

JOHN BROWN

RAB AND HIS FRIENDS
AND OTHER PAPERS

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PREFACE

"Squeeze out the whey," was the pithy and sharp advice of his crusty, acute, faithful, and ill-fated friend, William Taylor of Norwich, author of *English Synonyms*, to Southey, when that complacent and indefatigable poet and literary man of all work sent him the MSS. of his huge quartos. It would perhaps have been better for his fame had the author of *Thalaba*, *Don Roderick*, and *The Curse of Kehama* taken the gruff advice.

I am going to squeeze my two volumes into one, keeping it a profound secret as to what I regard as whey and what curd; only I believe the more professional papers, as *Locke and Sydenham*, *Dr. Marshall*, etc., are less readable – less likely to while away the idle hours of the gentle public, than those now given: they are squeezed out not without a grudge.

My energetic friend, J. T. Fields, of the well-known Boston firm, has done the same act of excision by the two volumes that I now do, – and has done it admirably. Only I could not but smile when I saw *Horo Subsecivo* exchanged for "Spare Hours," – a

good title, but not mine; and my smile broke into laughter when I found myself dedicated "affectionately" to an excellent man and poet, whom, to my sorrow, I do not know.

While thanking my American friends, and shaking hands with them across the great deep, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of acknowledging the following portion of a letter received a day or two ago from an unknown friend – Charles D. Warner, of Hartford, Conn., U.S.: —

"I see you lay some stress upon the fact that your venerated father was very tenacious of purpose, and that *that* is a trait of the Browns. The branch of the family in this country also assert the same of themselves.

"In further reading how your father came, late in life, when it was too late, to know that he had neglected his body, I called to mind a remark of another Dr. Brown, which I thought you might like to hear, as confirmatory of your theory of the *unity* of the Browns.

"Dr. John Brown, D.D., was a native of Brooklyn, in this State. He was settled at one time in Cazenovia, New York, and finally died at the age of fifty, prematurely worn out, at Hadley, Mass. He was a man of great tenacity of purpose, strength of intellect, a clear thinker, and generally a powerful man. He was also much beloved, for his heart was large and warm.

"While he was waiting for death to overtake him, being undermined as I have said, I have heard my mother say that he once remarked, 'I have worn myself out in labour which God

never required of me, and for which man never will thank me."

Those of my readers who think life in the main more serious than not, will forgive this grave and weighty passage. Those who do not think so, will not be the worse of asking themselves if they are safe in so doing.

J. B

23, Rutland Street,
15th Feb. 1862.

Human wisdom has reached its furthest point when it gets to say – I do not know – God knows. In the child's story of "Beauty and the Beast" the Beast says to Beauty, "Doyou not think me very ugly?"

"Why, yes," said she, "for I cannot tell a story." You are right," replied the 'Beast; "and besides being ugly I am very stupid."

"I think you cannot be very stupid," said Beauty, "if you yourself know this." – From a thoughtful Discourse on Plato, by, I believe, a Liverpool Merchant.

RAB AND HIS FRIENDS

Four-and-thirty years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street from the High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwined, as only lovers and boys know how, or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. "A dog-fight!" shouted Bob, and was off; and so was I, both of us all but praying that it might not be over before we got up! And is not this boy-nature? and human nature too? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it? Dogs like fighting; old Isaac says they "delight" in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog or man – courage, endurance, and skill – in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy – be he ever so fond himself of fighting, if he be a good boy, hates and despises all this, but he would have run off with Bob and me fast enough: it is a natural, and a not wicked interest, that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely-ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced a dog-fight to his brain? He did not, he could not see the dogs fighting; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs

fighting, is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman, fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many "brutes;" it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile; a crowd centripetal, having its eyes and its heads all bent downwards and inwards, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over: a small thoroughbred, white bull-terrier, is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unaccustomed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it; the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final grip of poor Yarrow's throat, – and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to have knocked down any man, would "drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile," for that part, if he had a chance: it was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls, of the best possible ways of ending it. "Water!" but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well at Black-friar's Wynd. "Bite the tail!" and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of *Yarrow's* tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than

enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend, – who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" observed a calm, highly-dressed young buck, with an eye-glass in his eye. "Snuff, indeed!" growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" again observes the buck, but with more urgency; whereon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull which may have been at Culloden, he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free!

The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms, – comforting him.

But the Bull Terrier's blood is up, and his soul unsatisfied; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase, he makes a brief sort of *amende*, and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him: down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief; up the Cowgate like an arrow – Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a huge mastiff, sauntering down the middle of the causeway, as if with his hands in his pockets: he is old, gray, brindled as big as a little Highland bull, and has the Shaksperian dewlaps shaking as he goes.

The Chicken makes straight at him, and fastens on his throat. To our astonishment, the great creature does nothing but stand still, hold himself up, and roar – yes, roar; a long, serious, remonstrative roar.

How is this? Bob and I are up to them. *He is muzzled!*

The bailies had proclaimed a general muzzling, and his master, studying strength and economy mainly, had encompassed his huge jaws in a home-made apparatus, constructed out of the leather of some ancient *breechin*. His mouth was open as far as it could; his lips curled up in rage – a sort of terrible grin; his teeth gleaming, ready, from out the darkness; the strap across his mouth tense as a bowstring; his whole frame stiff with indignation and surprise; his roar asking us all round, "Did you ever see the like of this?" He looked a statue of anger and astonishment, done in Aberdeen granite.

We soon had a crowd: the Chicken held on. "A knife!" cried Bob; and a cobbler gave him his knife: you know the kind of knife, worn away obliquely to a point, and always keen. I put its edge to the tense leather; it ran before it; and then! – one sudden jerk of that enormous head, a sort of dirty mist about his mouth, no noise, – and the bright and fierce little fellow is dropped, limp, and dead. A solemn pause: this was more than any of us had bargained for. I turned the little fellow over, and saw he was quite dead: the mastiff had taken him by the small of the back like a rat, and broken it.

He looked down at his victim appeased, ashamed, and

amazed; snuffed him all over, stared at him, and taking a sudden thought, turned round and trotted off. Bob took the dead dog up, and said, "John, we'll bury him after tea."

"Yes," said I, and was off after the mastiff. He made up the Cowgate at a rapid swing; he had forgotten some engagement. He turned up the Candlemaker Row, and stopped at the Harrow Inn.

There was a carrier's cart ready to start, and a keen, thin, impatient, black-a-vised little man, his hand at his gray horse's head, looking about angrily for something. "Rab, ye thief!" said he, aiming a kick at my great friend, who drew cringing up, and avoiding the heavy shoe with more agility than dignity, and watching his master's eye, slunk dismayed under the cart, – his ears down, and as much as he had of tail down too.

What a man this must be – thought I – to whom my tremendous hero turns tail! The carrier saw the muzzle hanging, cut and useless, from his neck, and I eagerly told him the story, which Bob and I always thought, and still think, Homer, or King David, or Sir Walter, alone were worthy to rehearse. The severe little man was mitigated, and condescended to say, "Rab, ma man, puir Rabbie," – whereupon the stump of a tail rose up, the ears were cocked, the eyes filled, and were comforted; the two friends were reconciled. "Hupp!" and a stroke of the whip were given to Jess; and off went the three.

Bob and I buried the Game Chicken that night (we had not much of a tea) in the back-green of his house, in Melville Street, No. 17, with considerable gravity and silence; and being at the

time in the Iliad, and, like all boys, Trojans, we of course called him Hector.

Six years have passed, – a long time for a boy and a dog: Bob Ainslie is off to the wars; I am a medical student, and clerk at Minto House Hospital.

Rab I saw almost every week, on the Wednesday; and we had much pleasant intimacy. I found the way to his heart by frequent scratching of his huge head, and an occasional bone. When I did not notice him he would plant himself straight before me, and stand wagging that bud of a tail, and looking up, with his head a little to the one side. His master I occasionally saw; he used to call me "Maister John," but was laconic as any Spartan.

One fine October afternoon, I was leaving the hospital, when I saw the large gate open, and in walked Rab, with that great and easy saunter of his. He looked as if taking general possession of the place; like the Duke of Wellington entering a subdued city, satiated with victory and peace. After him came Jess, now white from age, with her cart; and in it a woman carefully wrapped up, – the carrier leading the horse anxiously, and looking back. When he saw me, James (for his name was James Noble) made a curt and grotesque "boo," and said, "Maister John, this is the mistress; she's got a trouble in her breest – some kind o' an income we're thinkin'."

By this time I saw the woman's face; she was sitting on a sack filled with straw, with her husband's plaid round her, and his big-coat, with its large white metal buttons, over her feet.

I never saw a more unforgettable face – pale, serious, *lonely*,¹ delicate, sweet, without being at all what we call fine. She looked sixty, and had on a mutch, white as snow, with its black ribbon; her silvery, smooth hair setting off her dark-grey eyes – eyes such as one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime, full of suffering, full also of the overcoming of it: her eyebrows² black and delicate, and her mouth firm, patient, and contented, which few mouths ever are.

As I have said, I never saw a more beautiful countenance, or one more subdued to settled quiet. "Ailie," said James, "this is Maister John, the young doctor; Rab's freend, ye ken. We often speak about you, doctor." She smiled, and made a movement, but said nothing; and prepared to come down, putting her plaid aside and rising. Had Solomon, in all his glory, been handing down the Queen of Sheba, at his palace gate, he could not have done it more daintily, more tenderly, more like a gentleman, than did James the Howgate carrier, when he lifted down Ailie his wife. The contrast of his small, swarthy, weather-beaten, keen, worldly face to hers – pale, subdued, and beautiful – was something wonderful. Rab looked on concerned and puzzled, but ready for anything that might turn up, – were it to strangle the nurse, the porter, or even me. Ailie and he seemed great friends.

¹ It is not easy giving this look by one word; it was expressive of her being so much of her life alone.

² ... "Black brows, they say, Become some women best, so that there be not Too much hair there, but in a semicircle, Or a half-moon made with a pen." – A Winter's Tale.

"As I was sayin', she's got a kind o' trouble in her breest, doctor; wull ye tak' a look at it?" We walked into the consulting room, all four; Rab grim and comic, willing to be happy and confidential if cause could be shown, willing also to be the reverse, on the same terms. Ailie sat down, undid her open gown and her lawn handkerchief round her neck, and, without a word, showed me her right breast. I looked at and examined it carefully, – she and James watching me, and Rab eyeing all three. What could I say? there it was, that had once been so soft, so shapely, so white, so gracious and bountiful, so "full of all blessed conditions," – hard as a stone, a centre of horrid pain, making that pale face, with its grey, lucid, reasonable eyes, and its sweet resolved mouth, express the full measure of suffering overcome.

Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and loveable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?

I got her away to bed. "May Rab and me bide?" said James. "*You* may; and Rab, if he will behave himself."

"T'se warrant he's do that, doctor," and in slunk the faithful beast. I wish you could have seen him. There are no such dogs now. He belonged to a lost tribe. As I have said, he was brindled, and grey like Rubislaw granite; his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thickset, like a little bull – a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog. He must have been ninety pounds' weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or two – being all he had – gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was

scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it; one eye out, one ear cropped as close as was Archbishop Leighton's father's; the remaining eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which was for ever unfurling itself, like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long – the mobility, the instantaneousness of that bud were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings and winkings, the intercommunications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest.

Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way all along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Cæsar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity ³ of all great fighters.

You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never looked at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller. ⁴ The same large, heavy, menacing, combative,

³ A Highland game-keeper, when asked why a certain terrier, of singular pluck, was so much more solemn than, the other dogs, said, "Oh, Sir, life's full o' sarioussness to him – he just never can get eneuch o' fechtin'."

⁴ Fuller was, in early life, when a farmer lad at Soham, famous as a boxer; not quarrelsome, but not without "the stern delight" a man of strength and courage feels in their exercise. Dr. Charles Stewart of Dunearn, whose rare gifts and graces as a physician, a divine, a scholar, and a gentleman, live, only in the memory of those few who knew and survive him, liked to tell how Mr. Fuller used to say, that when he was in the pulpit, and saw a buirdly man come along the passage, he would instinctively

sombre, honest countenance, the same deep, inevitable eye, the same look, as of thunder asleep, but ready, – neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with.

Next day, my master, the surgeon, examined Ailie. There was no doubt it must kill her, and soon. It could be removed – it might never return – it would give her speedy relief – she should have it done. She curtsied, looked at James, and said, "When?"

"To-morrow," said the kind surgeon – a man of few words. She and James and Rab and I retired. I noticed that he and she spoke little, but seemed to anticipate everything in each other. The following day, at noon, the students came in, hurrying up the great stair. At the first landing-place, on a small well-known black-board, was a bit of paper fastened by wafers, and many remains of old wafers beside it. On the paper were the words, – "An operation to-day. – J. B. Clerk."

Up ran the youths, eager to secure good places: in they crowded, full of interest and talk. "What's the case?"

"Which side is it?"

Don't think them heartless; they are neither better nor worse than you or I: they get over their professional horrors, and into their proper work; and in them pity, as an *emotion*, ending in itself or at best in tears and a long-drawn breath, lessens, – while pity, as a *motive*, is quickened, and gains power and purpose. It

draw himself up, measure his imaginary antagonist, and forecast how he would deal with him, his hands meanwhile condensing into fists, and tending to "square." He must have been a hard hitter if he boxed as he preached – what "The Fancy" would call "an ugly customer."

is well for poor human nature that it is so.

The operating theatre is crowded; much talk and fun, and all the cordiality and stir of youth. The surgeon with his staff of assistants is there. In comes Ailie: one look at her quiets and abates the eager students. That beautiful old woman is too much for them; they sit down, and are dumb, and gaze at her. These rough boys feel the power of her presence. She walks in quickly, but without haste; dressed in her mutch, her neckerchief, her white dimity short-gown, her black bombazeen petticoat, showing her white worsted stockings and her carpet shoes. Behind her was James with Rab. James sat down in the distance, and took that huge and noble head between his knees. Rab looked perplexed and dangerous; for ever cocking his ear and dropping it as fast.

Ailie stepped up on a seat, and laid herself on the table, as her friend the surgeon told her; arranged herself, gave a rapid look at James, shut her eyes, rested herself on me, and took my hand. The operation was at once begun; it was necessarily slow; and chloroform – one of God's best gifts to his suffering children – was then unknown. The surgeon did his work. The pale face showed its pain, but was still and silent. Rab's soul was working within him; he saw that something strange was going on, – blood flowing from his mistress, and she suffering; his ragged ear was up, and importunate; he growled and gave now and then a sharp impatient yelp; he would have liked to have done something to that man. But James had him firm, and gave him a *glower* from

time to time, and an intimation of a possible kick; – all the better for James, it kept his eye and his mind off Ailie.

It is over; she is dressed, steps gently and decently down from the table, looks for James; then turning to the surgeon and the students, she curtsies, – and in a low, clear voice, begs their pardon if she has behaved ill. The students – all of us – wept like children; the surgeon hopped her up carefully, – and, resting on James and me, Ailie went to her room, Rab following. We put her to bed. James took off his heavy shoes, crammed with tackets, heel-capt and toe-capt, and put them carefully under the table, saying, "Maister John, I'm for nane o' yer stryng nurse bodies for Ailie. I'll be her nurse, and I'll gang about on my stockin' soles as canny as pussy." And so he did; and handy and clever, and swift and tender as any woman, was that horny-handed, snell, peremptory little man. Everything she got he gave her: he seldom slept; and often I saw his small shrewd eyes out of the darkness, fixed on her. As before, they spoke little.

Rab behaved well, never moving, showing us how meek and gentle he could be, and occasionally, in his sleep, letting us know that he was demolishing some adversary. He took a walk with me every day, generally to the Candlemaker Row; but he was sombre and mild; declined doing battle, though some fit cases offered, and indeed submitted to sundry indignities; and was always very ready to turn, and came faster back, and trotted up the stair with much lightness, and went straight to that door.

Jess, the mare, had been sent, with her weather-worn cart, to

Howgate, and had doubtless her own dim and placid meditations and confusions, on the absence of her master and Rab, and her unnatural freedom from the road and her cart.

For some days Ailie did well. The wound healed by the first intention for as James said, "Oor Ailie's skin's ower clean to beil." The students came in quiet and anxious, and surrounded her bed. She said she liked to see their young, honest faces. The surgeon dressed her, and spoke to her in his own short kind way, pitying her through his eyes, Rab and James outside the circle, – Rab being now reconciled, and even cordial, and having made up his mind that as yet nobody required worrying, but, as you may suppose, *semper paratus*.

So far well: but, four days after the operation, my patient had a sudden and long shivering, a "groosin'," as she called it. I saw her soon after; her eyes were too bright, her cheek coloured; she was restless, and ashamed of being so; the balance was lost; mischief had begun. On looking at the wound, a blush of red told the secret; her pulse was rapid, her breathing anxious and quick, she wasn't herself, as she said, and was vexed at her restlessness. We tried what we could. James did everything, was everywhere; never in the way, never out of it; Rab subsided under the table into a dark place, and was motionless, all but his eye, which followed every one. Ailie got worse; began to wander in her mind, gently; was more demonstrative in her ways to James, rapid in her questions, and sharp at times. He was vexed, and said, "She was never that way afore, no, never." For a time she knew her

head was wrong, and was always asking our pardon – the dear gentle old woman: then delirium set in strong, without pause. Her brain gave way, and then came that terrible spectacle, she sang bits of old songs and Psalms, stopping suddenly, mingling the Psalms of David, and the diviner words of his Son and Lord, with homely odds and ends and scraps of ballads.

