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DESCENT OF ORPHEUS.

RICH golden hues still lingered in the western sky and lent a transient glory to every ripple on the wide extended sea. On shore the bees and the rest of the insect tribe had sought their shelter from the coming shades of night. Even the busy fisherman had drawn his boat on shore, and now slowly wended his way towards his cottage home. All was still, for nature had retired to rest, and even the very breeze could not be heard as it gently breathed upon the scarcely moving leaves. All was still, save the bosom of Orpheus, heaving with deep-drawn sighs for his lost Eurydice. The lyre hung unheeded on his arm, his drooping head reclined upon his troubled breast, as he, uttering mournful sobs, slowly walked along the silent beach. Yet even he found pleasure in the still solitude of the place, for there no unwelcome sound disturbed the thoughts that filled his sorrowing mind. The gentle waves that rolled upon the shore seemed to murmur in sympathy with his grief, too great to find relief in tears. Aweary of the haunts of busy life, he unmoored a skiff, and, heedless whither fate might bear his little craft, lay down to think and mourn for the loss of fair Eurydice. Soon the returning tide bore the light vessel some distance from the shore, where the larger waves propelled its frail boards, and sent it fast drifting to the open sea. Onwards it glided, till at last the land dis-

appeared from view, and all around there was nothing seen but one wide expanse of ocean. The shades of night had closed around, but the moon shone full and bright, casting a broad stream of silvery light across the encircling sea.

Orpheus, unconscious of danger, thinks only of his grief, till by accident his arm struck the strings of his lyre; when, aroused by the sudden sound, he mournfully exclaimed, "Oh, Eurydice, Eurydice, and must I never see thee more, oh! my beloved Eurydice?" He rose from off his side and looked around, when behold! some one unseen plied swift the oars. The boat glided rapidly from wave to wave, and there at the prow sat the shadowy outline of a female form. He looked and looked again, and still with skilful stroke she guided the fleeting boat. Orpheus started at the unexpected sight, and cried, "Speak, hast thou come to mock me in my grief; or if thou art from the land of shades, what hast thou to tell me of Eurydice?" Earnestly he gazed upon the almost transparent figure, and in anxious wonder waited a reply. He listened, but no sound met his attentive ear, save the measured stroke of the oar, and the distant roar of a tempestuous sea. Onwards they sped, till at last they neared the rolling billows rising high above the little boat, and tossing aloft their snow-like spray. Orpheus started up to seize the airy form; but, eluding his grasp, she suddenly disappeared. A hand unseen lifted up his lyre, and as he in wonder gazed, he saw it sink beneath the waves, and thought he heard it sound the name "Eurydice." The cherished name recalled his grievous loss, and, heedless of the rushing sea, he let the boat drift on. Forward it sprung from wave to wave, till now, within the eddying whirlpool's grasp, it turned round and round with ever increasing speed, and drew near the mouth of the engulfing vortex.

A moment it lingered on the awful brink, then down it sunk with a strange gurgling sound beneath the noisy waves. Down, and yet lower down was Orpheus borne to depths unknown. One continuous rushing sound was all he heard, till, no longer conscious of his state, he dreamt that he had found Eurydice, and clasped her again within his fond embrace. But alas! returning memory soon chased away these pleasant dreams, and Orpheus awoke to mourn his loss anew. Remembering the strange events that had so lately befallen him, he was astonished to find himself safe out of the reach of the

angry waves. He rose and looked around—all was dark. He listened, but he only heard, high overhead, the dreadful whirlpool's rushing sound. Driven by the force of the impetuous waters, he had been carried far underneath the cliffs of a mountain, hid countless fathoms deep below the bosom of the sea. There, cast upon a spacious cavern's floor, he awoke to a knowledge of the strange event. Cautiously he crept across the uneven surface, if perchance he might discover any signs of an egress to the outer world. Painfully he dragged his weary limbs along, till at last, beyond the reach of the whirlpool's roar, a dread silence and thick darkness reigned on every side. Often he paused and again renewed his fruitless search. At length, weary with exertion, he would have sought repose, when suddenly in the far recesses of the cave he heard the well-known sound of his own lyre, and again it seemed to say, "Eurydice.' The name of his beloved revived his sinking soul, and again his attentive ear distinctly heard the quivering wires pronounce the cheering words, "Orpheus, why dost thou linger in thy search? Courage! and thou wilt find Eurydice." No fear delayed his hurrying feet; but, heedless of all danger, he quickly pursued the direction whence came the mysterious words of welcome hope. As he advanced, a strange subdued light gradually appeared, streaming from that part of the cavern which he approached. The rugged walls sparkled with brilliant crystals, stones of every hue reflected rays of coloured light, and icicle-shaped masses of white glittering rock hung from the high o'erhanging roof. But Orpheus, eager in his search, paused not to behold the beauties of the place. The light shone brighter as he drew near, till now it seemed to come from a wide opening in the floor, and there beside it stood the same shadowy female form gazing intently on him as he in wondering expectation approached the mysterious spot. With one hand she pointed towards the yawning floor, and with the other beckoned on him to advance. Compelled by hope and wonder, nearer and nearer he came; but, as he gazed, the airy semblance again mysteriously vanished from his sight. On the place where she had stood he found his lyre, strung anew with strings like none he had ever seen before, and which upon the slightest touch gave forth a rich melodious sound which reverberated with repeated echoes through the caverned halls. He slung it o'er his shoulders and hastily approached to look

