

## CHAPTER XXII

### GROWING OLD

I THINK I have now nearly written out my little autobiography. After all, as I said to my friend Mr Haigh, there is not much in it. The life of a business man, or of a literary man, is not of much interest. There is no romance—no adventures—nothing of stirring moment. It is only a little bit of human life, working on from day to day, and striving to make the best of the little circle in which providence has placed it. And the time speedily arrives, when all this must come to an end; for “the night cometh when no man can work.”

Still, the nature of man is to do something. My habits were always industrious, and I could never be idle. Accordingly, after our autumn tour in Scotland in 1879, during which I visited Mr Purdie at St Andrews, Dr Farquharson at Finzean in Aberdeenshire, and my dear friend Mrs Priestly at the Laggan on Speyside—I settled down for the winter; and proceeded with my little book about “Duty.”

I had been so pleased with my first visit to St Andrews, that in 1880 I took a furnished house at Kinnessburn, overlooking the links, for several months; and there I invited my children and grandchildren to join me. It was a pleasant time; and with

the company of neighbours, and friends, and family, the months passed healthfully and delightfully. We had many a gay time on the links, following the red-coated golf players, or by the sands on the seaside, or driving about the country. And there I finished my book, and sent the MS. to the printer. I need not say anything about its reception: *Duty* must speak for itself.

Next year (1881) I went to Homburg; for rheumatism, in this damp climate, makes sad inroads upon old joints and muscles. I took with me the notes of Mr Nasmyth's autobiography, to rewrite them and work them up into a consecutive narrative during my leisure hours. Some months before, I had received a visit from Mr and Mrs Nasmyth, when they desired me to write the biography of the inventor of the steam-hammer. I had asked for the necessary information many years before, when engaged in composing *Industrial Biography*. Mr Nasmyth had furnished me with all that he thought necessary at the time, and it was very interesting; but now that he had thought over the matter—and being an idle and yet an active man, like myself—he was of opinion that some further account of himself and his contrivances might be useful, as a guide and incentive to others. I was accordingly quite willing to help him in his project.

I desired him to write down everything that he recollected, anyhow, and then I would put it into shape. It was a matter, however, of greater labour than I had expected; far greater than this little memoir of my own life. For here, I knew all the little recollections of my own small career; but there, I had to get into the heart of the life and recollections of another and far greater man. I got the first

volume of Mr Nasmyth's recollections, and took it to Homburg with me. A good deal of it was written out in almost microscopic handwriting. If anyone were to see the original book, they would recognise the labour I had in bringing the recollections and the narrative into shape. I had to give it a beginning, a middle, and an end; for it had no end. In fact, I wrote it all out, from the first page to the last.

After proceeding with the memoir to a certain extent, I went into Switzerland, to Pontresina; and after some residence there (during which, owing to the high altitude, I could not sleep), I went over the Stelvio Pass, to Innsbruck, Salzburg, Munich, and down the Rhine, homewards to London. Then I again proceeded with the book. After considering the matter, I thought that the best form in which to place it before the public was as an Autobiography. To this Mr Nasmyth eventually consented; and it so appeared.

No book could have been better received. The two leading *Quarterlies*, the *Times*, the *Athenæum*, and all the leading papers, were full of its praises. And yet, according to my ideas, the work did not succeed so well as it should have done. A previous book of mine—the *Life of George Moore*—had been reviewed in none of these important publications, and indeed it had received some rather carping and adverse notices. Yet it had been far more successful, so far as circulation went. *George Moore*, with no illustrations, went off like "hot rolls," while *James Nasmyth*, with abundant illustrations, "hung fire." The *Life of George Moore* was translated into French, German, and Italian; whereas *Nasmyth's Autobiography* was translated into none of these languages. Of course, both were republished in America.

It was only another illustration of the lottery of book publishing. One never can tell what will be the success of a book. It may be in its title, or in its matter, or in the way in which it is presented to the public. George Moore was a merchant and philanthropist; James Nasmyth was a manufacturer and inventor. Their lives were written equally well. Why did the one book succeed more than the other? I cannot tell.

But a rather knowing bookseller hinted the possible secret. He said, "If it had been published as a life *by you*, it would have been a great success; but it is by an unknown author, and you are merely its 'editor.' You see what the *Times* says—that 'Dr Smiles's work has been a light one, and that the volume is very much as it left the hands of its author.' Of course that is the opinion of the public, and that is why the book has not succeeded so well as it should have done." There may be something in this; but I still think that, notwithstanding the fact that I was the shaper and author of the book, as much as of the life of Edward, the book was properly cast in the form of an Autobiography.

I remember sending the manuscript of an article to the *Quarterly*. Mr Elwin was then editor—a most able one. He took my material, and without using anything else, he rewrote and reshaped it into an admirable contribution. I learned a great deal from Mr Elwin's treatment of my subject. I was not offended; on the contrary, I rejoiced at his throwing his own mind and heart into the theme. The article I refer to was entitled "James Watt."

I did the same with the *Scotch Naturalist*. I took up his tale, and made his case my own. I gathered together his random articles, and retold his

stories afresh, and, I think, with increased interest. I imparted to them that which Edward did not possess, and which I did—some literary art; and I did the same with the *Autobiography of Nasmyth*. Soon after the appearance of the *Scotch Naturalist*, the *Scotsman* announced that Thomas Edward had prepared a supplement to his life, which would shortly be published. I heard from several publishers that they had been applied to about this continuation, but that they had not accepted it. They wished me to revise and rewrite it. But I could not undertake to do so. Indeed, I doubted the wisdom of publishing it. I thought it better, after Edward had obtained his pension, to “let well alone.”

After I had got *Nasmyth's Autobiography* out of hand—finally corrected and published—I went over to France, with my wife—always a faithful companion—in order to avoid the east winds of February and March. Since my attack of brain disease some years ago, I have always spent a considerable portion of my time in travelling. Change of scene, and change of diet, with complete rest, set me up again for a new spell of work. Not that work for gain was necessary, but work for some special purpose. Besides, I had always some hobby to exercise my mind upon, even while travelling. Varieties of work recruit the springs of pleasure, and give a new zest to holiday-making. Though I was growing old, I did not feel my sense of enjoyment to diminish. “It is a poor wine,” said Jeffrey, “that grows sour with age.” I combined exercise with mental recreation—walked as much as I could—and reflected upon many things which presented themselves in the course of my observation.