"The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way;"

Nothing more touching, or in a sense more strangely beautiful, did I ever witness. Her tremulous, rapid, affectionate, eager, Scotch voice, – the swift, aimless, bewildered mind, the baffled utterance, the bright and perilous eye; some wild words, some household cares, something for James, the names of the dead, Rab called rapidly and in a "fremyt" voice, and he starting up, surprised, and slinking off as if he were to blame somehow, or had been dreaming he heard. Many eager questions and beseechings which James and I could make nothing of, and on which she seemed to set her all, and then sink back ununderstood. It was very sad, but better than many things that are not called sad. James hovered about, put out and miserable, but active and exact as ever; read to her, when there was a lull, short bits from the Psalms, prose and metre, chanting the latter in his own rude and serious way, showing great knowledge of the fit words, bearing up like a man, and doating over her as his "ain Ailie."

"Ailie, ma woman!" "Ala ain bonnie wee dawtie!"

The end was drawing on: the golden bowl was breaking; the silver cord was fast being loosed – that *animula blandula, vagula, hospes, comesque*, was about to flee. The body and the soul – companions for sixty years – were being sundered, and taking leave. She was walking, alone, through the valley of that shadow, into which one day we must all enter, – and yet she was not alone, for we know whose rod and staff were comforting her.

One night she had fallen quiet, and as we hoped, asleep; her eyes were shut. We put down the gas, and sat watching her. Suddenly she sat up in bed, and taking a bed-gown which was lying on it rolled up, she held it eagerly to her breast, – to the right side. We could see her eyes bright with a surprising tenderness and joy, bending over this bundle of clothes. She held it as a woman holds her sucking child; opening out her nightgown impatiently, and holding it close, and brooding over it, and murmuring foolish little words, as over one whom his mother comforteth, and who sucks and is satisfied. It was pitiful and strange to see her wasted dying look, keen and yet vague – her immense love.

"Preserve me!" groaned James, giving way. And then she rocked back and forward, as if to make it sleep, hushing it, and wasting on it her infinite fondness. "Wae's me, doctor; I declare she's thinkin' it's that bairn."

"What bairn?"

"The only bairn we ever had; our wee Mysie, and she's in the

Kingdom forty years and mair." It was plainly true: the pain in the breast, telling its urgent story to a bewildered, ruined brain, was misread and mistaken; it suggested to her the uneasiness of a breast full of milk, and then the child; and so again once more they were together, and she had her ain wee Mysie in her bosom.

This was the close. She sank rapidly: the delirium left her; but, as she whispered, she was "clean silly;" it was the lightening before the final darkness. After having for some time lain still – her eyes shut, she said, "James!" He came close to her, and lifting up her calm, clear, beautiful eyes, she gave him a long look, turned to me kindly but shortly, looked for Rab but could not see him, then turned to her husband again, as if she would never leave off looking, shut her eyes and composed herself. She lay for some time breathing quick, and passed away so gently, that when we thought she was gone, James, in his old-fashioned way, held the mirror to her face. After a long pause, one small spot of dimness was breathed out; it vanished away, and never returned, leaving the blank clear darkness without a stain. "What is our life? it is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Rab all this time had been full awake and motionless: he came forward beside us: Ailie's hand, which James had held, was hanging down; it was soaked with his tears; Rab licked it all over carefully, looked at her, and returned to his place under the table.

James and I sat, I don't know how long, but for some time, – saying nothing; he started up abruptly, and with some noise went

to the table, and putting his right fore and middle fingers each into a shoe, pulled them out, and put them on, breaking one of the leather latches, and muttering in anger, "I never did the like o' that afore!"

I believe he never did; nor after either. "Rab!" he said roughly, and pointing with his thumb to the bottom of the bed. Rab leapt up, and settled himself; his head and eye to the dead face. "Maister John, ye'll wait for me," said the carrier; and disappeared in the darkness, thundering down stairs in his heavy shoes. I ran to a front window: there he was, already round the house, and out at the gate, fleeing like a shadow.

I was afraid about him, and yet not afraid; so I sat down beside Rab, and being wearied, fell asleep. I awoke from a sudden noise outside. It was November, and there had been a heavy fall of snow. Rab was *in statu quo*; he heard the noise too, and plainly knew it, but never moved. I looked out; and there, at the gate, in the dim morning – for the sun was not up, was Jess and the cart, – a cloud of steam rising from the old mare. I did not see James; he was already at the door, and came up the stairs and met me. It was less than three hours since he left, and he must have posted out – who knows how? – to Howgate, full nine miles off; yoked Jess, and driven her astonished into town. He had an armful of blankets, and was streaming with perspiration. He nodded to me, spread out on the floor two pairs of clean old blankets having at their corners, "A. G., 1794," in large letters in red worsted. These were the initials of Alison Græme, and

James may have looked in at her from without – himself unseen but not unthought of – when he was "wat, wat, and weary," and after having walked many a mile over the hills, may have seen her sitting, while "a' the lave were sleepin'," and by the firelight working her name on the blankets, for her ain James's bed.

He motioned Rab down, and taking his wife in his arms, laid her in the blankets, and happed her carefully and firmly up, leaving the face uncovered; and then lifting her, he nodded again sharply to me, and with a resolved but utterly miserable face, strode along the passage, and down stairs, followed by Rab. I followed with a light; but he didn't need it. I went out, holding stupidly the candle in my hand in the calm frosty air; we were soon at the gate. I could have helped him, but I saw he was not to be meddled with, and he was strong, and did not need it. He laid her down as tenderly, as safely, as he had lifted her out ten days before – as tenderly as when he had her first in his arms when she was only "A. G." – sorted her, leaving that beautiful sealed face open to the heavens; and then taking Jess by the head, he moved away. He did not notice me, neither did Rab, who presided behind the cart.

I stood till they passed through the long shadow of the College, and turned up Nicolson Street. I heard the solitary cart sound through the streets, and die away and come again; and I returned, thinking of that company going up Libberton Brae, then along Roslin Muir, the morning light touching the Pentlands, and making them like on-looking ghosts; then down the hill through

Auchindinny woods, past "haunted Woodhouselee," and as daybreak came sweeping up the bleak Lammermuirs, and fell on his own door, the company would stop, and James would take the key, and lift Ailie up again, laying her on her own bed, and, having put Jess up, would return with Rab and shut the door.

James buried his wife, with his neighbours mourning, Rab watching the proceedings from a distance. It was snow, and that black ragged hole would look strange in the midst of the swelling spotless cushion of white. James looked after everything; then rather suddenly fell ill, and took to bed; was insensible when the doctor came, and soon died. A sort of low fever was prevailing in the village, and his want of sleep, his exhaustion, and his misery-made him apt to take it. The grave was not difficult to re-open. A fresh fall of snow had again made all things white and smooth; Rab once more looked on, and slunk home to the stable.

And what of Rab? I asked for him next week at the new carrier who got the goodwill of James's business, and was now master of Jess and her cart. "How's Rab?" He put me off, and said rather rudely, "What's *your* business wi' the dowg?" I was not to be so put off. "Where's Rab?" He, getting confused and red, and intermeddling with his hair, said, "'Deed, sir, Rab's deid."

"Dead! what did he die of?"

"Weel, sir," said he, getting redder, "he didna exactly dee; he was killed. I had to brain him wi' a rack-pin; there was nae doin' wi' him. He lay in the treviss wi' the mear, and wadna come oot. I tempit him wi' kail and meat, but he wad tak naething, and

keepit me frae feedin' the beast, and he was aye gur gurrin', and grup gruppin' me by the legs. I was laith to mak' awa wi' the auld dowg, his like wasna atween this and Thornhill, – but,'deed, sir, I could do naething else." I believed him. Fit end for Rab, quick and complete. His teeth and his friends gone, why should he keep the peace, and be civil?

He was buried in the braeface, near the burn, the children of the village, his companions, who used to make very free with him and sit on his ample stomach, as he lay half asleep at the door in the sun, watching the solemnity.

HER LAST HALF-CROWN

Once I had friends – though now by all forsaken;
Once I had parents – they are now in heaven.

I had a home once – "
Worn out with anguish, sin, and cold, and hunger,
Down sunk the outcast, death had seized her senses.
There did the stranger find her in the morning —
God had released her.

Southey.

Hugh Miller, the geologist, journalist, and man of genius, was sitting in his newspaper office late one dreary winter night. The clerks had all left, and he was preparing to go, when a quick rap came to the door. He said "Come in," and, looking towards the entrance, saw a little ragged child all wet with sleet. "Are ye Hugh Miller?"

"Yes."

"Mary Duff wants ye."

"What does she want?"

"She's deein'." Some misty recollection of the name made him at once set out, and with his well-known plaid and stick, he was soon striding after the child, who trotted through the now deserted High Street, into the Canongate. By the time he got to

the Old Playhouse Close, Hugh had revived his memory of Mary Duff; a lively girl who had been bred up beside him in Cromarty. The last time he had seen her was at a brother mason's marriage, where Mary was "best maid," and he "best man," He seemed still to see her bright young careless face, her tidy short gown, and her dark eyes, and to hear her bantering, merry tongue.

Down the close went the ragged little woman, and up an outside stair, Hugh keeping near her with difficulty; in the passage she held out her hand and touched him; taking it in his great palm, he felt that she wanted a thumb. Finding her way like a cat through the darkness, she opened a door, and saying, "That's her!" vanished. By the light of a dying fire he saw lying in the corner of the large empty room something like a woman's clothes, and on drawing nearer became aware of a thin pale face and two dark eyes looking keenly but helplessly up at him. The eyes were plainly Mary Duff's, though he could recognise no other feature. She wept silently, gazing steadily at him. "Are you Mary Duff?"

"It's a' that's o' me, Hugh." She then tried to speak to him, something plainly of great urgency, but she couldn't; and seeing that she was very ill, and was making herself worse, he put half-a-crown into her feverish hand, and said he would call again in the morning. He could get no information about her from the neighbours: they were surly or asleep.

When he returned next morning, the little girl met him at the stair-head, and said, "She's deid." He went in, and found that

it was true; there she lay, the fire out, her face placid, and the likeness to her maiden self restored. Hugh thought he would have known her now, even with those bright black eyes closed as they were, *in aeternum*.

Seeking out a neighbour, he said he would like to bury Mary Duff, and arranged for the funeral with an undertaker in the close. Little seemed to be known of the poor outcast, except that she was a "licht," or, as Solomon would have said, a "strange woman."

"Did she drink?"

"Whiles."

On the day of the funeral one or two residents in the close accompanied him to the Canongate Churchyard. He observed a decent-looking little old woman watching them, and following at a distance, though the day was wet and bitter. After the grave was filled, and he had taken off his hat, as the men finished their business by putting on and slapping the sod, he saw this old woman remaining; she came up and, courtesying, said, "Ye wad ken that lass, Sir?"

"Yes; I knew her when she was young." The woman then burst into tears, and told Hugh that she "keepit a bit shop at the close-mooth, and Mary dealt wi' me, and aye paid reglar, and I was feared she was dead, for she had been a month awin' me half-a-crown: " and then, with a look and voice of awe, she told him how on the night he was sent for, and immediately after he had left, she had been awakened by some one in her room; and by her

bright fire – for she was a *bein*, well-to-do body – she had seen the wasted dying creature, who came forward and said, "Wasn't it half-a-crown?"

"Yes."

"There it is," and putting it under the bolster, vanished!

Poor Mary Duff! her life had been a sad one since the day when she had stood side by side with Hugh at the wedding of their friends. Her father died not long after, and her mother supplanted her in the affections of the man to whom she had given her heart. The shock made home intolerable. She fled from it blighted and embittered, and after a life of shame and misery, crept, into the corner of her room to die alone.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

OUR DOGS

"The misery of keeping a dog is his dying so soon; but to be sure, if he lived for fifty years, and then died, what would become of me?" – Sir Walter Scott.

"There is in every animal's eye a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature if not of the soul." – Ruskin.

"They say that Socrates swore by his dog." – Montaigne.

To Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan's glum and faithful PETER, with much regard.

I was bitten severely by a little dog when with my mother at Moffat Wells, being then three years of age, and I have remained "bitten" ever since in the matter of dogs. I remember that little dog, and can at this moment not only recal my pain and terror – I have no doubt I was to blame – but also her face; and were I allowed to search among the shades in the cynic Elysian fields, I could pick her out still. All my life I have been familiar with these faithful creatures, making friends of them, and speaking to them; and the only time I ever addressed the public, about a year after being bitten, was at the farm of Kirklaw Hill, near Biggar, when the text, given out from an empty cart in which the ploughmen had placed me, was "Jacob's dog," and my entire sermon was as follows: "Some say that Jacob had a black dog

(the o very long), and some say that Jacob had a white dog, but I (imagine the presumption of four years!) say Jacob had a brown dog, and a brown dog it shall be."

I had many intimacies from this time onwards – Bawtie, of the inn; Keeper, the carrier's bull-terrier; Tiger, a huge tawny mastiff from Edinburgh, which I think must have been an uncle of Rab's; all the sheep dogs at Callands – Spring, Mavis, Yarrow, Swallow, Cheviot, etc.; but it was not till I was at college, and my brother at the High School, that we possessed a dog.

TOBY

Was the most utterly shabby, vulgar, mean-looking cur I ever beheld: in one word, a tyke. He had not one good feature except his teeth and eyes, and his bark, if that can be called a feature. He was not ugly enough to be interesting; his colour black and white, his shape leggy and clumsy; altogether what Sydney Smith would have called an extraordinarily ordinary dog: and, as I have said, not even greatly ugly, or, as the Aberdonians have it, bonnie wi' ill-fairedness. My brother William found him the centre of attraction to a multitude of small black-guards who were drowning him slowly in Lochend Loch, doing their best to lengthen out the process, and secure the greatest amount of fun with the nearest approach to death. Even then Toby showed his great intellect by pretending to be dead, and thus gaining time and an inspiration. William bought him for twopence, and as he had it not, the boys accompanied him to Pilrig Street, when I happened to meet him, and giving the twopence to the biggest boy, had the satisfaction of seeing a general engagement of much severity, during which the twopence disappeared; one penny going off with a very small and swift boy, and the other vanishing hopelessly into the grating of a drain.

Toby was for weeks in the house unbeknown to any one but ourselves two and the cook, and from my grandmother's love of tidiness and hatred of dogs and of dirt, I believe she would have

expelled "him whom we saved from drowning," had not he, in his straightforward way, walked into my father's bedroom one night when he was bathing' his feet; and introduced himself with a wag of his tail, intimating a general willingness to be happy. My father laughed most heartily, and at last Toby, having got his way to his bare feet, and having begun to lick his soles and between his toes with his small rough tongue, my father gave such an unwonted shout of laughter, that we – grandmother, sisters, and all of us – went in. Grandmother might argue with all her energy and skill, but as surely as the pressure of Tom Jones' infantile fist upon Mr. Allworthy's forefinger undid all the arguments of his sister, so did Toby's tongue and fun prove too many for grandmother's eloquence. I somehow think Toby must have been up to all this, for I think he had a peculiar love for my father ever after, and regarded grandmother from that hour with a careful and cool eye.

Toby, when full grown, was a strong coarse dog; coarse in shape, in countenance, in hair, and in manner. I used to think that, according to the Pythagorean doctrine, he must have been, or been going to be, a Gilmerton carter. He was of the bull-terrier variety, coarsened through much mongrelism and a dubious and varied ancestry. His teeth were good, and he had a large skull, and a rich bark as of a dog three times his size, and a tail which I never saw equalled – indeed it was a tail *per se*; it was of immense girth and not short, equal throughout like a policeman's baton; the machinery for working it was of great power, and acted in a way, as far as I have been able to discover, quite original. We

called it his ruler.

When he wished to get into the house, he first whined gently, then growled, then gave a sharp bark, and then came a resounding, mighty stroke which shook the house; this, after much study and watching, we found was done by his bringing the entire length of his solid tail flat upon the door, with a sudden and vigorous stroke; it was quite a *tour de force* or a *coup de queue*, and he was perfect in it at once, his first *bang* authoritative, having been as masterly and telling as his last.

With all this inbred vulgar air, he was a dog of great moral excellence – affectionate, faithful, honest up to his light, with an odd humor as peculiar and as strong as his tail. My father, in his reserved way, was very fond of him, and there must have been very funny scenes with them, for we heard bursts of laughter issuing from his study when they two were by themselves: there was something in him that took that grave, beautiful, melancholy face. One can fancy him in the midst of his books, and sacred work and thoughts, pausing and looking at the secular Toby, who was looking out for a smile to begin his rough fun, and about to end by coursing and *gurrin* round the room, upsetting my father's books, laid out on the floor for consultation, and himself nearly at times, as he stood watching him – and off his guard and shaking with laughter.