through the open floor, anxious to find some egress from the mysterious place. But soon his mind was filled with other thoughts, for the abyss on which he gazed could not belong to the upper world from which he had been so suddenly removed. "Why do I desire," he said, "to regain the haunts of men, where no loved one awaits my safe return? If now the Fates have revealed a secret path by which I may descend to thee, what dangers shall I not welcome for thy sake, oh! my beloved Eurydice?"

Often had he seen the sky when it hung o'er the earth like an unspotted curtain of ethereal blue, or when, obscured by clouds and mist, the light of the sun was darkened. He had seen the glassy surface of the sea when unruffled by the gentlest breeze; or when lashed into foam by the force of tempestuous winds. But to none of these could he liken the great expanse he now beheld. Below, on every side, it stretched, one vast extent of unvaried and unchanging hue. No limits of any kind could his searching eye detect. It was of a murky bluish shade, and pervaded by a strange dull light, which came from no apparent source. Anxious to explore the mysterious depths, he descended, firmly grasping the projecting rocks. Again he looked beneath him, and there for the first time he saw a huge double chain hanging suspended from some place unseen, outside the entrance to the cave. Quickly he reached and firmly grasped the oscillating links. Soon he descended far beneath the rocks, then paused and looked upwards. Scarce could he distinguish the dim outline of the opening through which he had passed from the black chaotic mass of slimy matter which stretched far around it on every side, as if he hung suspended beneath the very foundations of the upper world. As he gazed upwards, suddenly a portion of the o'erhanging mass gave way, and Orpheus felt the chain to which he clung hang loosely in his grasp. With trembling arms he clutched the falling chain, till by some unseen power he was violently shaken from his hold. Yet strange! he did not fall, but rather sunk by slow degrees into the abyss below. As he gradually descended, he heard the flutter of huge wings not far above his head. He looked aloft, and there with outstretched pinions and rapid circling flight, he saw swooping towards him a mighty bat-like monster, to whose foot one end of the chain was fastened. Its great red eyes shone with rage, and from its open hooked bill was

stretched a barbed sharp-pointed tongue. The monster's scaly body was of human shape, but its limbs were those of a bird, armed with long extended claws. Its ugly green glittering wings were stretched between each pair of legs, and along their outer edge were ranged spear-pointed prongs. Horror stricken, Orpheus struggled to descend from out its reach, but nearer and nearer it came with an angry hissing sound; till, almost seizing him in its grasping claws, it uttered a scream of rage, for now it had reached the limits of the chain which bound it to the rocks above. Long Orpheus saw it struggling and swaying the huge chain to and fro in its rage at his escape.

Soon he sunk far out of sight, till now, above, below, and all around, nothing was seen but one vast illimitable space. At last, overcome by fatigue and the soothing influence of the gentle downward motion, there, suspended between two worlds, he fell asleep. His excited thoughts portrayed themselves in dreams. Beside him stood the same female form who had thus far guided him in his bold adventure. This time she came nearer him, and earnestly gazed upon his face with affection and sympathising love. Orpheus looked upon the shadowy outline of the countenance; scenes of youth began to pass before his mind, and with a start he recognized the features of his mother. In vain he sought to clasp her to his bosom, for as he strove his mother eluded his outstretched arms, and motioning with her hands, said, "Sleep, Orpheus, my son; for no human tongue can tell its thoughts to me; but in thy sleep I may hold converse with thy spirit. Now thou art within the confines of the world of shades, where the past is as the present, and the present is but a shadowy repetition of the past. Here existence is but the memory of our former selves, yet we have our present joys and griefs, and look forward to the future. Hither came Eurydice, sorrowing for thee, and wishing to retrace her unwilling steps back to the upper earth where thou wert grieving for her loss. In vain! for no one may unpunished leave the world of spirits; unless, with all remembrance swept away, to enter again into another body, be born another self, and dying another death, return again a stranger to the land of shades. Only for a son would I have dared to pass forbidden bounds, and guide thee to the gates of hell. Now listen, and, for thy sake and mine, remember what I say. Envelope thyself in this cloak, intended only for a spirit's clothing, and

under such disguise be careful to conceal thy mortal body. I shall advise Eurydice how to play her part. Thou, too, must feign thyself a returning spirit, and follow by her side till thou hast almost gained the limits of the infernal world. Then, but not till then, tune thy lyre, and, recalling her passing memory with thy song, win her to thyself again. Farewell!"