One thing especially struck me, as it had often

done before in the course of my continental journeys—the large number of armed men, drilled and ready to kill with the most death-dealing instruments. At every frontier, between one country and another, there was a huge army watching another huge army over the boundary line—doing nothing but drilling and marching—eating off the head of industry, and very likely to bring political perdition on Europe; perhaps breeding future revolutions and national convulsions. If all this was for the protection of trade, it was like setting so many bull-dogs to watch the door, and to worry alike friends and customers. All these men, in the prime of life, had been withdrawn from the pursuits of agriculture or industry—and were waiting, armed to the teeth, for what was to happen next. We are not much better ourselves, though our army is recruited by volunteers, and not by forced conscription, which tells so fearfully upon the condition of France, Germany, and other continental nations. I remember a story told me by Sir John Lefroy, while Colonel at Woolwich. An Egyptian Pasha had come to England, and made an inspection of the Manufactory of Arms at the Arsenal. An observation was made to him respecting the beauties of the Nile, and the extraordinary construction of the Pyramids.

“Ah!” said the Pasha, “I wonder at you Englishmen thinking of the Pyramids. They are all humboogs! What I like in England are your Big Guns: they are not humboogs!”

But the hobby that most influenced me during this little excursion to France, was the subject of Race. I had always endeavoured to detect the differences which existed between one people and another—in their shape, figure, complexion, habits, and

customs. For instance, it was curious to see the contrast between the population spread over the face of England and that over the face of France. In the one case, the residences and farm-houses are all apart, separate from each other; while in France, the farming population are assembled in clusters of villages, many of their dwellings being far from the fields which they have to till and cultivate. In England, this arose from the Anglo-Saxon's comparative indifference to society, to his self-dependence, and his love of home-comfort; whilst in France, the clustering of the population in villages arises from their love of society, their love of talk or converse, and the pleasures which come from assembling together. This has been observed by many travellers; and it all arises from the difference of race between the one country and the other.

But my principal object was to see something of the Basques—perhaps the oldest people in Europe, living upon the soil which they occupied, some say twenty centuries before the Celts made their appearance in France. I found them at Pau, where they are recognised by their *berret* or cap, not unlike the lowland Scotch bonnet, while the women cover their heads with the red hood or capulet. But these ancient costumes are much better seen further south.

Pau contains a large colony of English. The Hotel de France was full of them. They had an English club; an English drag, with a post-horn; an English fox-hunt, where the fox was let out of a bag and hunted; English races, English polo matches, Scotch golf, English cricket, and three English churches. A number of the English were very "horsey." Those who did not talk about horses, talked about shares—Brighton and Egyptian Unified.

It seemed difficult to get rid of the London Stock Exchange. Yet Pau is a very pleasant place. The view of the Pyrenees, covered with snow, towards the south, extending all along the sky line, is very grand ; some say it is unsurpassed, though it is not equal to the view of the Oberland Alps from the Münster Platz at Berne.

On the same plateau on which the Hotel de France stands, and overlooking the river Gave, is one of the most remarkable buildings in France—the historic castle in which Henry of Navarre, the Bon Roi, was born. Here is the cradle in which he was rocked, and the playthings of his youth. The castle has been subject to many changes. At one time it furnished an asylum to Calvin, Theodore Beza, and the early reformers ; then it was assaulted by the Biscayans during the civil wars in Béarn, the marks of the shot fired by them being still seen on the walls of the Tour de la Monnaye ; it was eventually sacked and despoiled by the Revolutionists of 1793, though the cradle of Henry IV. was preserved, another being substituted in its place. Abd-el-Kader was a prisoner in the castle in 1848 ; and Queen Isabella occupied it in 1869. Westward of the castle lies the park, beautifully laid out, and abounding with noble trees. It stands high above the Gave, and affords a splendid view of the peaks of the Pyrenees, which bound the distant horizon.

The weather became cold, and snow began to fall. We had left London when the birds were singing in Kensington Gardens, for the sunny south, and the further south we went, the colder it grew. We left Pau and went by rail along the line of country so much celebrated in Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*—by Orthez, so well known for

its fierce fight; to the Bidassoa, which Wellington crossed in spite of the heavy forces arrayed against him, and then to Bayonne, below which he crossed the Adour—a memorable instance of his intrepidity and force of character. At Bayonne, we landed amidst a fierce snowstorm. In spite of it, we made our way at once to Biarritz, where we found peace and quiet at the Hotel d'Angleterre.

When the weather had subsided, we found Biarritz a charming seaside place. Wonderful walks by the shore, north and south: the long Atlantic waves coming in, even in the quietest weather, ten or twelve feet high, and dashing themselves as spray on the sands. The south coast, by the Chemin de la Côte Basque, was the favourite walk. The hills of Spain were seen, beyond the bay, covered with snow, and the rocky clefts, over which the waves dashed, were full of brightness. Summer seemed to have come while we remained here—from the 10th to the 24th of March.

The pleasantest excursion we made while at Biarritz, was to St Jean de Luz, a Basque town about ten miles to the south. It lies at the mouth of the Nivelle, where it falls into a beautiful bay. Here we saw the Basque race in perfection—Basque men, women, and children. They are a fine-looking people—though rather small; but they are sturdy, agile, and vigorous—dark-haired and dark-eyed—very like the remnants of the same race still found in Wales. In Spain, where they are very numerous, they were known as the Iberians; in Wales, as the Silurians. They are supposed to number about 840,000 people, north and south of the Pyrenees.