Toby had always a great desire to accompany my father up to town; this my father's good taste and sense of dignity, besides his fear of losing his friend (a vain fear!), forbade, and as the

decision of character of each was great and nearly equal, it was often a drawn game. Toby, ultimately, by making it his entire object, triumphed. He usually was nowhere to be seen on my father leaving; he however saw him, and lay in wait at the head of the street, and up Leith Walk he kept him in view from the opposite side like a detective, and then, when he knew it was hopeless to hound him home, he crossed unblushingly over, and joined company, excessively rejoiced of course.

One Sunday he had gone with him to church, and left him at the vestry door. The second psalm was given out, and my father was sitting back in the pulpit, when the door at its back, up which he came from the vestry, was seen to move, and gently open, then, after a long pause, a black shining snout pushed its way steadily into the congregation, and was followed by Toby's entire body. He looked somewhat abashed, but snuffing his friend, he advanced as if on thin ice, and not seeing him, put his fore-legs on the pulpit, and behold there he was his own familiar chum. I watched all this, and anything more beautiful than his look of happiness, of comfort, of entire ease when he beheld his friend – the smoothing down of the anxious ears, the swing of gladness of that mighty tail, – I don't expect soon to see. My father quietly opened the door, and Toby was at his feet and invisible to all but himself; had he sent old George Peaston, the "minister's man," to put him out, Toby would probably have shown his teeth, and astonished George. He slunk home as soon as he could, and never repeated that exploit.

I never saw in any other dog the sudden transition from discretion, not to say abject cowardice, to blazing and permanent valour. From his earliest years he showed a general meanness of blood, inherited from many generations of starved, bekicked, and down-trodden forefathers and mothers, resulting in a condition of intense abjectness in all matters of personal fear; anybody, even a beggar, by a *gowl* and a threat of eye, could send him off howling by anticipation, with that mighty tail between his legs.

But it was not always so to be, and I had the privilege of seeing courage, reasonable, absolute, and for life, spring up in Toby at once, as did Athené from the skull of Jove. It happened thus: —

Toby was in the way of hiding his culinary bones in the small gardens before his own and the neighbouring doors. Mr. Scrymgeour, two doors off, a bulky, choleric, red-haired, red-faced man —*torvo vultu* — was, by law of contrast, a great cultivator of flowers, and he had often scowled Toby into all but non-existence by a stamp of his foot and a glare of his eye. One day his gate being open, in walks Toby with a huge bone, and making a hole where Scrymgeour had two minutes before been planting some precious slip, the name of which on paper and on a stick Toby made very light of, substituted his bone, and was engaged covering it, or thinking he was covering it up with his shovelling nose (a very odd relic of paradise in the dog), when S. spied him through the inner glass-door, and was out upon him like the Assyrian, with a terrific *gowl*. I watched them. Instantly Toby made straight at him with a roar too, and an eye

more torve than Scrymgeour's, who, retreating without reserve, fell prostrate, there is reason to believe, in his own lobby. Toby contented himself with proclaiming his victory at the door, and returning finished his bone-planting at his leisure; the enemy, who had scuttled behind the glass-door, glaring at him.

From this moment Toby was an altered dog. Pluck at first sight was lord of all; from that time dated his first tremendous deliverance of tail against the door, which we called "come listen to my tail." That very evening he paid a visit to Leo, next door's dog, a big, tyrannical bully and coward, which its master thought a Newfoundland, but whose pedigree we knew better; this brute continued the same system of chronic extermination which was interrupted at Lochend, – having Toby down among his feet, and threatening him with instant death two or three times a day. To him Toby paid a visit that very evening, down into his den, and walked about, as much as to say "Come on, Macduff!" but Macduff did not come on, and henceforward there was an armed neutrality, and they merely stiffened up and made their backs rigid, pretended each not to see the other, walking solemnly round, as is the manner of dogs.

Toby worked his new-found faculty thoroughly, but with discretion. He killed cats, astonished beggars, kept his own in his own garden against all comers, and came off victorious in several well-fought battles; but he was not quarrelsome or foolhardy. It was very odd how his carriage changed, holding his head up, and how much pleasanter he was at home. To my father, next to

William, who was his Humane Society man, he remained stanch. He had a great dislike to all things abnormal, as the phrase now is. A young lady of his acquaintance was calling one day, and, relating some distressing events, she became hysterical. Of this Toby did not approve, and sallying from under my father's chair, attacked his friend, barking fiercely, and cut short the hysterics better than any *sal volatile* or valerian. He then made abject apologies to the patient, and slunk back to his chair.

And what of his end? for the misery of dogs is that they die so soon, or, as Sir Walter says, it is well they do; for if they lived as long as a Christian, and we liked them in proportion, and they then died, he said that was a thing he could not stand.

His exit was lamentable, and had a strange poetic or tragic relation to his entrance. My father was out of town; I was away in England. Whether it was that the absence of my father had relaxed his power of moral restraint, or whether through neglect of the servant he had been desperately hungry, or most likely both being true, Toby was discovered with the remains of a cold leg of mutton, on which he had made an ample meal; ⁵ this he was endeavouring to plant as of old, in the hope of its remaining undiscovered till to-morrow's hunger returned, the whole shank-bone sticking up unmistakably. This was seen by our excellent and Rhadamanthine grandmother, who pronounced sentence on

⁵ Toby was in the state of the shepherd boy whom George Webster met in Glenshee, and asked, "My man, were you ever fou'?" "Ay aince" – speaking slowly, as if remembering – "Ay, aince." "What on?" "Cauld mutton!"

the instant; and next day, as William was leaving for the High School, did he in the sour morning, through an easterly *haur*, behold him "whom he saved from drowning," and whom, with better results than in the case of Launce and Crabb, he had taught, as if one should say "thus would I teach a dog," – dangling by his own chain from his own lamp-post, one of his hind feet just touching the pavement, and his body preternaturally elongated.

William found him dead and warm, and falling in with the milk-boy at the head of the street, questioned him, and discovered that he was the executioner, and had got twopence, he – Toby's every morning's crony, who met him and accompanied him up the street, and licked the outside of his can – had, with an eye to speed and convenience, and a want of taste, not to say principle and affection, horrible still to think of, suspended Toby's animation beyond all hope. William instantly fell upon him, upsetting his milk and cream, and gave him a thorough licking, to his own intense relief; and, being late, he got from Pyper, who was a martinet, the customary palmies, which he bore with something approaching to pleasure. So died Toby; my father said little, but he missed and mourned his friend.

There is reason to believe that by one of those curious intertwistings of existence, the milk-boy was that one of the drowning party who got the penny of the twopence.

WYLIE

Our next friend was an exquisite shepherd's dog; fleet, thin-flanked, dainty, and handsome as a small greyhound, with all the grace of silky waving black and tan hair. We got her thus. Being then young and keen botanists, and full of the knowledge and love of Tweedside, having been on every hilltop from Muckle Mendie to Hundles-hope and the Lee Pen, and having fished every water from Tarth to the Leithen, we discovered early in spring that young Stewart, author of an excellent book on natural history, a young man of great promise and early death, had found the *Buxbaumia aphylla*, a beautiful and odd-looking moss, west of Newbie heights, in the very month we were that moment in. We resolved to start next day. We walked to Peebles, and then up Hay-stoun Glen to the cottage of Adam Cairns, the aged shepherd of the Newbie hirsel, of whom we knew, and who knew of us from his daughter, Nancy Cairns, a servant with Uncle Aitken of Callands. We found our way up the burn with difficulty, as the evening was getting dark; and on getting near the cottage heard them at worship. We got in, and made ourselves known, and got a famous tea, and such cream and oat cake! – old Adam looking on us as "clean dementit" to come out for "a bit moss," which, however, he knew, and with some pride said he would take us in the morning to the place. As we were going into a box bed for the night, two young men came in, and said

they were "gaun to burn the water." Off we set. It was a clear, dark, starlight frosty night. They had their leisters and tar torches, and it was something worth seeing – the wild flame, the young fellows striking the fish coming to the light – how splendid they looked with the light on their scales, coming out of the darkness – the stumblings and quenchings suddenly of the lights, as the torch-bearer fell into a deep pool. We got home past midnight, and slept as we seldom sleep now. In the morning Adam, who had been long risen, and up the *Hope* with his dog, when he found we had wakened, told us there were four inches of snow, and we soon saw it was too true. So we had to go home without our cryptogamie prize.

It turned out that Adam, who was an old man and frail, and had made some money, was going at Whitsunday to leave, and live with his son in Glasgow. We had been admiring the beauty and gentleness and perfect shape of Wylie, the finest collie I ever saw, and said, "What are you going to do with Wylie?"

"Deed," says he, "I hardly ken. I canna think o' selling her, though she's worth four pound, and she'll no like the toun." I said, "Would you let me have her?" and Adam, looking at her fondly, – she came up instantly to him, and made of him – said, "Ay, I wull, if ye'll be gude to her;" and it was settled that when Adam left for Glasgow she should be sent into Albany Street by the carrier.

She came, and was at once taken to all our hearts – even grandmother liked her; and though she was often pensive, as

if thinking of her master and her work on the hills, she made herself at home, and behaved in all respects like a lady. When out with me, if she saw sheep in the streets or road, she got quite excited, and helped the work, and was curiously useful, the being so making her wonderfully happy.

And so her little life went on, never doing wrong, always blythe and kind and beautiful. But some months after she came, there was a mystery about her: every Tuesday evening she disappeared: we tried to watch her, but in vain, she was always off by nine P.M., and was away all night, coming back next day wearied and all over mud, as if she had travelled far. She slept all next day. This went on for some months, and we could make nothing of it. Poor dear creature, she looked at us wistfully when she came in, as if she would have told us if she could, and was especially fond, though tired.

Well, one day I was walking across the Grass market, with Wylie at my heels, when two shepherds started, and looking at her, one said, "That's her; that's the wonder-fu' wee bitch that naebody kens." I asked him what he meant, and he told me that for months past she had made her appearance by the first daylight at the "buchs" or sheep-pens in the cattle-market, and worked incessantly, and to excellent purpose, in helping the shepherds to get their sheep and lambs in. The man said with a sort of transport, "She's a perfect meeracle; flees about like a speerit, and never gangs wrang; wears but never grups, and beats a' oor dowgs. She's a perfect meeracle; and as soople as a maukin."

Then he related how they all knew her, and said, "There's that wee fell yin; we'll get them in noo." They tried to coax her to stop and be caught, but no, she was gentle, but off; and for many a day "that wee fell yin" was spoken of by these rough fellows. She continued this amateur work till she died, which she did in peace.

It is very touching the regard the south-country shepherds have to their dogs. Professor Syme one day, many years ago, when living in Forres Street, was looking out of his window, and he saw a young shepherd striding down North Charlotte Street, as if making for his house; it was midsummer. The man had his dog with him, and Mr. Syme noticed that he followed the dog, and not it him, though he contrived to steer for the house. He came, and was ushered into his room; he wished advice about some ailment, and Mr. Syme saw that he had a bit of twine round the dog's neck, which he let drop out of his hand when he entered the room. He asked him the meaning of this, and he explained that the magistrates had issued a mad-dog proclamation, commanding all dogs to be muzzled or led on pain of death. "And why do you go about as I saw you did before you came in to me?"

"Oh," said he, looking awkward, "I didna want Birkie to ken he was tied." Where will you find truer courtesy and finer feeling? He didn't want to hurt Birkie's feelings.

Mr. Carruthers of Inverness told me a new story of these wise sheep-dogs. A butcher from Inverness had purchased some sheep at Dingwall, and giving them in charge to his dog, left the road. The dog drove them on, till coming to a toll, the toll-wife stood

before the drove, demanding her dues. The dog looked at her, and, jumping on her back, crossed his forelegs over her arms. The sheep passed through, and the dog took his place behind them, and went on his way.

RAB

Of Rab I have little to say, indeed have little right to speak of him as one of "our dogs" but nobody will be sorry to hear anything of that noble fellow. Ailie, the day or two after the operation, when she was well and cheery, spoke about him, and said she would tell me fine stories when I came out, as I promised to do, to see her at Howgate. I asked her how James came to get him. She told me that one day she saw James coming down from Leadburn with the cart; he had been away west, getting eggs and butter, cheese and hens, for Edinburgh. She saw he was in some trouble, and on looking, there was what she thought a young calf being dragged, or, as she called it, 'haurled,' at the back of the cart. James was in front, and when he came up, very warm and very angry, she saw that there was a huge young dog tied to the cart, struggling and pulling back with all his might, and as she said, "lookin' fearsome." James, who was out of breath and temper, being past his time, explained to Ailie, that this "muckle brute o' a whalp" had been worrying sheep, and terrifying everybody up at Sir George Montgomery's at Macbie Hill, and that Sir George had ordered him to be hanged, which, however, was sooner said than done, as "the thief" showed his intentions of dying hard. James came up just as Sir George had sent for his gun; and as the dog had more than once shown a liking for him, he said he "wad gie him a chance;" and so he tied him to

his cart. Young Rab, fearing some mischief, had been entering a series of protests all the way, and nearly strangling himself to spite James and Jess, besides giving Jess more than usual to do. "I wish I had let Sir George pit that charge into him, the thrawn brute," said James. But Ailie had seen that in his fore-leg there was a splinter of wood, which he had likely got when objecting to be hanged, and that he was miserably lame. So she got James to leave him with her, and go straight into Edinburgh. She gave him water, and by her woman's wit got his lame paw under a door, so that he couldn't suddenly get at her, then with a quick firm hand she plucked out the splinter, and put in an ample meal. She went in some time after, taking no notice of him, and he came limping up, and laid his great jaws in her lap: from that moment they were "chief," as she said, James finding him mansuete and civil when he returned.

She said it was Rab's habit to make his appearance exactly half an hour before his master, trotting in full of importance, as if to say, "He's all right, he'll be here." One morning James came without him. He had left Edinburgh very early, and in coming near Auchindinny, at a lonely part of the road, a man sprang out on him, and demanded his money. James, who was a cool hand, said, "Weel-a-weel, let me get it," and stepping back he said to Rab, "Speak till him, my man." In an instant Rab was standing over him, threatening strangulation if he stirred. James pushed on, leaving Rab in charge; he looked back, and saw that every attempt to rise was summarily put down. As he was telling Ailie

the story, up came Rab with that great swing of his. It turned out that the robber was a Howgate lad, the worthless son of a neighbour, and Rab knowing him had let him cheaply off; the only thing, which was seen by a man from a field, was, that before letting him rise, he quenched (*pro tempore*) the fire of the eyes of the ruffian, by a familiar Gulliverian application of Hydraulics, which I need not further particularize. James, who did not know the way to tell an untruth, or embellish anything, told me this as what he called "a fact *positeevely*."

WASP

Was a dark brindled bull-terrier, as pure in blood as Cruiser or Wild Dayrell. She was brought by my brother from Otley, in the West Riding. She was very handsome, fierce, and gentle, with a small, compact, finely-shaped head, and a pair of wonderful eyes – as full of fire and of softness as Grisi's; indeed she had to my eye a curious look of that wonderful genius – at once wild and fond. It was a fine sight to see her on the prowl across Bowden Moor, now cantering with her nose down, now gathered up on the top of a dyke, and with erect ears, looking across the wild like a moss-trooper out on business, keen and fell. She could do everything it became a dog to do, from killing an otter or a pole-cat, to watching and playing with a baby, and was as docile to her master as she was surly to all else. She was not quarrelsome, but "being in," she would have pleased Polonius as much, as in being "ware of entrance." She was never beaten, and she killed on the spot several of the country bullies who came out upon her when following her master in his rounds. She generally sent them off howling with one snap, but if this was not enough, she made an end of it.

But it was as a mother that she shone; and to see the gipsy, Hagar-like creature nursing her occasional Ishmael – playing with him, and fondling him all over, teaching his teeth to war, and with her eye and the curl of her lip daring any one but her

master to touch him, was like seeing Grisi watching her darling "*Gennaro*" who so little knew why and how much she loved him.

Once when she had three pups, one of them died. For two days and nights she gave herself up to trying to bring it to life – licking it, and turning it over and over, growling over it, and all but worrying it to awake it. She paid no attention to the living two, gave them no milk, flung them awray with her teeth, and would have killed them, had they been allowed to remain with her. She was as one possessed, and neither ate, nor drank, nor slept, was heavy and miserable with her milk, and in such a state of excitement that no one could remove the dead pup.

Early on the third day she was seen to take the pup in her mouth, and start across the fields towards the Tweed, striding like a race-horse – she plunged in, holding up her burden, and at the middle of the stream dropped it, and swam swiftly ashore: then she stood and watched the little dark lump floating away, bobbing up and down with the current, and losing it at last far down, she made her way home, sought out the living two, devoured them with her love, carried them one by one to her lair, and gave herself up wholly to nurse them; you can fancy her mental and bodily happiness and relief when they were pulling away – and theirs.

