and tormenting weak men—of perverting the English language, and exciting Murmurs, Mobs, and Discontent—of taking the Lord's name in vain—of coveting other men's wives—of ensnaring the young—of drinking strong liquors and swearing—of laughing at fools—of ruling with rods of iron—of increase in years, lack of wisdom, skill in ancient writing, and bawling for more wine, and finally, of sulkiness, and lustfulness and patience and perseverance in feasting. And, whereas, many attempts have been made, and in order to find out and to bring to condign punishment the Author of this scandalous production,

A REWARD OF TEN GUINEAS

is hereby offered, and will be paid, to any person or Persons, (unless the actual *Chief Scribe*), who shall give such information as will lead to a discovery, and bring to conviction, the aforesaid Scribe of the said infamous writing, on application to the Prosecutor Fiscal for the Justices of the Peace, or Mr. ANDREW ANGUS, Bookseller, Actuary for all concerned.

Booksellers will please stop the circulation of any ancient writings, that may fall into their hands, until they are inspected by a *fit* Antiquarian—(One concern.)

Aberdeen, October 15, 1813.”

The advertisement had the effect of making it impossible to get a sight of the manuscript, although it was parodied in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817 by the authors of the *Chaldee Manuscript*, and by numerous writers in our local squibs, which led to their suppression.

But as it is said, "everything comes to him who waits," so, after eighty years, when the pear was ripe, it dropt into the writer's mouth, and a copy came by the merest chance into his possession. But the pear proved to be over-ripe—it was actually rotten !

It was so bad that the writer, knowing himself as well as he appears to know his neighbours, ought to have been boycotted from decent society. There is more wit in the advertisement than in the piece complained of. So there is no loss in its suppression ; the wonder in reading the MS. being, that, in a professedly Christian community, men could be found who took any pleasure in accusing others of the crimes alleged. And if there was any truth in the accusations, or even if there was not, the very charges so confidently made imply a state of morality and a licentiousness worse than that of beasts. Society may be bad—and it may be safely credited that it is worse than it should be, but a peep through this half-opened door into the highest circles of society in the city in 1813, will make everyone thankful that he lives, not at the commencement, but at the termination of the century.

For in these "good old times" Feudalism, with its right of pot and gallows, was not entirely extinct in its effect on the masses. The "divinity which doth hedge a king"—if believed in by some political and religionist devotees had in a diluted form permeated the down-trodden community in the form of snobbery towards all superiors in rank. If, in 1791, Dr. Parr characterised England as a place where there was "a church without the gospel, and a king above the law," what might he not have said of "Aberdeen awa'" and the surrounding district? There, for a full generation after he wrote, the large landed proprietors—titled by rank or lands—lived like the Barons of old, taking as their models the Wolf of Badenoch or Bishop Gordon, so far as they dared.

Vice reigned rampant and defiant of all restraints in it ; flaunted itself in public, jostled and insulted decent citizens

in the open streets, and unblushingly braved morality and public opinion in houses which became notorious. With fiendish malignity and hellish ingenuity, the inmates of these houses made direct and unconcealed attacks on the character of many of the most respected citizens in the hope of hush-money, and blackmailing afterwards, if they found a weak victim; and to secure themselves they corrupted the guardians of the peace and took the "watchmen" of the time into their pay.

In their diabolical devices, and on pretence of a call for his services by a dying penitent, late one night they lured into one of their dens the godly Dr. Kidd of Gilcomston Chapel, and he, simple man, fell into the snare. He was instantly met with a demand for hush-money or exposure. He resisted the extortion, and, strong in his innocence, triumphantly exposed them before the Presbytery which sat to expiscate the wide-spread fama.

Mrs. Grundy being then only a baby, modesty seems to have been unknown. A street brawl having occurred and the parties having to appear at the Police Court, the presiding Baillie asked one of the witnesses—a brothel keeper—where she resided, and was answered—"Weel, yer honour, ye needna ask that, for mony's the time ye've been in my house!" "You impident limmer," said the Baillie, "do you mean to say that I was ever in your house?" "Weel," taking a good look at him, "if it wasna you, it was your son Jock—he's a good customer and yer' jist as like ither as twa piz!" Such are samples of the habits in the "good old times," when innocent purity was not safe, and the peace and happiness of whole families was wrecked in the cruellest manner, by those who manufactured and retailed garbage. So it was little wonder that on the occasion of a county gathering in 1816, one of the most notoriously patronized brothels, "the White Ship" in Park Street, was first looted and then burnt by an infuriated mob, who then made an experiment in Lynch law and Jeddart justice.