There is a wonderful old Basque church at St Jean de Luz—a large hall-like apartment, without

aisles, and having wooden galleries running round three sides. The sanctuary is up a steep flight of steps, and occupied by three altars. Notwithstanding the devotion of the Basques, they are still believers in witchcraft and the evil eye. The Basque "brownie" is equivalent to the Devonshire "were-woman." Christianity has not yet been able to uproot the old pagan superstitions. But I cannot here enter into the subject of the special race to which the Basque people belong. We left Biarritz for Paris, crossed the Channel, and reached home by the beginning of April.

Three months later, on the 4th of July, I started for a short tour in Ireland, accompanied by my young friend, Count Giuseppe Zoppola. My friend was amazed at the wreckage of the empty houses in Dublin. Wherever a house was empty, every window was smashed—a curious indication of the mischievousness of Dublin boys. We put up at the Shelburne—the cleanest hotel in the city. We went round and saw the renovations made in the Cathedrals of St Patrick and Christ Church—the one made by the greatest brewer in Ireland, the other by the greatest manufacturer of ardent spirits. Wonderful, what porter and whisky have done for Dublin! We saw the splendid buildings by the Liffey—the Bank of Ireland, once the Irish Parliament House, the Custom House, now almost disused, the Exchange, and the Four Courts—all splendid buildings. Then we went to Phœnix Park, and passed the spot, marked with a cross, where Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Burke had been so foully murdered. A sad sight! the driver of our car passed it with a groan.

I observe a great difference amongst the people

generally, since my first visit to the south of Ireland some forty years ago. There were then a great many more beggars about the cities, towns, and villages than now. The people seemed to be very poor. And yet they were apparently much gayer. The cardrivers, ragged though they might be, were full of wit and humour. Now, though well dressed, and much better off, they were only surly. At the Phoenix Park, the Dublin garrison were under review. It was a fine sight, the united bands playing the forces past the Irish Commander-in-chief, the picturesque city lying beyond the green sward along the Liffey, and the Wicklow Mountains in the distance. The cardrivers stood apart and whispered together. There seemed to be no rejoicing in their hearts at the sight. After seeing all that was to be seen in Dublin—the museums, which are very fine, and the Picture Gallery, which contains some excellent specimens of ancient and modern art—we set out for Galway and Connemara.

The country looked very smiling and prosperous as we went along—past Maynooth and through the southern parts of the counties of Meath and Westmeath, where the pasture land is the richest in Great Britain. We crossed the Shannon at Athlone, the sight of which brought to mind the contest at that place between the French and Irish forces under the command of St Ruth, and the English and Dutch under the command of General Ginckel, less than two hundred years ago. The place was carried after a furious assault, and the French and Irish retreated to Aughrim, where they were defeated principally by the French Huguenots, and driven southward towards Limerick. There were kings on both sides—James II. and the Catholics on the one, and William III.

and the Protestants on the other. Will these days ever return?

At Athlone, three dark-coated gentlemen got into our carriage. There seemed to have been a function or conference going on at the place, as many of the same cloth were seen along the platform. Our neighbours brought an ill odour with them. One of them had been imbibing liberally of the "wine of the country," and was disposed to speak loudly to his friends. The others were very quiet and peaceable.

The soil became poorer and thinner, large stones and rocks appearing at intervals; then the sea came in sight, and at length we reached Galway amidst a torrent of rain. Rain is no doubt the cause of the greenness of Ireland—Green Erin—always open to the rain clouds of the Atlantic. I need not say much of Galway. It is a decaying town. It is too far out of the reach of traffic and commerce. Its flour mills are silent, for the corn comes ready ground from America; its fisheries are neglected; and nothing is done to encourage new industries. While at Galway I read a speech of Mr Parnell, delivered after the opening of the Exhibition at Cork. He urged the investment of capital for the employment of native labour—a most excellent subject truly.\* But who will invest capital in a country where property, the result of industry, is not secure?

There is plenty of capital in Ireland as well as England; and wherever there is a likelihood of a remunerative return, it is readily invested. Mr Fawcett, in his *Political Economy*, points out that

\* I have dwelt upon this subject in *Men of Invention and Industry*, pp. 256-323. The book was written, in some measure, from the result of this visit to Ireland.

nowhere can capital be had if it cannot be had from England. But see what is done for the investment of English capital in Ireland. An English company proposed to take some old deserted buildings on the river Corrib, for the purpose of establishing a woollen manufactory. The splendid supply of water power was their first consideration, and the cheap supply of labour was the second. The projectors were of opinion that what the Scotch do at Hawick and Galashiels—working up their own wool on the spot, into trouserings and blanketings—might be equally done in the West of Ireland. But on inquiry of the proprietors of the disused buildings, they were informed that the sum required for ground rent was £500 per annum. Of course, the idea was preposterous; the projectors went elsewhere with their capital, and the buildings continue tumbling to ruin.

A little further up the river is a large space enclosed by a square stone wall. The space was enclosed for the purpose of burning seaweed in order to make iodine; but why erected so far away from the sea, no one knew. The seaweed had to be carried up there through the canal, as well as the coal. At all events, the speculation stopped with the building of the wall, and no seaweed has ever been burnt there.

I went to the Court-House at Galway, where the Commissioners were then sitting for the purpose of reducing the landlords' rents under the recent Land Act. The farmers seemed very poor people, and were, for the most part, cultivators of small holdings at moderate rents. Will the reduction do them any good? We must hope so. Even if the land were their own, without capital it is probable that they could not make more than a slender living out of it.

Rent has not much to do with alleged distress. The Irish people pay more for whisky than for rent. The rental of agricultural land in Ireland, in 1881, was estimated at £11,518,392; whereas the amount spent in intoxicating liquors was £13,823,102; or £2,304,710 more in drink than in rent.\* The amount paid to tenants for tenant right has much more influence upon the farmers' condition than the amount paid to the landlords for rent. Sometimes the amount of tenant right is enormous; but no one proposes to alter it.

And yet the labourers' condition in Ireland must be improving. When Inglis visited the country in 1834, he said that the labourer considered himself fortunate in having employment at sixpence per day throughout the year. But this wage must be now more than quadrupled. You cannot get labourers to work in the country for twelve shillings a week. In Dublin they won't work for less than five shillings a day. If they can get it, so much the better. It would be a great thing to be accomplished, if the Irish people could be induced to rely more upon their own efforts, rather than on money raised from the taxpayers, or on reductions of rent squeezed, no matter by what means, from the landlords.