On one occasion my brother had lent her to a woman who lived in a lonely house, and whose husband was away for a time. She was a capital watch. One day an Italian with his organ came – first begging, then demanding money – showing that he knew she

was alone, and that he meant to help himself, if she didn't. She threatened to "lowse the dowg", but as this was Greek to him, he pushed on. She had just time to set Wasp at him. It was very short work. She had him by the throat, pulled him and his organ down with a heavy crash, the organ giving a ludicrous sort of cry of musical pain. Wasp, thinking this was from some creature within, possibly a *whittret*, left the ruffian, and set to work tooth and nail on the box. Its master slunk off, and with mingled fury and thankfulness, watched her disembowelling his only means of an honest living. The woman good-naturedly took her off, and signed to the miscreant to make himself and his remains scarce. This he did with a scowl; and was found in the evening in the village, telling a series of lies to the watchmaker, and bribing him with a shilling to mend his pipes – "his kist o'whussels."

JOCK

Was insane from his birth; at first an *amabilis insania*, but ending in mischief and sudden death. He was an English terrier, fawn-coloured; his mother's name Vamp (Vampire), and his father's Demon. He was more properly *daft* than mad; his courage, muscularity, and prodigious animal spirits making him insufferable, and never allowing one sane feature of himself any chance. No sooner was the street-door open, than he was throttling the first dog passing, bringing upon himself and me endless grief. Cats he tossed up into the air, and crushed their spines as they fell. Old ladies he upset by jumping over their heads; old gentlemen by running between their legs. At home, he would think nothing of leaping through the tea things, upsetting the urn, cream, etc., and at dinner the same sort of thing.

I believe if I could have found time to thrash him sufficiently, and let him be a year older, we might have kept him; but having upset an Earl when the streets were muddy, I had to part with him. He was sent to a clergyman in the island of Westray, one of the Orkneys; and though he had a wretched voyage, and was as sick as any dog, he signalized the first moment of his arrival at the manse, by strangling an ancient monkey, or "puggy," the pet of the minister, – who was a bachelor, – and the wonder of the island. Jock henceforward took to evil courses, extracting the kidneys of the best young rams, driving whole hirsels down steep

places into the sea, till at last all the guns of Westray were pointed at him, as he stood at bay under a huge rock on the shore, and blew him into space. I always regret his end, and blame myself for sparing the rod. Of

DUCHIE

I have already spoken; her oddities were endless. We had and still have a dear friend, – "Cousin Susan" she is called by many who are not her cousins – a perfect lady, and, though hopelessly deaf, as gentle and contented as ever Griselda with the full use of her ears; quite as great a pet, in a word, of us all as Duchie was of ours. One day we found her mourning the death of a cat, a great playfellow of the Sputchard's, and her small Grace was with us when we were condoling with her, and we saw that she looked very wistfully at Duchie. I wrote on the slate, "Would you like her?" and she through her tears said, "You know that would never do." But it did do. We left Duchie that very night, and though she paid us frequent visits, she was Cousin Susan's for life. I fear indulgence dulled her moral sense. She was an immense happiness to her mistress, whose silent and lonely days she made glad with her oddity and mirth. And yet the small creature, old, toothless, and blind, domineered over her gentle friend – threatening her sometimes if she presumed to remove the small Fury from the inside of her own bed, into which it pleased her to creep.

Indeed, I believe it is too true, though it was inferred only, that her mistress and friend spent a great part of a winter night in trying to coax her dear little ruffian out of the centre of the bed. One day the cook asked what she would have for dinner:

"I would like a muttonchop, but then, you know, Duchie likes minced veal better!" The faithful and happy little creature died at a great age, of natural decay.

But time would fail me, and I fear patience would fail you, my reader, were I to tell you of Crab, of John Pym, of Puck, and of the rest. Crab, the Mugger's dog, grave, with deep-set, melancholy eyes, as of a nobleman (says the Master of Ravenswood) in disguise, large vis-aged, shaggy, indomitable, come of the pure Piper Allan's breed. This Piper Allan, you must know, lived some two hundred years ago in Cocquet Water, piping like Homer, from place to place, and famous not less for his dog than for his music, his news, and his songs. The earl of Northumberland, of his day, offered the piper a small farm for his dog, but after deliberating for a day, Allan said, "Na, na, ma Lord, keep yir ferum; what wud a piper do wi' a ferum?" ⁶ From

⁶ I have to thank cordially the writer of the following letters. They are from the pen of Mr. Robert White, Newcastle-on-Tyne, author of the History of the Battle of Otterburn, and one of the last of the noble band of literary and local antiquarians of which "Muncaster" has so long been the seat, up to all traditional lore and story of the stouthearted Border. "In the second series of your Horo Subsecivæ. p. 162, you allude to the dog Crab being come of the pure 'Piper Allan's breed, and say that the said 'Piper Allan lived some two hundred years ago in Cocquet (Coquet) Water.' "In Northumberland and over the Borders, James Allan is generally known as Piper Allan. He was born about 1733, and after leading a strange life, towards his seventieth year he stole a horse at Gateshead in the county of Durham, and took it to Lilliesleaf in Roxburghshire, where he was apprehended and sent to Durham jail. He was found guilty, and received sentence of death, but was reprieved, and afterwards had his punishment mitigated to perpetual imprisonment. After being confined for nearly seven years, his health failed, and he was removed to the House of Correction,

this dog descended Davidson (the original Dandie Dinmont) of

where he lived about five months, and died at Durham, November 13th, 1810, aged about 77 years. "Some time ago in Willis's Current Notes, which are now discontinued, an original letter of Sir Walter Scott was printed, in which is the following paragraph: – "I should be glad to see a copy of the Alnwick work upon Allan, whom I have often seen and heard, particularly at the Kelso Races. He was an admirable piper, yet a desperate reprobate. The last time I saw him he was in absolute beggary, and had behaved himself so ill at my uncle's (Thomas Scott of Monklaw) house, that the old gentleman, himself a most admirable piper, would not on any account give him quarters, though I interceded earnestly for him, "the knave," as Davie tells Justice Shallow, "being my very good friend." He was then quite like a pauper, with his wife, and an ass, in the true gipsy fashion. When I first saw him at Kelso Races, he wore the Northumberland livery, a blue coat, with a silver crescent on his arm.' (Allan was piper to Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland.) "The father of Jamie Allan was named Willie, and he also was a good piper, besides being an excellent fisher and a keen otter-hunter. He had two favourite dogs for the latter sport, – Charley and Phoebe, – and such was the wisdom of the former that he used to say, If Charley could speak he would sell the otter's skin.' Probably Crab may have been of this kind. "James Davidson of Hindlee was a great fox hunter, and his breed of terriers – the pepper-and-mustard class – were the best over all the country. I have seen the genuine breed long ago at Ned Dunn's of the Whitelee at the head of Redesdale. Among common dogs they were something like the Black Dwarf among men, long-bodied animals with strong short legs, wiry haired, and at the first look not unlike a low four-footed stool, such as I have seen in houses in the south of Scotland forty years ago. They were sent in to the fox when he was earthed, and fought him there. They seemed at first when out of doors to be shy, timid things, and would have slunk away from a fierce collie dog, but if he seized one of them, and the blood of the little creature got up, it just took a hold of him in a biting place, and held on, never quitting till he found to his cost he had caught a tartar." "I am now convinced, from what I have gleaned of the life of James Allan, and a notice in Mackenzie's History of Northumberland, that your Piper Allan was William, the father of James. He was born at Bellingham in 1704. He was nearly six feet high, of a ruddy complexion, and had much shrewdness, wit, and independence of mind. In early life he became a good player on the bagpipes. He mended pots and pans, made spoons, baskets, and besoms, ana was a keen and

Hyndlee's breed, and Crab could count his kin up to him. He

excellent fisher. In the Valley of Coquet he married a gipsy girl, named Betty, who bore him six children, and James was the youngest save one; but she died in the prime of life. He was married a second time to an unfortunate daughter of a Presbyterian minister. "Among his other pursuits, he excelled especially in the hunting of otters and kept eight or ten dogs for that particular sport. Please turn to my previous letter, and in the passage, 'if Charley could speak,' etc., dele Charley and insert Peachem. This dog was Will's chief favourite, and such confidence had he in the animal, that when hunting he would at times observe, 'When my Peachem gi'es mouth, I durst always sell the otter's skin.' Charley was also an excellent dog. Lord Ravensworth once employed Willie to kill the otters that infested his pond at Eslington Hall, which he soon accomplished; and on going away, the steward, Mr. Bell, offered, in his Lordship's name, to buy Charley at the Piper's own price. Will turned round very haughtily, and exclaimed, 'By the wuns, his hale estate canna buy Charley! 'He was a capital piper, and composed two popular tunes, 1 We'll a' to the Coquet and Woo,' and 'Salmon Tails up the Water.' These I never heard, and probably they may be lost. When his end drew near, he was something like Rob Roy in his neglect of religious impressions. When reminded that he was dying, he exclaimed, 'By Jing, I'll get foul play, then, to dee before my billie, wha's ten years aulder!' When still closer pressed to ponder on his condition, he said, 'Gi'e me my pipes, and I'll play ye "Dorrington Lads" yet.' Thus he exhausted his last breath in playing his favourite strain. He died 18th February 1779, aged seventy-five years, and was buried in Rothbury Churchyard. His son James was born at Hepple, in Coquetdale, March 1734. "The following verses on old Will are in the 'Lay of the Reedwater Minstrel:' — "A stalwart Tinkler wight was he, And weel could mend a pot or pan; And deftly 'ull could thraw a flee, An' neatly weave the willow-wan'." An' sweetly wild were Allan's strains, An' mony a jig an' reel he blew; Wi' merry lilt he charm'd the swains, Wi' barbed spear the otter slew. 'Nae mair he'll scan, wi' anxious eye, The sandy shores of winding Reed; Nae mair he'll tempt the finny fry, — The king O' Tinklers, Allan's dead. "Nae mair at Mell or Merry Night The cheering bagpipes Wull shall blaw; Nae mair the village throng delight, Grim death has laid the minstrel law." Now trouts, exulting, cut the wave; Triumphant see the otter glide, Their deadly foe lies in his grave. Charley and Phcebe by his side. I add another bit from Mr. White, too characteristic of that mixture of kindness and cruelty, of tenderness and pluck, — Dandie Dinmont, — and of the exercise, called one-sidedly "sport." It ends

had a great look of the Right Honourable Edward Ellice, and had much of his energy and *wecht*; had there been a dog House of Commons, Crab would have spoken as seldom, and been as great a power in the house, as the formidable and faithful time-out-of-mind member for Coventry.

John Pym was a smaller dog than Crab, of more fashionable blood, being a son of Mr. Somner's famous Shem, whose father and brother are said to have been found dead in a drain into

happily, which is more than the bigstorefarmer wished: – "The mother of the farfamed Peppers and Mustards was a dark-coloured, rough-haired bitch of the name of Tar. Davidson wanted a cat from some of the cottages at a distance from Hindlee, that he might have the young dogs tried upon it. One of his shepherds chanced to call at Andrew Telfer's house (the grandfather, I believe, of my late friend), where he saw baudrons sitting on the end of adresser near the door; and the house being low and dark, he swept her into his plaid-neuk on going out, and carried her home. Next morning she was introduced to a covered drain, which ran across the road, the said drain being closed up at one end, whereby she was compelled to give battle to her foes. A young terrier was the first to oppose her, and paid for its rashness by retreating from the drain with the skin almost torn from its nose. Another of the same age met with the same punishment, and Davidson, considerably irritated, brought forward Tar, the old dame, who, by her age and experience, he considered, would be more than a match for the cat. There was sore fighting for a time, till again Puss was victorious, and Tar withdrew from the conflict in such a condition that her master exclaimed, 'Confoond the cat, she's tumbld an e'e oot o' the bitch!' which indeed was the case. 'Tak awathe stanes frae the tapo' the cundy,' said Davidson, 'and we'll ha'e her worried at ance.' The stones were removed, and out leapt the cat in the middle of her enemies. Fortunately for her, however, it happened that a stone wall was continued up the side of the road, which she instantly mounted, and, running along the top thereof, with the dogs in full cry after her she speedily reached a plantation, and eluded all pursuit. No trace of her could be discovered; and the next time the shepherd called at Andrew Telfer's house, my lady was seated on the dresser, as demure as if nothing in her whole life had ever disturbed her tranquillity."

which the hounds had run a fox. It had three entrances; the father was put in at one hole, the son at another, and speedily the fox bolted out at the third, but no appearance of the little terriers, and, on digging, they were found dead, locked in each other's jaws; they had met, and it being dark, and there being no time for explanations, they had throttled each other. John was made of the same sort of stuff, and was as combative and victorious as his great namesake, and not unlike him in some of his not so creditable qualities. He must, I think, have been related to a certain dog to whom "life was full o' sairiousness," but in John's case the same cause produced an opposite effect. John was gay and light-hearted, even when there was not "enuff o' fechtin," which, however, seldom happened, there being a market every week in Melrose, and John appearing most punctually at the cross to challenge all comers, and being short-legged, he inveigled every dog into an engagement by first attacking him, and then falling down on his back, in which posture he latterly fought and won all his battles.

What can I say of *PUCK*⁷ – the thoroughbred – the simple-

⁷ In *The Dog*, by Stonehenge, an excellent book, there is a woodcut of Puck, and "Dr. Wm. Brown's celebrated dog John Pym" is mentioned. Their pedigrees are given – here is Puck's, which shows his "strain" is of the pure azure blood – "Got by John Pym, out of Tib; bred by Purves of Leaderfoot; sire. Old Dandie, the famous dog of old John Stoddart of Selkirk – dam Whin." How Homeric all this sounds! I cannot help quoting what follows – "Sometime a Dandie pup of a good strain may appear not to be game at an early age; but he should not be parted with on this account, because many of them do not show their courage till nearly two years old, and then nothing can beat them; this apparent softness arising, as I suspect, from kindness of heart" –

hearted – the purloiner of eggs warm from the hen – the flutterer of all manner of Volscians – the bandy-legged, dear, old, dilapidated buffer? I got him from my brother, and only parted with him because William's stock was gone. He had to the end of life a simplicity which was quite touching. One summer day – a dog-day – when all dogs found straying were hauled away to the police-office, and killed off in twenties with strychnine, I met Puck trotting along Princes Street with a policeman, a rope round his neck, he looking up in the fatal, official, but kindly countenance in the most artless and cheerful manner, wagging his tail and trotting along. In ten minutes he would have been in the next world; for I am one of those who believe dogs *have* a next world, and why not? Puck ended his days as the best dog in Roxburghshire. *Placide quiescas!*

a suspicion, my dear "Stonehenge," which is true and shows your own "kindness of heart," as well as sense.

DICK

Still lives, and long may he live! As he was never born, possibly he may never die; be it so, he will miss us when we are gone. I could say much of him, but agree with the lively and admirable Dr. Jortin, when, in his dedication of his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* to the then (1752) Archbishop of Canterbury, he excuses himself for not following the modern custom of praising his Patron, by reminding his Grace "that it was a custom amongst the ancients, *not to sacrifice to heroes till after sunset.*" I defer my sacrifice till Dick's sun is set.

I think every family should have a dog; it is like having a perpetual baby; it is the plaything and crony of the whole house. It keeps them all young. All unite upon Dick. And then he tells no tales, betrays no secrets, never sulks, asks no troublesome questions, never gets into debt, never coming down late for breakfast, or coming in by his Chubb *too early* to bed – is always ready for a bit of fun, lies in wait for it, and you may, if choleric, to your relief, kick him instead of some one else, who would not take it so meekly, and, moreover, would certainly not, as he does, ask your pardon for being kicked.

Never put a collar on your dog – it only gets him stolen; give him only one meal a day, and let that, as Dame Dorothy, Sir Thomas Browne's wife, would say, be "rayther under." Wash him once a week, and always wash the soap out; and let him be

carefully combed and brushed twice a week.

By the bye, I was wrong in saying that it was Burns who said Man is the god of the Dog – he got it from Bacon's *Essay on Atheism*, or perhaps more truly – Bacon had it first.

QUEEN MARY'S CHILD-GARDEN

If any one wants a pleasure that is sure to please, one over which he needn't growl the sardonic beatitude of the great Dean, let him, when the Mercury is at "Fair," take the nine A.M. train to the North, and a return ticket for Callander, and when he arrives at Stirling, let him ask the most obliging and knowing of station-masters to telegraph to "the Dreadnought" for a carriage to be in waiting. When passing Dunblane Cathedral, let him resolve to write to the *Scotsman*, advising the removal of a couple of shabby trees which obstruct the view of that beautiful triple end-window which Mr. Ruskin and everybody else admires, and by the time he has written this letter in his mind, and turned the sentences to it, he will find himself at Callander and the carriage all ready. Giving the order for the *Port of Monteith*, he will rattle through this hard-featured, and to our eye comfortless village, lying ugly amid so much grandeur and beauty, and let him stop on the crown of the bridge, and fill his eyes with the perfection of the view up the Pass of Leny – the Teith lying diffuse and asleep, as if its heart were in the Highlands and it were loath to go, the noble Ben Ledi imaged in its broad stream. Then let him make his way across a bit of pleasant moorland – flushed with maiden-hair and white with cotton-grass; and fragrant with the *Orchis conopsia*, well deserving its epithet *odoratissima*.