That it was a drunken age is attested by the prevalence of smuggling, and by the presence in almost every house in the city and county of Holland gin and French brandy which had never paid duty. All round the coast, farmers instead of employing their horses to till the soil, used them more profitably to convey smuggled goods into the interior,

and strings of pack-horses, with kegs slung across their backs, were openly and defiantly driven into the villages by day and into town at night. The very jailor in the Tolbooth was allowed to sell drink to the prisoners and their friends. Drunkenness was no disgrace in general society—nay respect was shown to the habit even in the courts of justice. A once well known citizen, who boasted that for twenty years he had never gone to bed sober, had the misfortune to be cited as a juror in a trial which was expected to last through a good part of the night, while he had an engagement to sup with some cronies and to enjoy his usual experience. He attended the court and on his name being called, he begged to be excused. "On what grounds?" said the Judge, "On the ground, my Lord, that last night I was out at supper and took such a quantity of punch that I have not yet recovered, and even now can hardly tell whether my head or my heels are uppermost!" The sympathetic Judge smiled a brotherly smile, and said, "The excuse is accepted and you may go." Could this be repeated now-a-days when Mrs. Grundy is fat, fair and forty?

"Who by his gray hairs doth his lustres tell,
Lives not these years, but he that lives them well.
One man has reached his sixty years; but he
Of all these threescore years has lived, but three.
He lives, who lives to virtue; men, who cast
Their ends for pleasure, do not live, but last."

But all over the country manners and customs were both brutal and barbarous. "The Fancy" was patronized, and and "Bruisers" employed at elections; prize fights and duelling were prevalent: meal mobs, machine-breaking, rick burning, and rioting, frequent. The penal code had a hundred capital crimes and the gallows was a familiar object. Society was honeycombed with governmental spies and hired informers—wretches who first excited and then nurtured sedition; living in luxury themselves on the rewards of their betrayal of their dupes. Privilege and profligacy were throned, the reins of justice were loosely held towards influential persons, but were mercilessly tightened when a poor man got his neck within the noose, while pressgangs scoured the country and flogging taught submission.

And the result of this regime was the Peterloo Massacre

of 1819, the Bristol, Nottingham, and Glasgow riots, the atrocious State Trials in Scotland—the licentiousness of life as revealed in such popular publications as *Tom and Jerry* and *Life in London*; the hideous revelations of the Burke and Hare murders, and the ghoulish horrors of the Resurrectionists all over the country. Was it not "a wicked world, Readers?"

Think of the tale which angry conscience tells,
When she with more than tragic horror swells
Each circumstance of guilt; when stern, but true.
She brings bad actions forth into review;
And like the dread hand-writing on the wall
Bids late remorse awake at reason's call,
Arm'd at all points bids scorpions vengeance pass,
And to the mind holds up reflection's glass;
The mind, which starting, heaves the heartfelt groan,
And hates that form she knows to be her own.

So wrote the renegade clergyman Churchill, (1731-64), who knew from personal experience the bitter stings of an angry conscience. Of him might almost have been said what Italian children said, as Dante moodily passed them—

"There goes the man who has already seen Hell."



CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

“ We hurry to the river we must cross,
And swifter downwards every footstep wends ;
Happy, who reach it ere they count the loss
Of half their memories and half their friends.”
W. S. Landor.

“ Life ends in death, death ended, life renews ;
Death lives by life, yet death from life ensues ;
For all must change, transition has no end ;
Thus life, thus death, each help to other lend !”

“ Follow out the happiest story ; it closes with a tomb.”

NEXT to the sight of the actual living man is that of his portrait, if a faithful one. Carlyle says of a subject, “a man of wholesome, by no means weakly aspect—to judge by his portrait, which is the chief ‘Biography’ I have of him. Potent eyes, and eyebrows ditto, blunt nose ; honest, almost careless lips, and deep chin ; extensive penetrative face, not pincered together, but potently fallen closed ; comfortable to see—a man of sterling character.” That portrait calmly and unblushingly submitted itself to his inspection. True, it wanted the mobility of the features, and the play of the ever changeful emotions which in the eyes is as that of cloud or sunshine on the mountain slopes, or the sweet swiftly passing ripple of the breeze on the waving grass.