No doubt there are many excuses for the poor people of Ireland. They have been too much accustomed to rely upon other people's help, and too little upon their own industry. Their clergy, who have so great an influence over them, ought to enjoin upon them the virtues of self-reliance, prudence, and foresight; because, after all, the prosperity of a people must depend eventually upon individual exertion.

\* *Times*, 29th March 1881.

No idle people were ever prosperous, and no industrious people were ever poor. As Bishop Berkeley said long ago, "The wealth of a country bears proportion to the skill and industry of its inhabitants."

While at Galway, I had frequent interviews with the last remnant of one of the Thirteen Tribes who settled there in the thirteenth century. He was a baronet, and his father had formerly represented the county. His patrimony had been squandered, and he was now as poor as his tenantry. Still he was "hail fellow, well met," with everybody; and to us, as strangers, he was very kind. He took us to his Castle on the river Corrib; and a fine old ivy-covered place it is—venerable, picturesque, and admirably situated. There are some splendid old trees about the grounds; yet everything has the look of neglect. The house inside has been for the most part stripped of its finest furniture. The arras, which used to decorate the staircase, has been removed and sold. It is an unhappy position for the inheritor of this beautiful place—his capital has been squandered by his predecessors, and he can do but little to improve the condition of his tenantry. There is some fine marble on the estate, but for lack of capital it cannot be properly worked and brought to market. We were taken to see the village connected with the estate. But it was a sad sight. Most of the houses were in ruins; some had been demolished; for a large number of the tenantry had emigrated.

We intended to proceed to the island of Aran at the entrance of Galway Bay, to see the wonderful remains of the ancient building there, most probably the work of some extinct race; but a tremendous storm set in from the south-west, and the little

pleasure-steamer did not start. We took the opportunity, however, of going up Lough Corrib, to see the remains of the once famous Abbey of Cong; the sail up the lough is very pleasant; the islands and foreground varying from time to time, while the lofty hills of Connaught bound the distance. Numerous castles, or ruins of castles, are seen on either side; but there is a great want of wood. The numerous islands which we pass are woodless; the Irish proprietors forgetting that trees grow while we sleep, and that a not unimportant revenue can be obtained from the growth of wood. At the top of the lough we reached the landing-place at Ashford, near the fine country seat of Lord Ardilaun, surrounded by woods. We were told on board the boat, that the owner had been giving employment to several thousand workmen in the improvements of his estate; but when his agent was murdered a few years ago, and his body thrown into Lough Mask, he paid off the workmen, and left the place: very much to the dismay of the poor working people of the neighbourhood.

The principal object at Cong, about a mile from the landing-place, is the old Norman Abbey, now in ruins. The last native king of Ireland, Roderick O'Connor, is said to have died here in the twelfth century. The Abbey of Cong was formerly noted for its great riches; and the remaining buildings, though in ruin, furnish evidence of the artistic beauty with which it was decorated. What remains, however, is now merely a shell—the best view of the ornate windows being obtained from the gardens, which are beautifully laid out. The river which joins Lough Mask to Lough Corrib runs close behind; and the monks had a method of making the salmon catch

themselves in the traps which they set under the bridge—all for the good of the monastery.

In the evening, we took a long walk towards Lough Mask. The face of the country was very singular. It was covered for miles with dense blocks of carboniferous limestone, apparently serrated together, without a scrap of vegetation. Under these blocks, the river between the two Loughs runs underground; only emerging at intervals. An attempt was made during the Starvation Crisis in Ireland to make a canal between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask: but though much employment was given to the poor people, the canal—the marks of which still stand—could never hold water, and it was eventually abandoned. The constructors probably did not know the use of puddling. What Brindley said would have been applicable—"Puddle it, again and again."

From the high ground on Blake Hill, we enjoyed the beautiful view of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask—the latter of hateful memory. The mountainous group round the western shores of Lough Mask looked very grand in the evening twilight. It was sad to think of the murderous scenes which had recently taken place in so quiet and apparently peaceful a place. Not far off was the site of a great battle—that of Southern Moytura, or Matura Cong—where the ancient Firbolgs met the Tuatha de Dananns, and after four days' fierce fighting, achieved a victory. Fighting seems to have been the constant occupation of the ancient Irish, long before the invasion of Strongbow.

We might have stayed longer at Cong, but for the inn, which was a hideous place. It was like all the other inns in the Connemara district—thoroughly

incomplete — bad food, bad beds, bad everything. Moths, and the wings of moths, abounded everywhere. We found the same evidences of inaccuracy, inattention, and incompleteness, in the course of our entire journey. Little is done to attract and retain visitors. Hence visitors do not come to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Connemara; and if they do come, they go away as speedily as possible.

I need not cite my further experiences in the West. We went from Galway to Recess on Lough Glendalough — then by the Twelve Pins, past Mr Mitchell Henry's new Castle of Kylemore, to Letterfrack—where we found letters from home. We next travelled along Killary Harbour—which very much resembles a Norwegian fiord, running far inland—to Leenane; then through the inland country, by the banks of the river Erriff—where the salmon fishers were busily at work—to Westport on Clew Bay with its thousand islands. From Westport to Ballina by railway, and from Ballina to Sligo by an outside car. At Sligo we found some pleasant friends, with whom we spent a happy time, then across Ulster to Belfast, where we found comfort and hospitality. We were now amongst a new race—where industry, self-reliance, and energy, are regarded as among the essential elements of manhood. But I have already given a full enough account of the self-help of the people of Belfast in my little book on *Men of Invention and Industry*.