He will see from the turn of the hillside the Blair of

Drummond waving with corn and shadowed with rich woods, where eighty years ago there was a black peatmoss; and far off, on the horizon, Damyat and the Touch Fells; and at his side the little loch of Ruskie, in which he may see five Highland cattle, three tawny brown and two brindled, standing in the still water – themselves as still, all except their switching tails and winking ears – the perfect images of quiet enjoyment. By this time he will have come in sight of the Lake of Monteith, set in its woods, with its magical shadows and soft gleams. There is a loveliness, a gentleness and peace about it more like "lone St. Mary's Lake," or Derwent Water, than of any of its sister lochs. It is lovely rather than beautiful, and is a sort of gentle prelude, in the *minor* key, to the coming glories and intenser charms of Loch Ard and the true Highlands beyond.

You are now at the Port, and have passed the secluded and cheerful manse, and the parish kirk with its graves, close to the lake, and the proud aisle of the Grahams of Gartmore washed by its waves. Across the road is the modest little inn, a Fisher's Tryst. On the unruffled water lie several islets, plump with rich foliage, brooding like great birds of calm. You somehow think of them as on, not in the lake, or like clouds lying in a nether sky – "like ships waiting for the wind." You get a coble, and *yould* old Celt, its master, and are rowed across to *Inch-mahome, the Isle of Rest*. Here you find on landing huge Spanish chestnuts, one lying dead, others standing stark and peeled, like gigantic antlers, and others flourishing in their *viridis senectus*, and in a thicket

of wood you see the remains of a monastery of great beauty, the design and workmanship exquisite. You wander through the ruins, overgrown with ferns and Spanish filberts, and old fruit-trees, and at the corner of the old monkish garden you come upon one of the strangest and most touching sights you ever saw – an oval space of about eighteen feet by twelve, with the remains of a double row of boxwood all round, the plants of box being about fourteen feet high, and eight or nine inches in diameter, healthy, but plainly of great age.

What is this? it is called in the guide-books Queen Mary's Bower; but besides its being plainly not in the least a bower, what could the little Queen, then five years old, and "fancy free," do with a bower? It is plainly, as was, we believe, first suggested by our keen-sighted and diagnostic Professor of Clinical Surgery,⁸ *the Child-Queen's Garden*, with her little walk, and its rows of boxwood, left to themselves for three hundred years.

Yes, without doubt, "here is that first garden of her simpleness." Fancy the little, lovely royal child, with her four Marys, her playfellows, her child maids of honour, with their little hands and feet, and their innocent and happy eyes, pattering about that garden all that time ago, laughing, and running, and gardening as only children do and can. As is well known,

⁸ The same seeing eye and understanding mind, when they were eighteen years of age discovered and published the Solvent of Caoutchouc, for which patent was taken out afterwards by the famous Mackintosh. If the young discoverer had secured the patent, he might have made a fortune as large as his present reputation – I don't suppose he much regrets that he didn't.

Mary was placed by her mother in this Isle of Rest before sailing from the Clyde for France. There is something "that tirls the heartstrings a' to the life" in standing and looking on this unmistakable living relic of that strange and pathetic old time. Were we Mr. Tennyson, we would write an Idyll of that child Queen, in that garden of hers, eating her bread and honey – getting her teaching from the holy men, the monks of old, and running off in wild mirth to her garden and her flowers, all unconscious of the black, lowering thunder-cloud on Ben Lomond's shoulder.

"Oh, blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild:
I think of thee with many fears
Of what may be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality,
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?"

You have ample time to linger there amid

"The gleams, the shadows, and the peace profound,"

and get your mind informed with quietness and beauty, and fed with thoughts of other years, and of her whose story, like

Helen of Troy's, will continue to move the hearts of men as long as the grey hills stand round about that gentle lake, and are mirrored at evening in its depths. You may do and enjoy all this, and be in Princes Street by nine P.M.; and we wish we were as sure of many things as of your saying, "Yes, this *is* a pleasure that has pleased, and will please again; this was something expected which did not disappoint."

There is another garden of Queen Mary's, which may still be seen, and which has been left to itself like that in the Isle of Rest. It is in the grounds at Chatsworth, and is moated, walled round, and raised about fifteen feet above the park. Here the Queen, when a prisoner under the charge of "Old Bess of Hardwake," was allowed to walk without any guard. How different the two! and how different she who took her pleasure in them!

Lines written on the steps of a small moated garden at Chatsworth, called

"Queen Mary's Bower.

"The moated bower is wild and drear,
And sad the dark yew's shade;
The flowers which bloom in silence here,
In silence also fade.

"The woodbine and the light wild rose
Float o'er the broken wall;
And here the mournful nightshade blows,

To note the garden's fall.

"Where once a princess wept her woes,
The bird of night complains;
And sighing trees the tale disclose
They learnt from Mary's strains.

"A. H."

'ATXINOIA – NEARNESS OF THE NOUS – PRESENCE OF MIND

'ERTOXIA: HAPPY GUESSING

"Depend upon it, a lucky guess is never merely luck – there is always some Talent in it." – Miss Austen, in "Emma."

Dr. Chalmers used to say that in the dynamics of human affairs, two qualities were essential to greatness – Power and Promptitude. One man might have both, another power without promptitude, another promptitude without power. We must all feel the common sense of this, and can readily see how it applies to a general in the field, to a pilot in a storm, to a sportsman, to a fencer, to a debater. It is the same with an operating surgeon at all times, and may be at any time with the practitioner of the art of healing. He must be ready for what are called emergencies – cases which rise up at your feet, and must be dealt with on the instant, – he must have power and promptitude.

It is a curious condition of mind that this requires: it is like sleeping with your pistol under your pillow, and it on full cock; a moment lost and all may be lost. There is the very nick of time. This is what we mean by presence of mind; by a man having such a subject at his finger-ends; that part of the mind lying

nearest the outer world, and having to act on it through the bodily organs, through the will – the outposts must be always awake. It is of course, so to speak, only a portion of the mind that is thus needed and thus available; if the whole mind were for ever at the advanced post, it would soon lose itself in this endeavour to keep it. Now, though the thing needed to be done maybe simple enough, what goes to the doing of it, and to the being at once ready and able to do it, involves much; the wedge would not be a wedge, or do a wedge's work, without the width behind as well as the edge in front. Your men of promptitude without genius or power, including knowledge and will, are those who present the wedge the wrong way. Thus your extremely prompt people are often doing the wrong thing, which is almost always worse than nothing. Our vague friend who bit "Yarrow's" tail instead of "the Chicken's" was full of promptitude; as was also that other man, probably a relative, who barred the door with a boiled carrot: each knew what was needed – the biting the tail, the barring the door; both erred as to the means – the one by want of presence of mind, the other by lack of mind itself. We must have just enough of the right knowledge and no more; we must have the habit of using this; we must have self-reliance, and the consentaneousness of the entire mind; and whatsoever our hand finds to do, we must do it with our might. Therefore it is that this master act of the man, under some sudden and great unexpected crisis, is in a great measure performed unconsciously as to its mental means. The man is so *totus in illo*, that there is no bit of the mind left

to watch and record the acts of the rest; therefore men, when they have done some signal feat of presence of mind, if asked how they did it, generally don't very well know – they just did it: it was, in fact, done and then thought of, not thought of and then done, in which case it would likely never have been done. Not that the act was uncaused by mind; it is one of the highest powers of mind thus to act; but it is done, if I may use the phrase, by an acquired instinct. You will find all this in that wonderful old Greek who was Alexander the Great's and the old world's schoolmaster, and ours if we were wise, – whose truthfulness and clear insight one wonders at the longer he lives. He seems to have seen the human mind as a bird or an engineer does the earth – he knew the plan of it. We now-a-days see it as one sees a country, athwart and in perspective, and from the side; he saw it from above and from below. There are therefore no shadows, no foreshortenings, no clear-obscure, indeed no disturbing-medium; it is as if he examined everything *in vacuo*. I refer my readers to what he says on [Greek] ⁹

⁹ [– As I am now, to my sorrow and shame, too much of a mediate Grecian, I give a Balliol friend's note on these two words: – "What you have called 'presence of mind' and 'happy guessing' may, I think, be identified respectively with Aristotle's [Greek] and *evaxoxia* – The latter of these, [Greek], Aristotle mentions incidentally when treating of [Greek], or good deliberation. *Eth. Nic.* bk. vi. ch. 9. Good deliberation, he says, is not *eûtoxîa*, for the former is a slow process, whereas the latter is not guided by reason, and is rapid. In the same passage he tells us that [Greek] is a sort of [Greek]. But he speaks of [Greek] more fully in *Ana. Post.* 1. 34: – [Greek] is a sort of happy guessing at the intermediate, when there is not time for consideration: as when a man, seeing that the bright side of the moon is always turned towards the

My object in what I have now written and am going to write, is to impress upon medical students the value of power and promptitude in combination, for their professional purposes; the uses to them of nearness of the *Nous*, and of happy guessing; and how you may see the sense, and neatness, and pith of that excellent thinker, as well as best of all story-tellers, Miss Austen,

sun, comprehends that her light is borrowed from the sun; or concludes, from seeing one conversing with a capitalist that he wants to borrow money; or infers that people are friends from the fact of their having common enemies.' And then he goes on to make these simple observations confused and perplexing by reducing them to his logical formula. "The derivation of the words will confirm this view. Evoroxia is a hitting the mark successfully, a reaching to the end, the rapid, and, as it were, intuitive perception of the truth. This is what Whewell means by saying, 'all induction is a happy conjecture.' But when Aristotle says that this faculty is not guided by reason [Greek], he does not mean to imply that it grows up altogether independent of reason, any more than Whewell means to say that all the discoveries in the inductive sciences have been made by men taking 'shots' at them, as boys at school do at hard passages in their Latin lessons. On the contrary, no faculty is so absolutely the child of reason as this faculty of happy guessing. It only attains to perfection after the reason has been long and painfully trained in the sphere in which the guesses are to be made. What Aristotle does mean is, that when it has attained perfection, we are not conscious of the share which reason has in its operation – it is so rapid that by 110 analysis can we detect the presence of reason in its action. Sir Isaac Newton seeing the apple fall, and thence 'guessing' at the law of gravitation, is a good instance of evaroxia. "[Greek], on the other hand, is a nearness of mind; not a reaching to the end, but an apprehension of the best means; not a perception of the truth, but a perception of how the truth is to be supported. It is sometimes translated 'sagacity,' but readiness or presence of mind is better, as sagacity rather involves the idea of consideration. In matters purely intellectual it is ready wit. It is a sort of shorter or more limited eùcroxîa. It is more of a natural gift than [Greek], because the latter is a far higher and nobler faculty, and therefore more dependent for its perfection 011 cultivation, as all our highest faculties are. [Greek] akin to genius, [Greek] to practical common sense." –]

when she {096} says in *Emma*, "Depend upon it, a lucky guess is never merely luck, there is always some talent in it," – talent here denoting intelligence and will in action. In all sciences except those called exact, this happy guessing plays a large part, and in none more than in medicine, which is truly a tentative art, founded upon likelihood, and is therefore what we call contingent. Instead of this view of the healing art discouraging us from making our ultimate principles as precise as we should make our observations, it should urge us the more to this; for, depend upon it, that guess as we may often have to do, he will guess best, most happily for himself and his patient, who has the greatest amount of true knowledge, and the most serviceable amount of what we may call mental cash, ready money, and ready weapons.

We must not only have wisdom, which is knowledge assimilated and made our own, but we must, as the Lancashire men say and do, *have wit to use it*. We may carry a nugget of gold in our pocket, or a 100L bank-note, but unless we can get it *changed* it is of little use, and we must moreover have the coin of the country we are in. This want of presence of mind – of having his wits about him, is as fatal to a surgeon as to a general.

That wise little man, Dr. Henry Marshall, little in body but not little in mind, in brain, and in worth, used to give an instance of this. A young, well-educated surgeon, attached to a regiment quartered at Musselburgh, went out professionally with two officers who were in search of "satisfaction." One fell shot in the

thigh, and in half-an-hour after he was found dead, the surgeon kneeling pale and grim over him, with his two thumbs sunk in his thigh *below* the wound, the grass steeped in blood. If he had put them two inches higher, or extemporized a tourniquet with his sash and the pistol's ramrod and a stone, he might have saved his friend's life and his own – for he shot himself that night.

Here is another. Robbie Watson, whom I now see walking mildly about the streets – having taken to coal – was driver of the Dumfries coach by Biggar. One day he had changed horses, and was starting down a steep hill, with an acute turn at the foot, when he found his wheelers, two new horses, utterly ignorant of backing. They got furious, and we outside got alarmed. Robbie made an attempt to pull up, and then with an odd smile took his whip, gathered up his reins, and lashed the entire four into a gallop. If we had not seen his face we would have thought him a maniac; he kept them well together and shot down like an arrow, as far as we could see to certain destruction. Right in front at the turn was a stout gate into a field, shut; he drove them straight at that, and through we went, the gate broken into shivers, and we finding ourselves safe, and the very horses enjoying the joke.

I remember we emptied our pockets into Robbie's hat, which he had taken-off to wipe his head. Now, in a few seconds all this must have passed through his head – "that horse is not a wheeler, nor that one either; we'll come to mischief; there's the gate; yes, I'll do it." And he did it; but then he had to do it with his might; he had to make it impossible for his four horses to do anything

but toss the gate before them.

Here is another case. Dr. Reid of Peebles, long famous in the end of last and beginning of this century, as the Doctor of Tweeddale; a man of great force of character, and a true Philip, a lover of horses, saw one Fair day a black horse, entire, thoroughbred. The groom asked a low price, and would answer no questions. At the close of the fair the doctor bought him, amid the derision of his friends. Next morning he rode him up Tweed, came home after a long round, and had never been better carried. This went on for some weeks; the fine creature was without a fault. One Sunday morning, he was posting up by Neidpath at a great pace, the country people trooping into the town to church. Opposite the fine old castle, the thoroughbred stood stock still, and it needed all the doctor's horsemanship to counteract the law of projectiles; he did, and sat still, and not only gave no sign of urging the horse, but rather intimated that it was his particular desire that he should stop. He sat there a full hour, his friends making an excellent joke of it, and he declining, of course, all interference. At the end of the hour, the Black Duke, as he was called, turned one ear forward, then another, looked aside, shook himself, and moved on, his master intimating that this was exactly what he wished; and from that day till his death, some fifteen years after, never did these two friends allude to this little circumstance, and it was never repeated; though it turned out that he had killed his two men previously. The doctor must have, when he got him, said to himself, "If he is not stolen there

is a reason for his paltry price," and he would go over all the possibilities. So that when he stood still, he would say, "Ah, this is it;" but then he saw this at once, and lost no time, and did nothing. Had he given the horse one dig with his spurs, or one cut with his whip, or an impatient jerk with his bit, the case would have failed. When a colt, it had been brutally used, and being nervous, it lost its judgment, poor thing, and lost its presence of mind.

One more instance of nearness of the *Nous*. A lady was in front of her lawn with her children, when a mad dog made his appearance, pursued by the peasants. What did she do? What would you have done? Shut your eyes and think. She went straight to the dog, received its head in her thick stuff gown, between her knees, and muffling it up, held it with all her might till the men came up. No one was hurt. Of course, she fainted after it was all right.

We all know (but why should we not know again?) the story of the Grecian mother who saw her child sporting on the edge of the bridge. She knew that a cry would startle it over into the raging stream – she came gently near, and opening her bosom allured the little scapegrace.

I once saw a great surgeon, after settling a particular procedure as to a life-and-death operation, as a general settles his order of battle. He began his work, and at the second cut altered the entire conduct of the operation. No one not in the secret could have told this: not a moment's pause, not a quiver of the face, not a look of doubt. This is the same master power in man, which makes the

difference between Sir John Moore and Sir John Cope.

Mrs. Major Robertson, a woman of slight make, great beauty, and remarkable energy, courage, and sense (she told me the story herself), on going up to her bedroom at night – there being no one in the house but a servant-girl, in the ground floor – saw a portion of a man's foot projecting from under the bed. She gave no cry of alarm, but shut the door as usual, set down her candle, and began as if to undress, when she said aloud to herself, with an impatient tone and gesture, "I've forgotten that key again, I declare;" and leaving the candle burning, and the door open, she went down stairs, got the watchman, and secured the proprietor of the foot, which had not moved an inch. How many women or men could have done, or rather have been all this!

LETTER TO JOHN CAIRNS, D.D

"I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive."

"As he was of the Pauline type of mind, his Christianity ran into the same mould. A strong, intense, and vehement nature, with masculine intellect and unyielding will, he accepted the Bible in its literal simplicity as an absolute revelation, and then showed the strength of his character in subjugating his whole being to this decisive influence, and in projecting the same convictions into other minds. He was a believer in the sense of the old Puritans, and, amid the doubt and scepticism of the nineteenth century, held as firmly as any of them by the doctrines of atonement and grace. He had most of the idiosyncrasy of Baxter, though not without the contemplation of Howe. The doctrines of Calvinism, mitigated but not renounced, and received simply as dictates of Heaven, without any effort or hope to bridge over their inscrutable depths by philosophical theories, he translated into a fervent, humble, and resolutely active life.