But it neither blushes nor winces at your remarks, and you can safely submit it to the test of caliper, forceps, measurement and comparison with other faces—which, if applied to the living, would render one liable to be called a vivisectionist, an inquisitor, or a torturer. “To know a man by his writings is good, to know him by his portrait is better, but to know him by both is best.” So, surely—

“ Blest be the art which can immortalize
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes.”

Failing, however, to get any portrait of the man Forbes Frost—no such thing being apparently in existence—failing to find what we feel sure did at some time exist—either an oral or a pen and ink sketch of him by John Ramsay, who was a frequent boon companion of his, and who as an acute observer of character, must have been struck with his peculiarities, we have to fall back on our own recollections. These have one disadvantage, that they are comparatively juvenile, balanced, it may be, by the fact they are intensely personal; and so they must be taken for what they are worth. But sixty years has made an enormous difference on the relative importance of citizens, many of those who then bulked largely in the eye of the public would hardly be visible now-a-days.

Forbes Frost, as the manager of one of the oldest and most enterprising firms in the city, was himself the representative of the numerous Jacobites of the district. As the practical commander of the "Book-Stall" from 1824 to 1845, he was a noted figure in at least the local literary society, and of the booksellers of the period. And, let it be remembered that that society—as attempted to be depicted in these sketches, was a very different society from that of the present. Now, continually rolling and grinding on the beach of the ever-flowing tide of humanity everlastingly surging around them, men get every angle rubbed off, and ever tend to become more and more like the pebbles in the Bay of Nigg—all of one round pattern. Sixty years ago many men stood out clear and distinct from their fellows as fragments of an earlier world, and the wash of the new tide against their dogged resistance was the talk of the time, and gave to it its spice and its zest.

Mr. Frost was one of these, a diamond, rough and unpolished; a gnarled oak with twisted branches and rugged bark, but with good sound timber beneath, on which dependence could be placed. His two partners in business were domestic men, lapped in the comforts and manifold consolations of domesticity, with winsome wives and bairnies of their own. His home had not the same attractions. He, trammelled with relationship responsibilities, which he was much too honest to shirk, gradually acquired the habits and character of a confirmed bachelor; and

drifted into a kindred society, half Philistine, half Bohemian, unpolished by feminine control with its fascinating graces.

Nothing was more common for the employees in the "Stall," than to hear him twitted with this by his familiars. That wicked, long tongued wag, Sandy Webster, the father of our late M.P., shewed him no mercy. He had frequent business interviews with the Distributor of Stamps, and as he passed would merrily say "Well, Frost, man! fan are you gaun to thaw?" On one occasion the Rev. Dr. Forbes, well known as "Old Prosody," was sitting near Mr. Frost's desk with his head buried in the *Times* newspaper, when Sandy as he passed bawled out, "I say, Forbes, man! fan are ye gaun to tak a wife?" Dr. Forbes rose instantly, and in his most frigid manner said, "Sir! I am not accustomed to be addressed in that manner!" Sandy burst out into a loud laugh, and said "Hoot, toot, man—keep your breath to cool your parridge, and speak fan you're spoken till—I was speekin' to my freen' Forbes Frost here!" But so much did the dignified Dr. resent the insult, that he deserted the "Stall" from that time forward.

Confirmed bachelor though Mr. Frost seemed to be, gradually acquiring this character, yet to his credit be it said, that he was not inhuman, and that he had a soft and tender spot in his heart. And considering the great favourite he was amongst Episcopalian ladies—the *Church-women* as he called them—it was little wonder. The writer could not help noticing that, while he put on all his best manners to all these ladies, there was "ane, a secret ane," an amiable and estimable lady, and of a good old family, to whom "aboon them a'" much more than ordinary complaisance was shown.

With the innate modesty of a true woman, the noble training of a cultured lady, and with that heaven-born female faculty of reading love sentiments towards her in the souls she meets, through the silent yet eloquent and impressive language of the eyes; she having discerned in the manager of the Book Stall something more than a mere admirer, made her visits like that of angels, few and far between. Yet through her friends and relatives' frequent dealings with the firm these visits had to be made, and when so, the sun of our little firmament shone with unusual bright

effulgence, and employer and employees were gladdened with its beams.