From Belfast I proceeded, with my friend Zoppola, by Larne and Stranraer, to the northern part of Cumberland, for the purpose of visiting my dear friend Mrs Moore at Whitehall. We were accompanied from Carlisle by my wife, who enjoyed the visit as much as we all did. Mrs Moore had been

pleasantly associated with me in the preparation of the life of her revered husband; and I think the volume in which that life has been embodied is likely to do some little amount of good in this world, by showing that sympathy and kindness are of far greater importance than money-making and selfish accumulations. After a few days at Whitehall, during which we saw the Border towers and scenery of the neighbourhood, we proceeded to Melrose, Edinburgh, and Loch Awe; then we returned to Dunkeld, from which I made my visit to the porter-astronomer of Coupar-Angus. My tour was not yet ended, for at York my wife went on to London, while I journeyed back to Saltburn-on-the-sea, for the purpose of visiting Mrs Cooke, the widow of the famous astronomical instrument maker of Buckingham Street, York. After I had accomplished that object, I proceeded across the country to Bangor, North Wales, where I had the pleasure of several interviews with another self-taught astronomer, John Jones, the slate-counter at Penrhyn Quay. But all that history I have recounted elsewhere, and need not dwell upon it here.

When I reached home, I proceeded with the collecting, revising, and writing out of my history of a few men of invention and industry; as a sort of supplemental volume to the accounts I had already published in *Industrial Biography* and *Lives of the Engineers*. I had proceeded pretty far by the beginning of 1884, when, one morning, on lifting up a picture to hang upon the wall, I felt my mouth full of blood. What? was this the foreshadowing of the end? I sent for my friend Dr Parr, and he examined me. My lungs were sound. There were no tubercles or signs of them there. But my pulse was bounding,

and it seemed that I was too full of blood. I was put upon low diet, and I gradually recovered my strength. I laid my books and writing to one side, and took another little holiday. I went over to Belfast again, and obtained from my friend Mr Harland the history of his important and significant life for my forthcoming book; and after I had accomplished this purpose, I proceeded to Edinburgh to take part in the Tercentenary Festival of the University, which was celebrated in April of that year. I was kindly invited by Sir George Harrison, the Lord Provost, to reside with him and partake of his hospitality during my stay in the city. But I desired to be as free from excitement as possible, and preferred to live in a hotel where I was free to come and go, or to rest according to inclination.

Everything went off in the most perfect manner during the celebration of the Tercentenary. The reception of guests at the museum, followed by the students' torchlight march; the procession of the professors, graduates, and distinguished guests to St Giles' Cathedral, and the sermon there, followed by the lunch at the University new buildings; the assemblage of distinguished foreigners, and the granting of degrees to them, followed by the grand banquet at the Drill Hall; the numerous receptions by the advocates, the Royal Scottish Academy, and the students; winding up on the fourth day of the celebration with a splendid exhibition of fireworks—during the whole course of which the conduct of the assembled multitude was most admirable—all went off in perfect order.

On returning home, I finished my book, and sent the manuscript to the printers. Being still full of

my old fad about Race, I desired to pay a visit to the western coast of Norway, to see the country from which the piratical Vikings came in ancient times—men who had crossed the sea in open boats and made raids upon all parts of the coast of Great Britain and Ireland. I had visited Christiania and the Miösen Lake in the south many years before, after my excursion to the North Frisian Islands; but now I wished to visit the western coast of Norway, and observe some of the extensive fiords which penetrate inland from the sea, sometimes for a hundred miles or more.

I had the pleasure of being accompanied by my friends, Dr and Mrs Parr—both delightful companions, full of conversation and of anecdotal recollections, the result of close and intelligent observation of character. We left Hull late on the night of the 31st of July 1884 by the *Hero*, and, after a pleasant voyage, reached the islands off the coast of Norway early on the morning of the 3rd of August. We first touched at Alesund, and then steamed northward between the islands and the mainland. Out at sea, we had met some rough weather, but inland we were protected from the ocean and steamed quietly along. On the land side we observed the serrated hills crested with snow. Little bits of land, covered with soil washed down from the mountains, afforded but little space for cultivation; but wherever there was a patch of land, there was a cottage upon it, and the space was turned to use. Fishermen's boats and little vessels were seen lying in the creeks; for the people are fishermen as well as farmers—the women mostly staying at home, while the men live by the sea. The mountains, as they came in sight as we steamed further along, looked peaked, and jagged, and

ragged. I do not wonder that the old Norsemen, when they found themselves possessors of a rock-bound country incapable of cultivation or extension, should have desired to leave it for a land more responsive to their industry.

Our steamer stopped at the little town of Molde, opposite the entrance to the Romsdal Fjord. We saw the furrowed snow-covered peaks of the mountains in the distance ; but we were not allowed to land. A telegram had been received from England, to the effect that cholera had broken out ; it proved to be a mere scare, though some bad cases of British cholera had occurred at a town in Lancashire. The harbour master at Molde prohibited anyone leaving the vessel ; so that we were perforce under the necessity of going forward to Trondhjem, and leaving our trip up the Romsdal Fjord to some future period. The voyage to Trondhjem was nevertheless full of interest. We steamed back through the Molde Fjord, and northward through the Jul Sound—*sound* or *sund* being one of the numerous names which we have derived from the Scandinavian. The mist hung low upon the mountains, under the snow. We passed lighthouses, and bits of farms, washed at foot by the sea. The country looked wild, bleak, and inhospitable. The jagged rocks stood up in some places in long ridges—washed bare by the constantly falling rains from the west. Sometimes scarcely a house was to be seen. In other places, if there was a bit of land washed down from the adjoining hills, there was a dwelling or two, but they seemed only temporary, built of wood, and not unlike an enlarged cigar-box. In one place, we observed three cows on a height, but no sheep were to be seen. There was

no corn in the fields. In fact, there were no fields—only rock, with occasional patches of scrub and bits of grass. No wonder the old Norsemen left this sterile country.

The next town we reached was Christiansand, a very busy fishing place, situated on four promontories of rocky islands. Little steamers were flying between the different islands. Immense quantities of fish were laid drying upon the rocks. When the split fish, or klipfish, had been dried, they were built up into stacks. These are taken, for the most part, to Spain and other Catholic countries. Men and women were equally at work; but it was pleasant to see that home was not neglected, for, as we passed the windows, we observed that they were crowded with flowers in bloom.