"There was a fountain of tenderness in his nature as well as a Conep of impetuous indignation; and the one drawn out, and the other controlled by his Christian faith, made him at once a philanthropist and a reformer, and both in the highest departments of human interest.

"The union of these ardent elements, and of a highly devotional temperament, not untouched with melancholy, with the patience of the scholar, and the sobriety of the critic, formed the singularity and almost the anomaly of his personal character. These contrasts were tempered by the discipline of experience, and his life, both as a man and a Christian, seemed to become more rich, genial, and harmonious as it approached its close – Dr. Cairns.

23 RUTLAND STREET, 15th August 1860.

My dear Friend, – When, at the urgent request of his trustees and family, and in accordance with what I believe was his own wish, you undertook my father's Memoir, it was in a measure on the understanding that I would furnish you with some domestic and personal details. This I hoped to have done, but was unable.

Though convinced more than ever how little my hand is needed, I will now endeavour to fulfil my promise. Before doing so, however, you must permit me to express our deep gratitude to you for this crowning proof of your regard for him to whom for many years you habitually wrote as "My father," and one of whose best blessings, when he was "such an one as Paul the aged," was to know that you were to him "mine own son in the gospel."

"Without whose life we had not been

With regard to the manner in which you have done this last kindness to the dead, I can say nothing more expressive of our

feelings, and, I am sure, nothing more gratifying to you, than that the record you have given of my father's life, and of the series of great public questions in which he took part, is done in the way which would have been most pleasing to himself – that which, with his passionate love of truth and liberty, his relish for concentrated, just thought and expression, and his love of being loved, he would have most desired, in any one speaking of him, after he was gone. He would, I doubt not, say, as one said to a great painter, on looking at his portrait, "It is certainly like, but it is much better-looking;" and you might well reply, as did the painter, "It is the truth, told lovingly" – and all the more true that it is so told. You have, indeed, been enabled to speak the truth, or as the Greek has it, [Greek] – to truth it in love.

I have over and over again sat down to try and do what I promised and wished – to give some faint expression of my father's life; not of what he did or said or wrote – not even of what he was as a man of God and a public teacher; but what he was in his essential nature – what he would have been had he been anything else than what he was, or had lived a thousand years ago.

Sometimes I have this so vividly in my mind that I think I have only to sit down and write it off, and do it to the quick. "The idea of his life," what he was as a whole, what was his self, all his days, would, – to go on with words which not time or custom can ever wither or make stale, —

"Sweetly creep
Into my study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of his life
Would come apparelled in more precious habit —
More moving delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of my soul,
Than when he lived indeed;"

as if the sacredness of death and the bloom of eternity were on it; or as you may have seen in an untroubled lake, the heaven reflected with its clouds, brighter, purer, more exquisite than itself; but when you try to put this into words, to detain yourself over it, it is by this very act disturbed, broken and bedimmed, and soon vanishes away, as would the imaged heavens in the lake, if a pebble were cast into it, or a breath of wind stirred its face. The very anxiety to transfer it, as it looked out of the clear darkness of the past, makes the image grow dim and disappear.

Every one whose thoughts are not seldom with the dead, must have felt both these conditions; how, in certain passive, tranquil states, there comes up into the darkened chamber of the mind, its "chamber of imagery" – uncalled, as if it blossomed out of space, exact, absolute, consummate, vivid, speaking, not darkly as in a glass, but face to face, and "moving delicate" – this idea of his life and then how an effort to prolong and perpetuate and record all this, troubles the vision and kills it! It is as if one should try to paint in a mirror the reflection of a dear and unseen face; the coarse, uncertain passionate handling and colour, ineffectual

and hopeless, shut out the very thing itself.

I will therefore give this up as in vain, and try by some fragmentary sketches, scenes, and anecdotes, to let you know in some measure what manner of man my father was. Anecdotes, if true and alive, are always valuable; the man in the concrete, the *totus quis* comes out in them; and I know you too well to think that you will consider as trivial or out of place anything in which his real nature displayed itself, and your own sense of humour as a master and central power of the human soul, playing about the very essence of the man, will do more than forgive anything of this kind which may crop out here and there, like the smile of wild-flowers in grass, or by the wayside.

My first recollection of my father, my first impression, not only of his character, but of his eyes and face and presence, strange as it may seem, dates from my fifth year. Doubtless I had looked at him often enough before that, and had my own childish thoughts about him; but this was the time when I got my fixed, compact idea of him, and the first look of him which I felt could never be forgotten. I saw him, as it were, by a flash of lightning, sudden and complete. A child begins by seeing bits of everything; it knows in part – here a little, there a little; it makes up its wholes out of its own littles, and is long of reaching the fulness of a whole; and in this we are children all our lives in much. Children are long of seeing, or at least of looking at what is above them; they like the ground, and its flowers and stones, its "red sod-gers" and lady-birds, and all its queer things; their

world is about three feet high, and they are more often stooping than gazing up. I know I was past ten before I saw, or cared to see, the ceilings of the rooms in the manse at Biggar.

On the morning of the 28th May 1816, my eldest sister Janet and I were sleeping in the kitchen-bed with Tibbie Meek,¹⁰ our only servant.

We were all three awakened by a cry of pain – sharp, insufferable, as if one were stung. Years after we two confided to each other, sitting by the burnside, that we thought that "great cry" which arose at midnight in Egypt must have been like it. We all knew whose voice it was, and, in our night-clothes, we ran into the passage, and into the little parlour to the left hand, in which was a closet-bed. We found my father standing before us, erect, his hands clenched in his black hair, his eyes full of misery and amazement, his face white as that of the dead. He frightened us. He saw this, or else his intense will had mastered his agony, for, taking his hands from his head, he said, slowly and gently, "Let us give thanks," and turned to a little sofa in the room; there lay our mother, dead.

She had long been ailing. I remember her sitting in a shawl, –

¹⁰ A year ago, I found an elderly countrywoman, a widow, waiting for me. Rising up, she said, "D'ye mind me?" I looked at her, and could get nothing from her face; but the voice remained in my ear, as if coming from the "fields of sleep," and I said by a sort of instinct, "Tibbie Meek!" I had not seen her or heard her voice for more than forty years. She had come to get some medical advice. Voices are often like the smells of flowers and leaves, the tastes of wild fruits – they touch and awaken the memory in a strange way. "Tibbie" is now living at Thankerton.

an Indian one with little dark green spots on a light ground, – and watching her growing pale with what I afterwards knew must have been strong pain. She had, being feverish, slipped out of bed, and "grand-mother," her mother, seeing her "change come," had called my father, and they two saw her open her blue, kind, and true eyes, "comfortable" to us all "as the day" – I remember them better than those of any one I saw yesterday – and, with one faint look of recognition to him, close them till the time of the restitution of all things.

"She had another morn than ours."

Then were seen in full action his keen, passionate nature, his sense of mental pain, and his supreme will, instant and unsparing, making himself and his terrified household give thanks in the midst of such a desolation, – and for it. Her warfare was accomplished, her iniquities were pardoned; she had already received from her Lord's hand double for all her sins: this was his supreme and over-mastering thought, and he gave it utterance.

No man was happier in his wives. My mother was modest, calm, thrifty, reasonable, tender, happy-hearted. She was his student-love, and is even now remembered in that pastoral region for "her sweet gentleness and wife-like government." Her death, and his sorrow and loss, settled down deep into the heart of the countryside. He was so young and bright, so full of fire, so unlike any one else, so devoted to his work, so chivalrous in his look

and manner, so fearless, and yet so sensitive and self-contained. She was so wise, good and gentle, gracious and frank.

His subtlety of affection, and his almost cruel self-command, were shown on the day of the funeral. It was to Symington, four miles off, – a quiet little churchyard, lying in the shadow of Tinto, a place where she herself had wished to be laid. The funeral was chiefly on horseback. We, the family, were in coaches. I had been since the death in a sort of stupid musing and wonder, not making out what it all meant. I knew my mother was said to be dead. I saw she was still, and laid out, and then shut up, and didn't move; but I did not know that when she was carried out in that long black box, and we all went with her, she alone was never to return.

When we got to the village all the people were at their doors. One woman, the blacksmith Thomas Spence's wife, had a nursing baby in her arms, and he leapt up and crowed with joy at the strange sight, the crowding horsemen, the coaches, and the nodding plumes of the hearse. This was my brother William, then nine years old, and Margaret Spence was his foster-mother. Those with me were overcome at this sight; he of all the world whose, in some ways, was the greatest loss, the least conscious, turning it to his own childish glee.

We got to the churchyard and stood round the open grave. My dear old grandfather was asked by my father to pray; he did. I don't remember his words; I believe he, through his tears and sobs, repeated the Divine words, "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth,

and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever;" adding, in his homely and pathetic way, that the flower would again bloom, never again to fade; that what was now sown in dishonour and weakness, would be raised in glory and power, like unto His own glorious body. Then to my surprise and alarm, the coffin, resting on its bearers, was placed over that dark hole, and I watched with curious eye the unrolling of those neat black bunches of cords, which I have often enough seen since. My father took the one at the head, and also another much smaller springing from the same point as his, which he had caused to be put there, and unrolling it, put it into my hand. I twisted it firmly round my fingers, and awaited the result; the burial men with their real ropes lowered the coffin, and when it rested at the bottom, it was too far down for me to see it – the grave was made very deep, as he used afterwards to tell us, that it might hold us all – my father first and abruptly let his cord drop, followed by the rest.

This was too much. I now saw what was meant, and held on and fixed my fist and feet, and I believe my father had some difficulty in forcing open my small fingers; he let the little black cord drop, and I remember, in my misery and anger, seeing its open end disappearing in the gloom.

My mother's death was the second epoch in my father's life; it marked a change at once and for life; and for a man so self-reliant, so poised upon a centre of his own, it is wonderful the extent of change it made. He went home, preached her funeral

sermon, every one in the church in tears, himself outwardly unmoved. ¹¹ But from that time dates an entire, though always deepening, alteration in his manner of preaching, because an entire change in his way of dealing with God's Word. Not that his abiding religious views and convictions were then originated or even altered – I doubt not that from a child he not only knew the Holy Scriptures, but was "wise unto salvation" – but it strengthened and clarified, quickened and gave permanent direction to, his sense of God as revealed in His Word. He took as it were to subsoil ploughing; he got a new and adamantine point to the instrument with which he bored, and with a fresh power – with his whole might, he sunk it right down into the living rock, to the virgin gold. His entire nature had got a shock, and his blood was drawn inwards, his surface was chilled; but fuel was heaped all the more on the inner fires, and his zeal, that [Greek] burned with a new ardour; indeed had he not found an outlet for his pent-up energy, his brain must have given way, and his faculties have either consumed themselves in wild, wasteful splendour and combustion, or dwindled into lethargy. ¹²

¹¹ I have been told that once in the course of the sermon his voice trembled, and many feared he was about to break down.

¹² There is a story illustrative of this altered manner and matter of preaching. He had been preaching when very young, at Galashiels, and one wife said to her "neebor," "Jean, what think ye o' the lad?" "It's maist o't tinsel wark," said Jean, neither relishing nor appreciating his fine sentiments and figures. After my mother's death, he preached in the same place, and Jean, running to her friend, took the first word, "It's a' gowd noo."

The manse became silent; we lived and slept and played under the shadow of that death, and we saw, or rather felt, that he was another father than before. No more happy laughter from the two in the parlour, as he was reading Larry the Irish postboy's letter in Miss Edgeworth's tale, or the last Waverley novel; no more visitings in a cart with her, he riding beside us on his white thorough-bred pony, to Kilbucho, or Rachan Mill, or Kirklawhill. He went among his people as usual when they were ill; he preached better than ever – they were sometimes frightened to think how wonderfully he preached; but the sunshine was over – the glad and careless look, the joy of young life and mutual love. He was little with us, and, as I said, the house was still, except when he was *mandating* his sermons for Sabbath. This he always did, not only *vivâ voce*, but with as much energy and loudness as in the pulpit; we felt his voice was sharper, and rang keen through the house.

What we lost, the congregation and the world gained. He gave himself wholly to his work. As you have yourself said, he changed his entire system and fashion of preaching; from being elegant, rhetorical, and ambitious, he became concentrated, urgent, moving (being himself moved), keen, searching, unswerving, authoritative to fierceness, full of the terrors of the Lord, if he could but persuade men. The truth of the words of God had shone out upon him with an immediateness and infinity of meaning and power, which made them, though the same words he had looked on from childhood, other and greater

and deeper words. He then left the ordinary commentators, and men who write about meanings and flutter around the circumference and corners; he was bent on the centre, on touching with his own fingers, on seeing with his own eyes, the pearl of great price. Then it was that he began to dig into the depths, into the primary and auriferous rock of Scripture, and take nothing at another's hand: then he took up with the word "apprehend;" he had laid hold of the truth, – there it was, with its evidence, in his hand; and everyone who knew him must remember well how, in speaking with earnestness of the meaning of a passage, he, in his ardent, hesitating way, looked into the palm of his hand as if he actually saw there the truth he was going to utter. This word *apprehend* played a large part in his lectures, as the thing itself did in his processes of investigation, or, if I might make a word, *indigation*. Comprehension, he said, was for few; apprehension was for every man who had hands and a head to rule them, and an eye to direct them. Out of this arose one of his deficiencies. He *could* go largely into the generalities of a subject, and relished greatly others doing it, so that they did do it really and well; but he was averse to abstract and wide reasonings. Principles he rejoiced in: he worked with them as with his choicest weapons; they were the polished stones for his sling, against the Goliaths of presumption, error, and tyranny in thought or in polity, civil or ecclesiastical; but he somehow divined a principle, or got at it naked and alone, rather than deduced it and brought it to a point from an immensity of

particulars, and then rendered it back so as to blind them into one *cosmos*. One of my young friends, who afterwards went to India, and now dead, used to come and hear him in Broughton Place with me, and this word *apprehend* caught him, and as he had a great love for my father, in writing home to me, he never forgot to ask how "grand old Apprehend" was.

From this time dates my father's possession and use of the German Exegetics. After my mother's death I slept with him; his bed was in his study, a small room,¹³ with a very small grate; and I remember well his getting those fat, shapeless, spongy German books, as if one would sink in them, and be bogged in their bibulous, unsized paper; and watching him as he impatiently cut them up, and dived into them in his rapid, eclectic way, tasting them, and dropping for my play such a lot of soft, large, curled bits from the paper-cutter, leaving the edges all shaggy. He never came to bed when I was awake, which was not to be wondered at; but I can remember often awaking far on in the night or morning, and seeing that keen, beautiful, intense face bending over these Rosenmullers, and Ernestis, and Storrs, and Kuinoels – the fire out, and the grey dawn peering through the window; and when he heard me move, he would speak to me in the foolish words of endearment my mother was wont to use, and come to bed, and take me, warm as I was, into his cold bosom.

Vitringa in Jesaiam I especially remember, a noble folio. Even

¹³ On a low chest of drawers in this room there lay for many years my mother's parasol, by his orders – I daresay, for long, the only one in Biggar.

then, with that eagerness to communicate what he had himself found, of which you must often have been made the subject, he went and told it. He would try to make me, small man as I was, "apprehend" what he and Vitranga between them had made out of the fifty-third chapter of his favourite prophet, the princely Isaiah.¹⁴ Even then, so far as I can recal, he never took notes of what he read. He did not need this, his intellectual force and clearness were so great; he was so *totus in illo*, whatever it was, that he recorded, by a secret of its own, his mind's results and victories and *memoranda*, as he went on; he did not even mark his books, at least very seldom; he marked his mind.

He was thus every year preaching with more and more power, because with more and more knowledge and "pureness;" and, as you say, there were probably nowhere in Britain such lectures delivered at that time to such an audience, consisting of country people, sound, devout, well-read in their Bibles and in the native divinity, but quite unused to persistent, deep, critical thought.

"The dinner waits, and we are tired
Says Gilpin, "So am I,"

better; and to hear him sounding the depths and cadences of the Living Temple, "bearing on its front this doleful inscription, 'Here God once dwelt,'" was like listening to the recitative of

¹⁴ His reading aloud of everything from John Gilpin to John Howe was a fine and high art, or rather gift. Henderson

Handel. But Isaiah was his masterpiece; and I remember quite well his startling us all when reading at family worship, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God," by a peremptory, explosive sharpness, as of thunder overhead, at the words, "the mighty God," similar to the rendering now given to Handel's music, and doubtless so meant by him; and then closing with "the Prince of Peace," soft and low. No man who wishes to feel Isaiah, as well as understand him, should be ignorant of Handel's "Messiah." His prelude to "Comfort ye" – its simple theme, cheerful and infinite as the ripple of the unsearchable sea – gives a deeper meaning to the words. One of my father's great delights in his dying months was reading the lives of Handel and Michael Angelo, then newly out. He felt that the author of "He was despised," and "He shall feed his flock," and those other wonderful airs, was a man of profound religious feeling, of which they were the utterance: and he rejoiced over the warlike airs and choruses of "Judas Maccabæus." You have recorded his estimate of the religious nature of him of the *terribile via*: he said it was a relief to his mind to know that such a mighty genius walked humbly with his God.