The advanced age of both parties forbade the indulgence of that glamour and romance which attends youthful attachments, and which, when not rudely dispelled, but cherished and nourished by genuine affection, gilds all life's future story with golden beams, doubles its joys and divides its sorrows, yet all the same these two, true as the needle to the pole, had responsive magnetic influences.

As was fitting to one who read Boswell's *Johnson* once a year he loved his love because she was both literary—and of course intellectual, and was of good birth and breeding. He was attracted by her wide acquaintanceships, her foreign travel, and her knowledge of a wider world than he knew. Was it that because she was so sincerely religious, that any inherited bigotry derived from her church connection had been entirely eliminated by her familiarity with sincere christians, that Mr. Frost never proposed? When she did visit the Book Stall her bright eyes very evidently sparkled all the brighter when conversing with him. Lamentable to say, when the silent language of the eye was only silvern, while the spoken speech would have been golden—this golden speech was never spoken—which would have made two hearts glad and two lives happier. Mr. Frost died, leaving to her tokens of his regard, and that from him was a sure sign of his warm affection.

Years after, when the writer had acquired the intimate friendship of this lady, and had learnt to esteem her, as she deserved to be esteemed, for her literary culture, her extended knowledge, and her liberality of opinion—somewhat unusual amongst those of her rank and creed—it was with the sincerest sympathy that he heard her say that “Mr. Frost's death was to her the blighting of all her conceptions of earthly happiness.” What might have been? If—only If?

The writer believes that by the silent influence of her example Mr. Frost opposed the introduction of the high claims of the churchmen of the time, was hostile to Puseyite doctrine, and Ritualistic practices, and stood aloof from some of his most respected friends, Dr. Grub, Mr. Cheyne, and others, on this subject, supporting Bishop Skinner in his endeavours to control if not subdue it.

An affectionate regard for the character of Mr. Frost

induces us to give one more trait, which shows that his bark was worse than his bite. It has been already stated that he was unduly hard upon the apprentices, and perhaps unduly lenient to those who had got beyond that stage. While an apprentice, and as one who had lived in an atmosphere of love, the writer suffered sorely from his temper, and on one occasion feeling that the scolding received was manifestly unjust, replied, "Mr. Frost, I have done my very best to please you, and I like the business, but as I do not seem to please you, I will leave in a fortnight." Never did a bolt from the blue sky fall upon a more astonished man than this one apparently did, and never did a young boy see an old man so completely silenced and staggered. Any ordinary man would have simply said, "Very well! be it so!" The affair would have been then ended, and the whole after relations of the two parties would have been entirely different. But the young man had not studied the peculiar character of the man he had to deal with in vain. So he was not surprised when the reply came, "Well, George, you must forgive me for speaking so harshly, for I was vexed and irritated by other things at the time; just you continue to do as well as you can, and let this be forgotten by us both." It was forgotten, and from that time until Mr. Frost's death in 1845, a constant increasing friendship was maintained between the two. And though the writer was not of the "gentle persuasion," yet he received one of the last letters which Mr. Frost penned.

And now, in concluding this series of sketches, intended as a thread among the days to link the generations each to each, we record that Forbes Frost died in June, 1845, and was buried at Ellon; Provost Brown, in Nov., 1848; and William Brown, in Jan., 1861. Appreciative notices of the last two appeared in the *Aberdeen Journal*, Nov. 29th, 1848, and Feby. 6th, 1861.

" Ane by ane they gang awa',
The gatherer gathers grit an' sma',
Ane by ane maks ane an' a'.

Aye whan ane sets doon the cup
Ane ahint maun tak' it up,
A' thegither they will sup.