We went on again, past islands and rocky cliffs swept by the waves—past Smölen and Hitteren—and then we entered the Trondhjem Fjord. The scenery about here is not very interesting. But one of the curious things to be seen, is the boats scudding across the fjord, sometimes impelled by sail, sometimes by oars, and sometimes by both. Many of the boats were *manned* by women only. They seemed as deft with the oar as the sail. And the curious thing was, that these boats were built in the style of the old Viking war-boat. The tradition of boat building had lasted for more than eight hundred years. When the boat was enlarged to the size of a ship, it was impelled by a large square sail amidships. But the oar was still used, especially in steering—on the steerboard or starboard side.

On reaching Trondhjem, we were not allowed to land until we had been examined and passed by the sanitary doctor of the port. We had to remain on

board all night; and next morning, a dapper little man, the Trondhjem surgeon, mounted the ship's side, and had us all mustered and examined. There was nothing wrong; we were all well, with no sick on board; so at last we were permitted to land on the shores of Gamle Norge.

Trondhjem is a very quiet little town or city. And yet it is the capital of Mid-Norway. At one time it must have been a place of great importance, for it was from this place that some of the most formidable piratical expeditions sailed for the shores of great Britain and Normandy. It was here that the *Long Serpent* was launched on the Nidd, and set sail for England, with other war-galleys, full of Bareserks. Trondhjem was the principal station of King Olaf Trygvesson, the famous sea-warrior, who built and launched his ships here, and set forth on his famous expeditions.

But there is nothing of the piratical character about the Norwegians of the present day. They are quiet, peaceful, and honest. As we landed, we observed the tallness and fine figures of the men—generally much better-looking than the women. They were, for the most part, fair-haired, with blue or light grey eyes; though the Professor of Antiquities at Christiania informed me that two-thirds of the Norwegians were fair, and one-third dark. The darker people, however, must inhabit the inland parts of the country, as nearly all we saw were fair-haired and blue-eyed.

We went to see the cathedral, which is in course of restoration. It seems to have fallen for the most part to ruins; but now there is every probability of its being restored to its original splendid condition—the work being liberally helped by the State. The

structure seems to be a combination of Norman and early English. More than half of the whole building has already been restored. More than half the houses in the city are built of wood, so that every precaution is taken to keep the fire brigade in a state of perfect efficiency. Great fires are, however, still common in the place—the great fire of 1858 having destroyed 60 houses, and rendered about 1000 people homeless.

After seeing all that was to be seen at Trondhjem, we took a passage by the steamboat for Bergen, and set out the same night at twelve o'clock. We passed the same line of coast that we had already seen, and remained two nights on board. At Alesund, we passed the place from which Rolf the Ganger had set out for the conquest of Normandy, where his castle is now in ruins. We went sometimes inside the islands which surround the west coast of Norway, and sometimes through the open sea, though there were usually long crests of rocks far out, over which the waves were wildly beating themselves into spray.

We stopped at Florø to take in some cargo of fish, where we were reminded of the likeness of the men to our people at home. The fishermen very much resembled those at Peterhead, Fraserburgh, and Gamrie, in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire. The young women were the same, only in the one case they were Pigs (or pigge) and in the other Lassies. It seems to me that the English are more like the Frisians and Danes; and that the Lowland Scotch, the Cumbrians, and Northumbrians, are more like the Norwegians. At the table d'hôte on the steamer, I sat opposite a gentleman who was the very picture of the late George Stephenson, the engineer.

At breakfast, in the cabin, as well as elsewhere, we had *flad-brod*, similar to the oatmeal cakes introduced into Yorkshire and other counties in England by the old Northmen. In short, there are numerous resemblances between the Norwegians and Eastern English and Scots—their manners and customs—their maritime instincts and love of the sea—their steadiness, orderliness, and courage—all of which I cannot particularise here, though I hope to do so in my long-contemplated work on Race. But will that ever be written? At present it seems to me to resemble that of the hero of Bulwer's *Caxtons*, who contemplated a Great Work, "The History of Human Error," which was never written, or at least never finished.

We landed in Bergen, a fishing town, very picturesquely situated. The principal street along the harbour is called the Strand, just as our street along the shore of the Thames in London is called by the same name; and the Danes or Northmen had their principal church on the north side of the Thames in the Strand (St Clement Danes), and on the south their principal church was St Olave's, in Tooley Street—or St Olave's Street. The population here is very mixed, not so pure as at Trondhjem. These are both fair and dark, and not so tall and well-formed; but this is the case in most commercial towns.

After staying a night at Bergen, at a not very agreeable hotel—though it was said to be the best in the place—we started by steamer for the Hardanger Fjord. The morning was very fine. The sun was out; the view of the boats and ships, with their background of mountains, looked large and grand. We were preceded down the Byfjord by a great steamer

bound for England. Though Bergen is surrounded by greenery—being originally called Björgvin, from “the pasture between the mountains”—the vegetation rapidly disappeared as we emerged from the land-locked bay. Then we came to bare, striated rocks, with not a vestige of vegetation. Passing islands without number, we reached the Björne Fjord, and passed through a magnificent panorama. Here trees and vegetation were abundant. Indeed, this fiord seemed to me, under the morning sun, to present a combination of the beauties of Loch Lomond and the Lake of Como. As we passed along, the names of places reminded us of those at home. The lighthouses on the points of land were Fyrness (Furness). There was Lunden; not far off was Selby; and Lerwick, near the entrance to the Hardanger Fjord. This inlet of the sea, which runs more than 100 miles inland, consists of many fiords, each called by its special name. But I need not commemorate them here. The nautical instincts seem to have accompanied the Norwegian people everywhere. At the little hamlet of Rosendal, the inhabitants, though they were but peasants, had five beautifully modelled yachts and schooners on the stocks, of from 80 to 150 tons burthen—some of them nearly ready for launching. In the distance, amongst the trees, was the seat of Baron Rosenkrantz, one of the two last remaining barons in Norway; for titles of nobility were abolished in 1821.