Much of this – most of it – was entirely his own, self-originated and self-sustained, and done for its own sake,

"All too happy in the pleasure
Of his own exceeding treasure."

But he often said, with deep feeling, that one thing put him always on his mettle, the knowledge that "yonder in that corner, under the gallery, sat, Sabbath after Sabbath, a man who knew his Greek Testament better than I did."

This was his brother-in-law, and one of his elders, Mr. Robert Johnston, married to his sister Violet, a merchant and portioner in Biggar, a remarkable man, of whom it is difficult to say to strangers what is true, without being accused of exaggeration. A shopkeeper in that remote little town, he not only intermeddled fearlessly with all knowledge, but mastered more than many practised and University men do in their own lines. Mathematics, astronomy, and especially what may be called *selenology*, or the doctrine of the moon, and the higher geometry and physics; Hebrew, Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin, to the veriest rigours of prosody and metre; Spanish and Italian, German, French, and any odd language that came in his way; all these he knew more or less thoroughly, and acquired them in the most leisurely, easy, cool sort of a way, as if he grazed and browsed perpetually in the field of letters, rather than made formal meals, or gathered for any ulterior purpose, his fruits, his roots, and his nuts – he especially liked mental nuts – much less bought them from any one.

With all this, his knowledge of human, and especially of Biggar human nature, the ins and outs of its little secret ongoings, the entire gossip of the place, was like a woman's; moreover, every personage great or small, heroic or comic, in Homer

– whose poems he made it a matter of conscience to read once every four years – Plautus, Suetonius, Plutarch, Tacitus, and Lucian, down through Boccaccio and Don Quixote, which he knew by heart and from the living Spanish, to Joseph Andrews, the Spectator, Goldsmith and Swift, Miss Austen, Miss Edgeworth, and Miss Ferrier, Galt and Sir Walter – he was as familiar with as with David Crockat the nailer, or the parish minister, the town-drummer, the mole-catcher, or the poaching weaver, who had the night before leistered a prime kipper at Rachan Mill, by the flare of a tarry wisp, or brought home his surreptitious grey hen or *maukin* from the wilds of Dunsyre or the dreary Lang Whang.¹⁵

This singular man came to the manse every Friday evening for many years, and he and my father discussed everything and everybody; – beginning with tough, strong head work – a bout at wrestling, be it Caesar's Bridge, the Epistles of Phalaris, the import of [Greek], the Catholic question, or the great roots of Christian faith; ending with the latest joke in the town or the *West Raw*, the last effusion by Affleck, tailor and poet, the last blunder of Æsop the apothecary, and the last repartee of the village fool, with the week's Edinburgh and Glasgow news by their respective carriers; the whole little life, sad and humorous – who had been born, and who was dying or dead, married or about to be, for the

¹⁵ With the practices of this last worthy, when carried on moderately, and for the sport's sake, he had a special sympathy.

past eight days. ¹⁶

This amused, and, in the true sense, diverted my father, and gratified his curiosity, which was great, and his love of men as well as for man. He was shy, and unwilling to ask what he longed to know, liking better to have it given him without the asking, and no one could do this better than "Uncle Johnston."

You may readily understand what a thorough exercise and diversion of an intellectual and social kind this was, for they were neither of them men to shirk from close gripes, or trifle and flourish with their weapons; they laid on and spared not. And then my uncle had generally some special nut of his own to crack, some thesis to fling down and offer battle on, some "particle" to energize upon; for though quiet and calm, he was thoroughly combative, and enjoyed seeing his friend's blood up, and hearing his emphatic and bright speech, and watching his flashing eye. Then he never spared him; criticised and sometimes quizzed – for he had great humour – his style, as well as debated and weighed his apprehendings and exegeses, shaking them heartily to test their strength. He was so thoroughly independent of all authority, except that of reason and truth, and his own humour; so ready to detect what was weak, extravagant, or unfair; so full of relish for

¹⁶ I believe this was the true though secret source of much of my father's knowledge of the minute personal history of every one in his region, which – to his people, knowing his reserved manner and his devotion to his studies, and his so rarely meeting them or speaking to them, except from the pulpit, or at a diet of visitation – was a perpetual wonder, and of which he made great use in his dealings with his afflicted or erring members."

intellectual power and accuracy, and so attached to and proud of my father, and bent on his making the best of himself, that this trial was never relaxed. His firm and close-grained mind was a sort of whetstone on which my father sharpened his wits at this weekly "setting."

The very difference of their mental tempers and complexions drew them together – the one impatient, nervous, earnest, instant, swift, vehement, regardless of exertion, bent on his goal, like a thorough-bred racer, pressing to the mark; the other leisurely to slowness and provokingness, with a constitution which could stand a great deal of ease, unimpassioned, still, clear, untroubled by likings or dislikings, dwelling and working in thought and speculation and observation as ends in themselves, and as their own rewards: ¹⁷ the one hunting for a principle or a "divine method;" the other sapping or shelling from a distance, and for his pleasure, a position, or gaining a point, or settling a rule, or verifying a problem, or getting axiomatic and proverbial.

¹⁷ He was curiously destitute of all literary ambition or show; like the cactus in the desert, always plump, always taking in the dew of heaven, and caring little to give it out. He wrote many papers in the Repository and Monitor, an acute and clever tract on the Voluntary controversy, entitled *Calm Answers to Angry Questions*, and was the author of a capital bit of literary banter – a *Congratulatory Letter to the Minister of Liber-ton*, who had come down upon my father in a pamphlet, for his sermon on "There remaineth much land to be possessed." It is a mixture of Swift and Arbuthnot. I remember one of the flowers he culls from him he is congratulating, in which my father is characterized as one of those "shallow, sallow souls that would swallow the bait "without perceiving the cloven foot!" But a man like this never is best in a book; he is always greater than his work.

In appearance they were as curiously unlike; my uncle short and round to rotundity, homely and florid in feature. I used to think Socrates must have been like him in visage as well as in much of his mind. He was careless in his dress, his hands in his pockets as a rule, and strenuous only in smoking or in sleep. with a large, full skull, a humorous twinkle in his cold, blue eye, a soft, low voice, expressing every kind of thought in the same, sometimes plaguily *douce* tone; a great power of quiet and telling sarcasm, large capacity of listening to and of enjoying other men's talk, however small.

My father – tall, slim, agile, quick in his movements, graceful, neat to nicety in his dress, with much in his air of what is called style, with a face almost too beautiful for a man's, had not his eyes commanded it and all who looked at it, and his close, firm mouth been ready to say what the fiery spirit might bid; his eyes, when at rest, expressing – more than almost any other I ever saw – sorrow and tender love, a desire to give and to get sympathy, and a sort of gentle, deep sadness, as if that was their permanent state, and gladness their momentary act; but when awakened, full of fire, peremptory, and not to be trifled with; and his smile, and flash of gaiety and fun, something no one could forget; his hair in early life a dead black; his eyebrows of exquisite curve, narrow and intense; his voice deep when unmoved and calm; keen and sharp to piercing fierceness when vehement and roused – in the pulpit, at times a shout, at times a pathetic wail; his utterance hesitating, emphatic, explosive, powerful, – each sentence shot straight and

home; his hesitation arising from his crowd of impatient ideas, and his resolute will that they should come in their order, and some of them not come at all, only the best, and his settled determination that each thought should be dressed in the very and only word which he stammered on till it came, – it was generally worth his pains and ours.

Uncle Johnston, again, flowed on like Cæsar's *Arar, incredibili lenitate*, or like linseed out of a poke. You can easily fancy the spiritual and bodily contrast of these men, and can fancy too, the kind of engagements they would have with their own proper weapons on these Friday evenings, in the old manse dining-room, my father showing uncle out into the darkness of the back-road, and uncle, doubtless, lighting his black and ruminative pipe.

If my uncle brought up nuts to crack, my father was sure to have some difficulties to consult about, or some passages to read, something that made him put his whole energy forth; and when he did so, I never heard such reading. To hear him read the story of Joseph, or passages in David's history, and Psalms 6th, 11th, and 15th, or the 53d, 53d, 54th, 55th, 63d, 64th, and 40th chapters of Isaiah, or the Sermon on the Mount, or the Journey to Emmaus, or our Saviour's prayer in John, or Paul's speech on Mars Hill, or the first three chapters of Hebrews and the latter part of the nth, or Job, or the Apocalypse; or to pass from those divine themes – Jeremy Taylor, or George Herbert, Sir Walter Raleigh, or Milton's prose, such as the passage beginning, "Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O thou Prince of all the kings of

the earth!" and "Truth, indeed, came once into the world with her divine Master," or Charles Wesley's Hymns, or, most loved of all, Cowper, from the rapt "Come thou, and, added to thy many crowns," or "O that those lips had language!" to the Jackdaw, and his incomparable Letters; or Gray's Poems, Burns's "Tam O'Shanter," or Sir Walter's "Eve of St. John," ¹⁸ and "The Grey Brother."

and pointing out the "Watchfold height," "the eiry Beacon Hill," and "Brotherstone."

But I beg your pardon: Time has run back with me, and fetched that blessed past, and awakened its echoes. I hear his voice; I feel his eye; I see his whole nature given up to what he is reading, and making its very soul speak.

Such a man then as I have sketched, or washed faintly in, as the painters say, was that person who sat in the corner under the gallery every Sabbath-day, and who knew his Greek Testament better than his minister. He is dead, too, a few months ago, dying surrounded with his cherished hoard of books of all sizes, times, and tongues – tatterdemalion many; all however drawn up in an order of his own; all thoroughly mastered and known; among them David Hume's copy of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, with his autograph, which he had picked up at some stall.

¹⁸ Well do I remember when driving him from Melrose to Kelso, long ago, we came near Sandyknowe, that grim tower of Smailholm, standing erect like a warrior turned to stone, defying time and change, his bursting into that noble ballad — "The Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day, He spurr'd his courser on, Without stop or stay, down the rocky way, That leads to Brotherstone

I have said that my mother's death was the second epoch in my father's life. I should perhaps have said the third; the first being his mother's long illness and death, and the second his going to Elie, and beginning the battle of life at fifteen. There must have been something very delicate and close and exquisite in the relation between the ailing, silent, beautiful and pensive mother, and that dark-eyed, dark-haired, bright and silent son; a sort of communion it is not easy to express. You can think of him at eleven slowly writing out that small book of promises in a distinct and minute hand, quite as like his mature hand, as the shy, lustrous-eyed boy was to his after self in his manly years, and sitting by the bedside while the rest were out and shouting, playing at hide-and-seek round the little church, with the winds from Benlomond or the wild uplands of Ayrshire blowing through their hair. He played seldom, but when he did run out, he jumped higher and farther, and ran faster than any of them. His peculiar beauty must have come from his mother. He used at rare times, and with a sort of shudder, to tell of her when a lovely girl of fifteen, having been seen by a gentleman of rank, in Cheap-side, hand in hand with an evil woman, who was decoying her to ruin, on pretence of showing her the way home; and how he stopped his carriage, and taking in the unconscious girl, drove her to her uncle's door. But you have said all this better than I can.

His time with his mother, and the necessary confinement and bodily depression caused by it, I doubt not deepened his native

thoughtful turn, and his tendency to meditative melancholy, as a condition under which he viewed all things, and quickened and intensified his sense of the suffering of this world, and of the profound seriousness and mystery in the midst of which we live and die.

The second epoch was that of his leaving home with his guinea, the last he ever got from any one but himself; and his going among utter strangers to be master of a school one half of the scholars of which were bigger and older than himself, and all rough colts – wilful and unbroken. This was his first fronting of the world. Besides supporting himself, this knit the sinews of his mind, and made him rely on himself in action as well as in thought. He sometimes, but not often, spoke of this, never lightly, though he laughed at some of his predicaments. He could not forget the rude shock. Generally those familiar revelations were at supper, on the Sabbath evening, when, his work over, he enjoyed and lingered over his meal.

From his young and slight, almost girlish look, and his refined, quiet manners, the boys of the school were inclined to annoy and bully him. He saw this, and felt it was now or never, – nothing between. So he took his line. The biggest boy, much older and stronger, was the rudest, and infected the rest. The "*wee maister*" ordered him, in that peremptory voice we all remember, to stand up and hold out his hand, being not at all sure but the big fellow might knock him down on the word. To the astonishment of the school, and to the big rebel's too, he obeyed and was punished

on the instant, and to the full; out went the hand, down came the "*taws*" and bit like fire. From that moment he ruled them by his eye, the *taws* vanished.

There was an incident at this time of his life which I should perhaps not tell, and yet I don't know why I shouldn't, it so perfectly illustrates his character in many ways. He had come home during the vacation of his school to Langrig, and was about to go back; he had been renewing his intercourse with his old teacher and friend whom you mention, from whom he used to say he learned to like Shakspeare, and who seems to have been a man of genuine literary tastes. He went down to bid him good-bye, and doubtless they got on their old book loves, and would be spouting their pet pieces. The old dominie said, "John, my man, if you are walking into Edinburgh, I'll convoy you a bit."

"John" was too happy, so next morning they set off, keeping up a constant fire of quotation and eager talk. They got past Mid-Calder to near East, when my father insisted on his friend returning, and also on going back a bit with him; on looking at the old man, he thought he was tired, so on reaching the well-known "Kippen's Inn," he stopped and insisted on giving him some refreshment. Instead of ordering bread and cheese and a bottle of ale, he, doubtless full of Shakspeare, and great upon sack and canary, ordered *a bottle of wine!* Of this, you may be sure, the dominie, as he most needed it, had the greater share, and doubtless it warmed the cockles of his old heart. "John" making him finish the bottle, and drink the health of "Gentle Will," saw

him off, and went in to pay the reckoning. What did he know of the price of wine! It took exactly every penny he had; I doubt not, most boys, knowing that the landlord knew them, would have either paid a part, or asked him to score it up. This was not his way; he was too proud and shy and honest for such an expedient. By this time, what with discussing Shakspeare, and witnessing his master's leisurely emptying of that bottle, and releasing the he found he must run for it to Edinburgh, or rather Leith, fourteen miles; this he did, and was at the pier just in time to jump into the Elie pinnace, which was already off. He often wondered what he would have done if he had been that one moment late. You can easily pick out the qualities this story unfolds.

"Dear prisoned spirits of the impassioned grape,"

His nature, capable as it was of great, persistent, and indeed dogged labour, was, from the predominance of the nervous system in his organization, excitable, and therefore needed and relished excitement – the more intense the better. He found this in his keen political tastes, in imaginative literature, and in fiction. In the highest kind of poetry he enjoyed the sweet pain of tears; and he all his life had a steady liking, even a hunger, for a good novel. This refreshed, lightened, and diverted his mind from the strain of his incessant exegesis. He used always to say that Sir Walter and Goldsmith, and even Fielding.

Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, and Miss Ferrier, were true

benefactors to the race, by giving such genuine, such secure and innocent pleasure: and he often repeated with admiration Lord Jeffrey's words on Scott, inscribed on his monument. He had no turn for gardening or for fishing or any field sports or games; his sensitive nature recoiled from the idea of pain, and above all, needless pain. He used to say the lower creation had groans enough, and needed no more burdens; indeed, he was fierce to some measure of unfairness against such of his brethren – Dr. Wardlaw, for instance ¹⁹ – as resembled the apostles in fishing for other things besides men.

But the exercise and the excitement he most of all others delighted in, was riding; and had he been a country gentleman and not a clergyman, I don't think he could have resisted fox-hunting. With the exception of that great genius in more than horsemanship, Andrew Ducrow, I never saw a man sit a horse as he did. He seemed inspired, gay, erect, full of the joy of life, fearless and secure. I have heard a farmer friend say if he had not been a preacher of the gospel he would have been a cavalry officer, and would have fought as he preached.

He was known all over the Upper Ward and down Tweeddale for his riding. "There goes the minister," as he rode past at a swift canter. He had generally well-bred horses, or as I would now call them, ponies; if he had not, his sufferings from a dull, hardmouthed, heavy-hearted and footed plebeian horse were

¹⁹ After a tight discussion between these two attached friends, Dr. Wardlaw said, "Well, I can't answer you, but fish I must and shall."

almost comic. On his grey mare, or his little blood bay horse, to see him setting off and indulging it and himself in some alarming gambols, and in the midst of his difficulties, partly of his own making, taking off his hat or kissing his hand to a lady, made one think of "young Harry with his beaver up." He used to tell with much relish, how, one fine summer Sabbath evening, after preaching in the open air for a collection, in some village near, and having put the money, chiefly halfpence, into his handkerchief, and that into his hat, he was taking a smart gallop home across the moor, happy and relieved, when three ladies – I think, the Miss Bertrams of Kersewell – came suddenly upon him; off went the hat, down bent the head, and over him streamed the cherished collection, the ladies busy among the wild grass and heather picking it up, and he full of droll confusion and laughter.