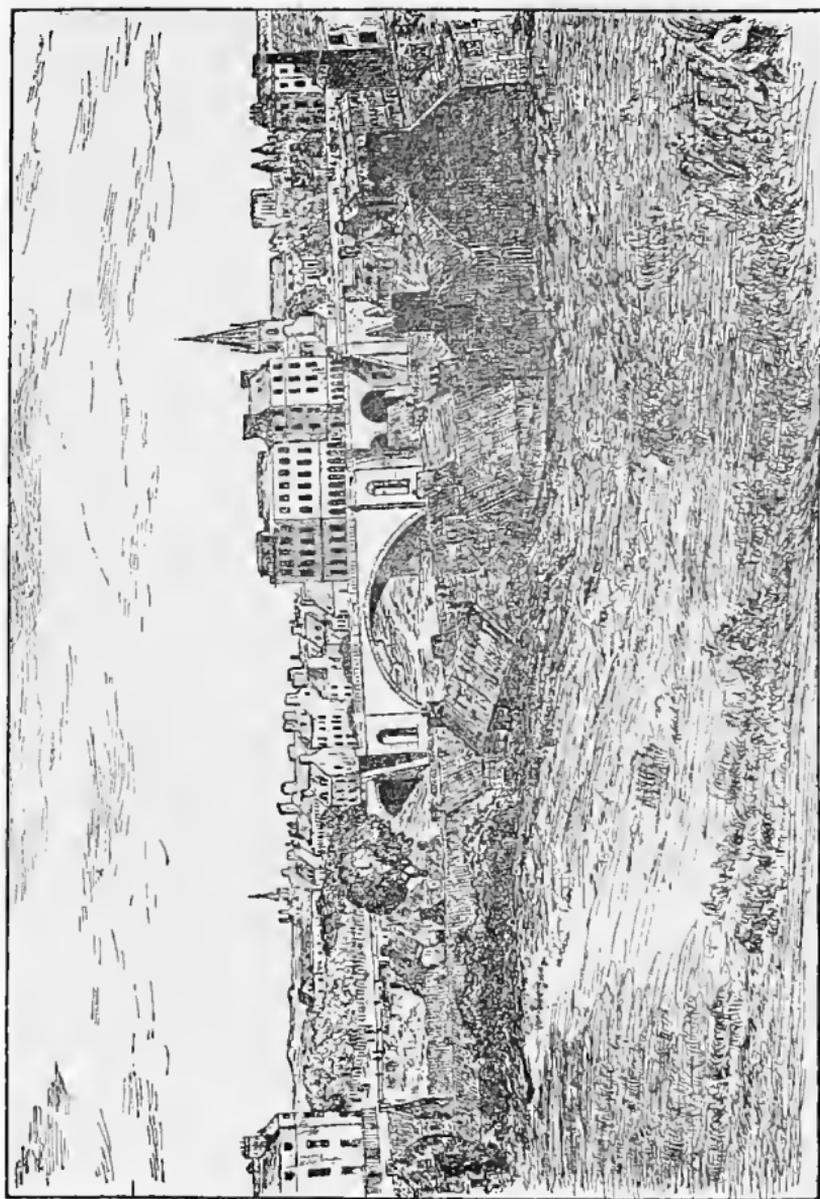
Golden heidet, ripe an' strang,
Shorn will be the hairst or lang,
Then hegins a better sang."

George Macdonald, 1824

"And here will I make an end. And if I have done well and as is fitting it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain to,"—11 *Maccabees*, xv. 37-38.