The further we went, the loftier the mountains became. We went in and out, sometimes under precipices, at other times along the fertile undulating sward, shut in by some lowering mountain near at hand. We saw the water shooting from the hill-tops in falls, some of them very fine. For the Folgefond

is always covered with its snow-mantle; this great mass of snow, and ice, and glaciers, covering about 150 square English miles; during the summer it is constantly sending down its melted waters to the valleys below. We passed on—the scenery constantly varying—until we at length reached the little hamlet of Utne, situated near the confluence of four fiords, radiating to the four points of the compass, and surrounded by the most beautiful mountain scenery.

We were fortunate in getting accommodation at the little inn, and there we remained for about a week. The landlady could not speak English, and we could not speak Norwegian; but we very soon succeeded in finding an interpreter; for most of the Norwegian visitors at the little inn could speak English; some of them perfectly. The landlady was a widow; and though old, she managed her house perfectly. Her name was Thorburn—spelt Thorbjorn—a well-known Border Scottish name.\* She was, indeed, very like some of my own immediate relations. She was not, however, called by her own name, but was known in the neighbourhood as Mother Utne; and a fine old mother she was.

The house was of a rather primitive character. It was built of wood, like most of the Norwegian houses. The outer lobby, or hall, was pretty wide and spacious; its windows overlooked the fiord and the mountains on the further side; while it was set round about with forms for the visitors. Doors opened from the hall into the dining or eating-room on the right hand, into the kitchen in the back centre, and into the drawing-room on the left. In the middle of the

\* There are also Thorburns in Banffshire and Wigtonshire—places where the Northmen settled.

hall was a winding wooden staircase leading to the bedrooms above. Everything was primitive, clean, neat, and comfortable. There was plenty of light, and plenty of air. The food was good, though not luxurious. Everything was simple and unpretending. Old Mother Utne was dressed in the costume of the Hardanger Fjord—a red bodice round her waist, and a large winged white cap on her head—which, by the way, the Norse people imported into Normandy, where the like head-gear still exists. The price charged for our accommodation was unusually moderate.

It happened that most of the visitors staying at the little inn were from Bergen. They were mostly professors, teachers in the higher schools, and therefore educated people. The daughter of the Burgomaster of Bergen was there, as well as the President or Speaker of the Municipal Council. They could, nearly all of them, speak English; and some of the ladies sang and played admirably. We had therefore fallen by accident into a very pleasant place; and soon felt ourselves quite at home. There was plenty of pleasant walking in the neighbourhood; the walk to the summit of the lofty hill behind Utne commanding splendid views of the surrounding waters and mountains. There was also boating on the fiord close at hand; and an occasional excursion up the Sor Fjord, with its surrounding majestic scenery. We had then distant views of the Folgefond and its vast snow-covered crest. The visit we paid to Ullensvang, and the Protestant pastor there, was very pleasant.

As we passed Kinservik, on our way to Ullensvang, the place was pointed out where the Scotch ships used to come for timber—Scotland, in past times, being very bare of wood. The sailors emptied out their

ballast before taking in their return cargo ; and the ballast now forms a ridge of stone which passing ships have to avoid. The place is called Skotto-fluen, or Scottish shoal. The fare paid to our boatmen on these occasions was very moderate ; and when a little present was made over the fare, the boatmen shook hands with us all round.

Politics exist in Norway as well as England. We found there were democrats as well as conservatives in Mother Utne's party. The democrats have now the control, and are alleged by the conservatives to be merely a mob government. One conservative lady, with whom we got into conversation, told us that the democrats were only the Torske, or Codfish people. Having made some inquiry about the Torskes from a supposed neutral person, he told me that the democrats repudiated the name ; and they were, he believed—though occasionally mistaken—working for the good of the people.

There was one circumstance related to me by the Librarian of the Bergen Free Library, which I thought of much interest. She told me that the Municipal Government of Bergen—following the example of Gottenburg and Christiania—had resolved to give no further licenses to drinking shops, because of the increasing vice of drunkenness ; but that they had permitted a company of known and respectable men to take possession of the public houses, and keep them under strict control. This number was limited, and strict regulations were laid down for their guidance. The sale of spirits was to be entirely prohibited on Sundays and Saints' days, and also on Saturdays and the eves of festivals, after 5 P.M. The laws relating to the sale of wine and beer were much less stringent.

The company was formed ; the capital necessary to purchase the public houses was subscribed ; and operations began a few years ago. It was arranged between the company and the municipality that whatever profit was made, over and above the 5 per cent. on their capital, should be handed over to the town for the purpose of promoting public improvements. The results have been perfectly satisfactory. Not only have the profits been such as to pay the 5 per cent. interest on the capital, but a large surplus has been annually handed over to the municipality. This has been expended in maintaining the Free Library and the Museum, and Musical Bands which play at certain hours, and in laying out public grounds and parks for the recreation of the public. Why should not this admirable example be followed elsewhere?

We left this pleasant place with regret, after many hand-shakings, congratulations, and good wishes. We went down the Hardanger Fjord, and passed the villages, and falls, and rocks, and mountains, which we had seen on our way up. After a few days in Bergen, we started for Hull, and steamed south, partly amongst the islands, to Stavanger. Here a number of emigrants came on board. They were mostly young persons, and their mothers and sisters stood along the shore, weeping and sobbing. But it was as it had been for a thousand years : the youth must go to some more productive regions—for the world was still but half peopled. Before, young men from Norway had gone as pirates ; now they went as honest emigrants—willing to work their way with energy and industry. As the ship left the shore, there was a “hip! hip! hurrah” from those on board—but what of those poor mothers and sisters left on

shore? During the evening, after we were well out to sea, the young Norwegians sang Folk-songs and danced national dances until a comparatively late hour. After a pleasant voyage, we reached Hull, in the midst of a yacht-race; and could scarcely land because of the crowd which lined the pier and the shores of the Humber.