The grey mare he had for many years. I can remember her small head and large eyes; her neat, compact body, round as a barrel; her finely fleabitten skin, and her thoroughbred legs. I have no doubt she had Arabian blood. My father's pride in her was quite curious. Many a wild ride to and from the Presbytery at Lanark, and across flooded and shifting fords, he had on her. She was as sweet-tempered and enduring, as she was swift and sure; and her powers of running were appreciated and applied in a way which he was both angry and amused to discover. You know what riding the *bruse* means. At a country wedding the young men have a race to the bridegroom's home, and he who wins, brings

out a bottle and glass and drinks the young wife's health. I wish Burns had described a *bruse*; all sorts of steeds, wild, unkempt lads as well as colts, old broken-down thoroughbreds that did wonders when *soopled*, huge, grave cart-horses devouring the road with their shaggy hoofs, wilful ponies, etc. You can imagine the wild hurry-skurry and fun, the comic situations and upsets over a rough road, up and down places one would be giddy to look at.

Well, the young farmers were in the habit of coming to my father, and asking the loan of the mare to go and see a friend, etc., etc., praising knowingly the fine points and virtues of his darling. Having through life, with all his firmness of nature, an abhorrence of saying "No" to any one, the interview generally ended with, "Well, Robert, you may have her, but take care of her, and don't ride her fast." In an hour or two Robert was riding the *bruse*, and flying away from the crowd, grey first, and the rest nowhere, and might be seen turning the corner of the farm-house with the victorious bottle in his uplifted hand, the motley pack panting vainly up the hill. This went on for long, and the grey was famous, almost notorious, all over the Upper Ward; sometimes if she appeared, no one would start, and she trotted the course. Partly from his own personal abstraction from outward country life, and partly from Uncle Johnston's sense of waggery keeping him from telling his friend of the grey's last exploit at Hartree Mill, or her leaping over the "best man" at Thriepland, my father was the last to hear of this equivocal glory of "the minister's

meer." Indeed, it was whispered she had once won a whip at Lanark races. They still tell of his feats on this fine creature, one of which he himself never alluded to without a feeling of shame. He had an engagement to preach somewhere beyond the Clyde on a Sabbath evening, and his excellent and attached friend and elder, Mr. Kello of Lindsaylands, accompanied him on his big plough horse. It was to be in the open air, on the riverside. When they got to the Clyde they found it in full flood, heavy and sudden rains at the head of the water having brought it down in a wild *spate*. On the opposite side were the gathered people and the tent. Before Mr. Kello knew where he was, there was his minister on the mare swimming across, and carried down in a long diagonal, the people looking on in terror. He landed, shook himself, and preached with his usual fervour. As I have said, he never liked to speak of this bit of hardihood, and he never repeated it; but it was like the man – there were the people, that was what he would be at, and though timid for anticipated danger as any woman, *in* it he was without fear.

One more of his character in connexion with his riding. On coming to Edinburgh he gave up this kind of exercise; he had no occasion for it, and he had enough and more than enough of excitement in the public questions in which he found himself involved, and in the miscellaneous activities of a popular town minister. I was then a young doctor – it must have been about 1840 – and had a patient, Mrs. James Robertson, eldest daughter of Mr. Pirie, the predecessor of Dr. Dick in what was then

Shuttle Street congregation, Glasgow. She was one of my father's earliest and dearest friends, – a mother in the Burgher Israel, she and her cordial husband "given to hospitality," especially to "the Prophets." She was hopelessly ill at Juniper Green, near Edinburgh. Mr. George Stone, then living at Muirhouse, one of my father's congregation in Broughton Place, a man of equal originality and worth, and devoted to his minister, knowing my love of riding, offered me his blood-chestnut to ride out and make my visit. My father said, "John, if you are going, I would like to ride out with you he wished to see his dying friend.

"You ride!" said Mr. Stone, who was a very York-shireman in the matter of horses. "Let him try," said I. The upshot was, that Mr. Stone sent the chestnut for me, and a sedate pony – called, if I forget not, Goliath – for his minister, with all sorts of injunctions to me to keep him off the thoroughbred, and on Goliath.

My father had not been on a horse for nearly twenty years. He mounted and rode off. He soon got teased with the short, pattering steps of Goliath, and looked wistfully up at me, and longingly to the tall chestnut, stepping once for Goliath's twice, like the Don striding beside Sancho. I saw what he was after, and when past the toll he said in a mild sort of way, "John, did you promise *absolutely* I was not to ride your horse?"

"No, father, certainly not. Mr. Stone, I daresay, wished me to do so, but I didn't."

"Well, then, I think we'll change; this beast shakes me." So we changed. I remember how noble he looked; how at home: his

white hair and his dark eyes, his erect, easy, accustomed seat. He soon let his eager horse slip gently away. It was first *evasit*, he was off, Goliath and I jogging on behind; then *erupit*, and in a twinkling —*evanuit*. I saw them last flashing through the arch under the Canal, his white hair flying. I was uneasy, though from his riding I knew he was as yet in command, so I put Goliath to his best, and having passed through Slateford, I asked a stonebreaker if he saw a gentleman on a chestnut horse. "Has he white hair?"

"Yes."

"And een like a gled's?"

"Yes."

"Weel, then, he's fleein' up the road like the wund; he'll be at Little Vantage" (about nine miles off) "in nae time if he haud on." I never once sighted him, but on coming into Juniper Green there was his steaming chestnut at the gate, neighing cheerily to Goliath. I went in, he was at the bedside of his friend, and in the midst of prayer; his words as I entered were, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;" and he was not the less instant in prayer that his blood was up with his ride. He never again saw Mrs. Robertson, or as she was called when they were young, Sibbie (Sibella) Pirie. On coming out he said nothing, but took the chestnut, mounted her, and we came home quietly. His heart was opened; he spoke of old times and old friends; he stopped at the exquisite view at Hailes into the valley, and up the Pentlands beyond, the smoke of Kate's Mill rising in the still and shadowy

air, and broke out into Cowper's words: Yes,

"He sets the bright procession on its way,
And marshals all the order of the year;
And ere one flowery season fades and dies,
Designs the blooming wonders of the next."

Then as we came slowly in, the moon shone behind
Craiglockhart hill among the old Scotch firs; he pulled up again,
and gave me Collins' Ode to Evening, beginning —

"If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Thy springs, and dying gales

repeating over and over some of the lines, as

"Thy modest ear,
Thy springs, and dying gales."

" — And marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil."

And when she looked out on us clear and full, "Yes —

"The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth

Repeats the story of her birth."

As we passed through Slateford, he spoke of Dr. Belfrage, his great-hearted friend, of his obligations to him, and of his son, my friend, both lying together in Colinton churchyard; and of Dr. Dick, who was minister before him, of the Coventrys, and of Stichel and Sprouston, of his mother, and of himself, – his doubts of his own sincerity in religion, his sense of sin, of God – reverting often to his dying friend. Such a thing only occurred to me with him once or twice all my life; and then when we were home, he was silent, shut up, self-contained as before. He was himself conscious of this habit of reticence, and what may be called *selfism* to us, his children, and lamented it. I remember his saying in a sort of mournful joke, "I have a well of love; I know it; but it is a *well*, and a *draw-well*, to your sorrow and mine, and it seldom overflows, but," looking with that strange power of tenderness as if he put his voice and his heart into his eyes, "you may always come hither to draw;" he used to say he might take to himself Wordsworth's lines —

"I am not one who much or oft delights
To season my fireside with personal talk."

And changing "though" into "if:"

"A well of love it may be deep,
I trust it is, and never dry;

What matter, though its waters sleep
In silence and obscurity?"

The expression of his affection was more like the shock of a Leyden jar, than the continuous current of a galvanic circle.

There was, as I have said, a permanent chill given by my mother's death, to what may be called the outer surface of his nature, and we at home felt it much. The blood was thrown in upon the centre, and went forth in energetic and victorious work, in searching the Scriptures and saving souls; but his social faculty never recovered that shock! it was blighted; he was always desiring to be alone and at his work. A stranger who saw him for a short time, bright, animated, full of earnest and cordial talk, pleasing and being pleased, the life of the company, was apt to think how delightful he must always be, – and so he was; but these times of bright talk were like angels' visits; and he smiled with peculiar benignity on his retiring guest, as if blessing him not the less for leaving him to himself. I question if there ever lived a man so much in the midst of men, and in the midst of his own children,²⁰ in whom the silences, as Mr. Carlyle would say, were so predominant. Every Sabbath he spoke out of the abundance of his heart, his whole mind; he was then communicative and frank enough: all the week, before and after, he would not unwillingly have never opened his mouth. Of many people we may say that their mouth is always open except when it is shut; of him that

²⁰ He gave us all the education we got at Biggar.

his mouth was always shut except when it was opened. Every one must have been struck with the seeming inconsistency of his occasional brilliant, happy, energetic talk, and his habitual silentness – his difficulty in getting anything to say. But, as I have already said, what we lost, the world and the church gained.

When travelling he was always in high spirits and full of anecdote and fun. Indeed I knew more of his inner history in this *one* way, than during years of living with him. I recollect his taking me with him to Glasgow when I must have been about fourteen; we breakfasted in *The Rain's Horn Tavern*, and I felt a new respect for him at his commanding the waiters. He talked a great deal during our short tour, and often have I desired to recal the many things he told me of his early life, and of his own religious crises, my mother's death, his fear of his own death, and all this intermingled with the drollest stories of his boy and student life.

We went to Paisley and dined, I well remember, we two alone, and, as I thought, magnificently, in a great apartment in *The Saracen's Head*, at the end of which was the county ball-room. We had come across from Dunoon and landed in a small boat at the *Water Neb* along with Mrs. Dr. Hall, a character Sir Walter or Galt would have made immortal. My father with characteristic ardour took an oar, for the first time in his life, and I believe for the last, to help the old boatman on the Cart, and wishing to do something decided, missed the water, and went back head over heels to the immense enjoyment of Mrs. Hall, who said, "Less

pith, and mair to the purpose, my man." She didn't let the joke die out.

Another time – it was when his second marriage was fixed on, to our great happiness and his – I had just taken my degree of M. D., and he took Isabella, William, and myself to Moffat. By a curious felicity we got into Miss Gedde's lodgings, where the village circulating library was kept, the whole of which we aver he read in ten days. I never saw him so happy, so open and full of mirth, reading to us, and reciting the poetry of his youth. On these rare but delightful occasions he was fond of exhibiting, when asked, his powers of rapid speaking, in which he might have rivalled old Matthews or his son. His favourite feat was repeating, "Says I to my Lord, quo' I – what for will ye no grund ma barleymeal mouterfree, says I to my Lord, quo' I, says I, I says." He was brilliant upon the final "I says." Another *chef-d'oeuvre* was, "On Tintock tap there is a mist, and in the mist there is a kist (a chest), and in the kist there is a cap (a wooden bowl), and in the cap there is a drap, tak' up the cap, and sup the drap, and set the cap on Tintock tap." This he could say, if I mistake not, five times without drawing breath. It was a favourite passage this, and he often threatened to treat it exegetically; laughing heartily when I said, in that case, he would not have great trouble with the *context*, which in others cost him a good deal.

His manners to ladies, and indeed to all women, were those of a courtly gentleman; they could be romantic in their

empressement and devotion, and I used to think Sir Philip Sydney, or Ariosto's knights and the Paladins of old, must have looked and moved as he did. He had great pleasure in the company of high-bred, refined, thoughtful women; and he had a peculiar sympathy with the sufferings, the necessary mournfulness of women, and with all in their lot connected with the fruit of that forbidden tree – their loneliness, the sorrows of their time, and their pangs in travail, their peculiar relation to their children. I think I hear him reading the words, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea" (as if it was the next thing to impossible), "she may forget, yet will not I forget thee." Indeed, to a man who saw so little of, and said so little to his own children, perhaps it may be *because* of all this, his sympathy for mothers under loss of children, his real suffering for their suffering, not only endeared him to them as their minister, their consoler, and gave him opportunities of dropping in divine and saving truth and comfort, when the heart was full and soft, tender, and at his mercy, but it brought out in his only loss of this kind, the mingled depth, tenderness, and also the peremptoriness of his nature.

In the case of the death of little Maggie – a child the very image of himself in face, lovely and pensive, and yet ready for any fun, with a keenness of affection that perilled everything on being loved, who must cling to some one and be clasped, made for a garden, for the first garden, not for the rough world, the

child of his old age – this peculiar meeting of opposites was very marked. She was stricken with sudden illness, malignant sore throat; her mother was gone, and so she was to my father as a flower he had the sole keeping of; and his joy in her wild mirth, his watching her childish moods of sadness, as if a shadow came over her young heaven, were themselves something to watch. Her delicate life made no struggle with disease; it as it were declined to stay on such conditions. She therefore sunk at once and without much pain, her soul quick and unclouded, and her little forefinger playing to the last with my father's silvery curls, her eyes trying in vain to brighten his: —

"Thou wert a dew-drop which the morn brings forth,
Not fitted to be trailed along the soiling earth;
But at the touch of wrong, without a strife,
Slips in a moment out of life."

His distress, his anguish at this stroke, was not only intense, it was in its essence permanent; he went mourning and looking for her all his days; but after she was dead, that resolved will compacted him in an instant. It was on a Sabbath morning she died, and he was all day at church, not many yards from where lay her little corpse alone in the house. His colleague preached in the forenoon, and in the afternoon he took his turn, saying before beginning his discourse: – "It has pleased the Father of Lights to darken one of the lights of my dwelling – had the child lived I would have remained with her, but now I have thought it

right to arise and come into the house of the Lord to worship." Such violence to one part of his nature by that in it which was supreme, injured him: it was like pulling up on the instant an express train; the whole inner organization is minutely, though it may be invisibly hurt; its molecular constitution damaged by the cruel stress and strain. Such things are not right; they are a cruelty and injustice and injury from the soul to the body, its faithful slave, and they bring down, as in his case they too truly did, their own certain and specific retribution. A man who did not feel keenly might have preached; a man whose whole nature was torn, shattered, and astonished as his was, had in a high sense *no right* so to use himself; and when too late he opened his eyes to this. It was part of our old Scottish severe unsparing character – calm to coldness outside, burning to fierceness, tender to agony within.

I was saying how much my father enjoyed women's company. He liked to look on them, and watch them, listening ²¹ to their keen, unconnected, and unreasoning, but not unreasonable talk. Men's argument, or rather arguing, and above all debating, he disliked. He had no turn for it. He was not combative, much

²¹ One day my mother, and her only sister, Agnes – married to James Aitken of Callands, a man before his class and his time, for long the only Whig and Seceder laird in Peeblesshire, and with whom my father shared the Edinburgh Review from its beginning – the two sisters who were, the one to the other, as Martha was to Mary, sat talking of their household doings; my aunt was great upon some things she could do; my father looked up from his book, and said, "There is one thing, Mrs. Aitken, you cannot do – you cannot turn the heel of a stocking," and he was right, he had noticed her make over this "kittle" turn to her mother.

less contentious. He was, however, warlike. Anything that he could destroy, any falsehood or injustice, he made for, not to discuss, but to expose and kill. He could not fence with his mind much less with his tongue, and had no love for the exploits of a nimble dialectic. He had no readiness either in thought or word for this; his way was slowly to *think out* a subject, to get it well "bottomed," as Locke would say; he was not careful as to recording the steps he took in their order, but the spirit of his mind was logical, as must be that of all minds who seek and find truth, for logic is nothing else than the arithmetic of thought; having therefore *thought it out*, he proceeded to put it into formal expression. This he did so as never again to undo it. His mind seemed to want the wheels by which this is done, *vestigia nulla retrorsum*, and having stereotyped it, he was never weary of it; it never lost its life and freshness to him, and he delivered it as emphatically thirty years after it had been cast, as the first hour of its existence.

I have said he was no swordsman, but he was a heavy shot; he fired off his ball, compact, weighty, the *maximum* of substance in the *minimum* of bulk; he put in double charge, pointed the muzzle, and fired, with what force and sharpness we all remember. If it hit, good; if not, all he could do was to load again, with the same ball, and in the same direction. You must come to him to be shot, at least you must stand still, for he had a want of mobility of mind in great questions. He could not stalk about the field like a sharp-shooter; his was a great sixty-eight pounder, and

it was not much of a swivel. Thus it was that he rather dropped into the minds of others his authoritative assertions, and left them to breed conviction. If they gave them entrance and cherished them, they would soon find how full of primary truth they were, and how well they would serve them, as they had served him. With all this heavy artillery, somewhat slow and cumbrous, on great questions, he had no want, when he was speaking off-hand, of quick *snell* remark, often witty and full of spirit, and often too unexpected, like lightning – flashing, smiting and gone. In Church Courts this was very marked. On small ordinary matters, a word from him would settle a long discussion. He would, after lively, easy talk with his next neighbour, set *him* up to make a speech, which was conclusive. But on great questions he must move forward his great gun with much solemnity and effort, partly from his desire to say as much of the truth at once as he could, partly from the natural concentration and rapidity of his mind in action, as distinguished from his slowness when *incubating*, or in the process of thought, – and partly from a sort of self-consciousness – I might almost call it a compound of pride and nervous diffidence – which seldom left him. He desired to say it so that it might never need to be said again or otherwise by himself, or any one else.

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