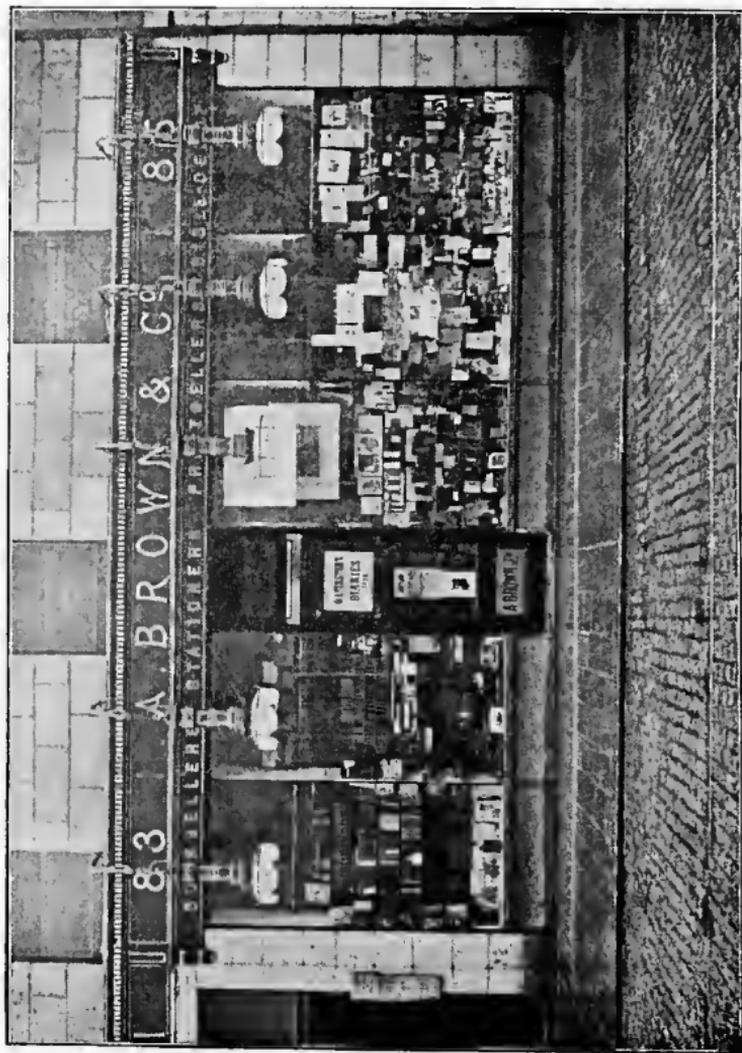
AS IN 1890.



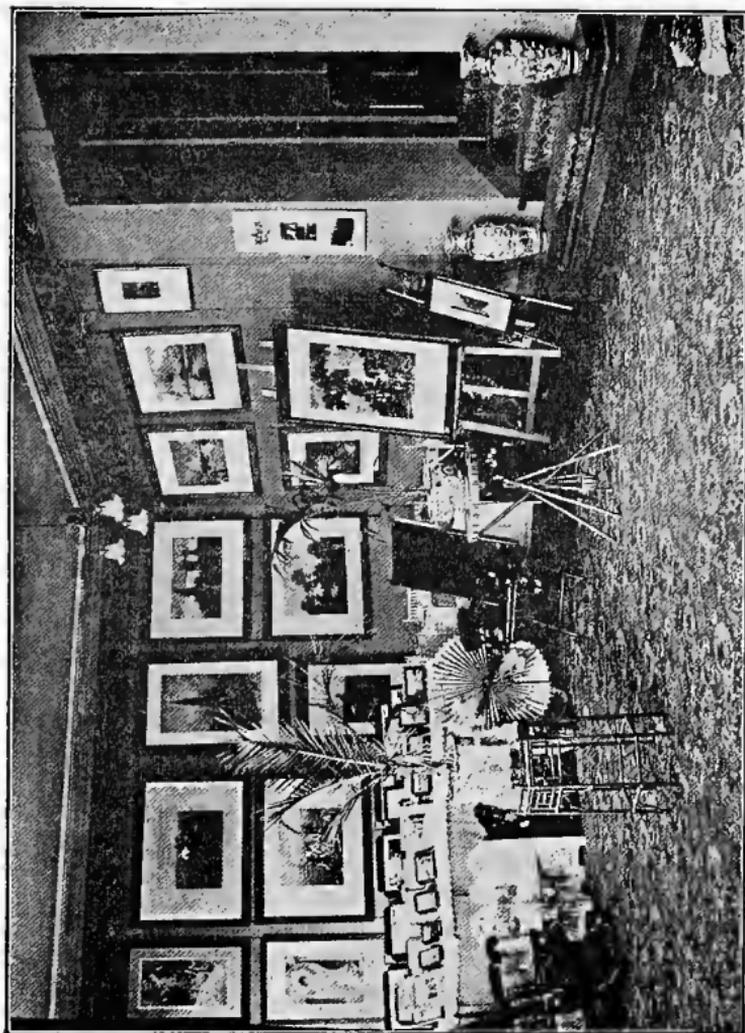
UNION BRIDGE AS IN 1820.

BOOKS PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY
A. BROWN & Co.,
Booksellers and Stationers,
 83 UNION STREET 85
 Aberdeen.

- A Jumble of Jottings** from the Memories of a Quiet Life, post 8vo, 6d
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