In the following November, my little book entitled *Men of Invention and Industry* was published. It had a large sale, and was well received by the press. So far as I am concerned, reviews of my books have been generally fair. Reviewers have praised my efforts to entertain and instruct the public, quite as much as they deserve. This I can say with justness and fairness; because the reviewers know as little of me personally as I know of them. They say their say about my works, and I am perfectly content. The book was translated into Italian and Dutch; perhaps into other languages, but of these I cannot tell. Of course it was republished in the United States. I sent over advance sheets to Harper & Co., New York, as a "protection," they told me, against a piratical publisher. The Harpers used to give me a sum for my advance sheets, but they do this no longer. They publish my books in their Franklin Square Library, and sell them for some 6d. or 7d. Of course they can give me no allowance out of this; but when the book is published at a dollar, they send me a trifle of the profit.\*

The reason of this is, that a man with a Highland name—doubtless descended from some old Highland Cateran—has set up an enormous piratical establish-

\* In justice to Messrs Harpers, a statement of their payments to Dr Smiles is given at the end of this chapter, on page 382.

ment in New York. He pounces upon all the best books that issue from the English press, and publishes them without any communication with the authors, and, of course, without any remuneration for their labours. The freebooter in question has, in this way, established one of the largest publishing houses in America, and is said to be making an immense fortune out of the brains of English authors. The Harpers had treated me very fairly, considering the law of their country, which protects book piracy as well as other industries. I have no doubt that the best of the American publishers are willing to secure an alteration in the law, and to give some fair consideration for the brain work of English authors; as the legislatures of France, Italy, and Germany already do. The fault is not so much in the American publishers, as in the American people and their representatives in the legislature.\* Charles Dickens suffered far more than I have done. In one of his letters he said, "I have no hope of the States doing justice in this dishonest respect, and therefore do not expect to overtake these fellows, but we may cry 'Stop, thief!' nevertheless, especially as they wince and smart under it." I believe, however, that the American people will yet wipe out this blot from their flag; and follow the example of England and the principal continental governments, in securing a limited copyright to foreign authors.

But authors and publishers are treated almost as badly at home. In 1844, Mr Murray brought under my notice the large borrowings made from my works by a Christian Society, supported by public donations and subscriptions. The Church Catechism enjoins us "to keep our hands from picking and stealing . . .

\* The law of 1891, such as it is, had not then been passed.—ED.

not to covet nor desire another man's goods, but to learn and labour truly to get our own living." But what can be said of a society which seizes the books belonging to other people, boils them down, and undersells the original owners. Mr Murray showed me a volume entitled *The Prayer Book and Commentary*, taken largely from the Bishop of Derry's *Bampton Lectures* (1876), on "The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity." This book had been boiled down by the Society in question, and sold at a very low price. Whole pages had been taken verbatim, in most places, without acknowledgment; in fact, the materials and body of the cheap book had been provided by the brain work of the original author. This cannot be Christian, for it is not honest. It may be well to give "pure literature" to the people, but is it necessary that they should steal it? Nor is this the way to teach "the people" honesty; but, on the contrary, dishonesty, even though the literature be "pure." The practice reminds one of the broom-seller who sold his brooms for next to nothing, because he stole them "ready-made."

As regards myself, Mr Murray showed me two volumes issued by the same society, which contained large extracts from my works, without which, indeed, these volumes could not have been published. One of these contained the lives of James Watt and George Stephenson, from my *Lives of the Engineers*; Henry Maudslay and Joseph Clement, from my *Industrial Biography*; and James Nasmyth, from the *Autobiography*, which I recently edited and published. It is true that this volume of boiled-down biographies is very badly done, and contains too much high-flown language. But the other

volume, published by the same society, is very ably done, by a thoroughly practised writer. It contained George Stephenson *again* (twice boiled down by the same society in one year), Thomas Telford, from my *Lives of the Engineers*, and Thomas Edward, from my *Life of the Scotch Naturalist*.

In the first book, the author or editor only incidentally refers to me as "almost the only astronomer who has examined a zone of these heavens"—why this ridiculous statement when it refers merely to engineering and invention?—and further on, he adds of his own work, "He has been obliged to use the material that lay readiest to his hand." Of course! my books were the readiest, and with this help and a little elbow-grease, he could readily boil them down, to enable the society to undersell me. In the case of the second volume, the author cites me often by name, and pays me many compliments, for which I thank him; but I am sorry that a writer of his powers should condescend to help a society which "steals its brooms ready-made."

Mr Murray desired me to insert a protest against this method of dealing with other people's property, in the *Times* and the *Athenæum*; but I had no wish to enter into a controversy on the subject. I must have travelled several thousands of miles—from Leeds to Newcastle, again and again—from London to North Wales—to Eskdale in Scotland—to Birmingham, Cornwall, Banff, and many other places, to collect the materials for my works; and I spent many years in searching numerous documents, and writing them out for publication; and now this society takes possession of the whole, "uses the material that lies readiest to its hand," boils it down,

and undersells me by means of public subscriptions! I do not know what other people may think about this practice, but honest authors and honest publishers cannot fail to regard this system of purloining and underselling as a public nuisance, which ought to be abated.

*Sums paid by Messrs Harpers to Dr Smiles for their editions of his books.*

1867. <i>The Huguenots</i> . . . . .	£100
1868. <i>Lives of the Stephensons</i> . . . . .	100
1871. <i>Character</i> . . . . .	100
1871. <i>Boy's Travel round the World</i> . . . . .	30
1873. <i>Huguenots after the Revocation</i> . . . . .	25
1873. <i>Self-Help</i> . New edition . . . . .	15
1875. <i>Thrift</i> . . . . .	100
1876-7. <i>Scotch Naturalist</i> . . . . .	100
1879. <i>Robert Dick</i> . . . . .	200
1887. <i>Life and Labour</i> . . . . .	50

*Royalties.*

- 1880. *Duty*, 10 per cent.
- 1882. *James Nasmyth*, 10 per cent.
- 1884. *Men of Invention and Industry*, 10 per cent.
- 1894. *Josiah Wedgwood*, 10 per cent.
- 1891. *Jasmin*, 10 per cent., later 12½ per cent.