Orpheus strove again to stay the retreating form, and as he struggled in his sleep he awoke to find it was a dream. Not far beneath he now beheld one vast array of wide extended plains, mountains, lakes and rivers. Distinctly he saw their various forms, and yet they seemed to have no real substantial being. As he drew near he thought he would pass through the airy fabric in his slow descent. Just when he expected it to vanish from his sight, he felt his progress stayed, and now he stood within the world of shades. He seemed to stand on nothing, for no pressure touched his feet. He approached the margin of a river, and, seizing the branch of a tree, he saw it bend and break within his grasp, yet his hand closed upon itself, for he felt neither weight nor substance. He threw it into the river and saw it borne along by the fast flowing current, but not the slightest sound was heard. As he watched it sailing down the stream, he saw, for the first time, the shadowy resemblance of a man sitting in what appeared to be a boat, and casting a line for fish. With angry scowl he looked on the wondering Orpheus, for he had disturbed his sport. Fearing his appearance would excite surprise, and not knowing what dangers might attend him, he hastened from the spot and ran to hide himself in an adjoining wood. In vain he sought concealment, for many shades met him as he hurried on; yet they did not appear to be surprised, and scarcely noticed him with a passing glance. Wondering, he turned his eyes upon himself, and lo! he also seemed a ghostly being—a fit inhabitant of the place. Then he remembered his dream, the instructions of his mother, and how she cast a spirit's garment o'er his living body. Fearless now of being discovered, he drew more closely the airy folds around him, and paused to consider where he should direct his steps. As he gazed around, he recognized the place as one he had often seen before. There were the hills, the valley, and the river; the little village, and the turrets of the distant city. All corresponded to the cherished scenes of his youthful years. Everything in the upper earth seemed

to have its shadowy resemblance in the world of shades. The inhabitants of the ghostly world flitted hither and thither, each on his different way. Some, bent on sport, were angling in the river, or led out the hounds to hunt on the surrounding hills. Some tended cattle in the fields, while others, engaged in some important business, hastily passed along. Near the village, children were engaged in play, but still silence reigned amidst their games.

Orpheus passed on to seek the spot where, in the upper world, he had been accustomed to wander with his lyre, and tell a tale of love to Eurydice's listening ear. He walked along the familiar paths, till in the distance he saw the very spot where he had often sat and pressed her to his bosom. Quickly he approached the cherished place, but suddenly he stopped, for there sat Eurydice herself weeping, and her long hair hanging dishevelled over her ghostly shoulders. Fain would he have rushed forward to embrace her, but his mother's warning words withheld his eager steps. In anxious expectation he watched her at a distance. She arose and, walking slowly by the river side, approached the neighbouring city. He followed her within the gate, through various streets, but at length she was lost to sight among the passing crowd. In vain he wandered through the moving throng of noiseless shades. Earnestly he examined the scarcely defined features of every ghostly citizen. Some he remembered to have seen before in the upper world, where, amidst the joys and sorrows of another life, they thought not of the land of shades. Others, as if they recognised in him an old acquaintance, gave him a friendly greeting as they passed, and did not appear surprised to see him in such a place.

Weary with his luckless search, he frequently was about to ask some one to tell him where to find her; but the unbroken silence reminded him of the warning which his mother, in some mysterious way, had given him in his sleep. He returned towards the city gate by which he entered, in hope that there he might again behold her pass to vent her silent grief in solitude without the walls.

The sentinel passed and repassed with silent ghostly steps. Many came and went, but he could not see Eurydice. At length two females hurriedly approached the gate, and as they drew near to where he stood, he recognized his mother and Eurydice. As they passed, Eurydice looked on him with a lov-

ing smile, and his mother, leading her by the hand, signalled him to follow. On and on he pursued their hurrying steps along the river's side, till at length the dim outline of a misty ocean spread before his view. A phantom ship lay moored at a short distance from the shore. Soon a boat approached the beach. Eurydice stepped on board, and his mother, turning towards him with a warning look, motioned him to follow. He found the vessel crowded with shades whose allotted time was run, and who, about to forget that they had ever lived before, were destined to inhabit other bodies and spend a new existence in the upper world.

The sails were spread, and soon the vessel sped upon her course. Orpheus saw the masts, which looked as if the slightest breeze would blow them into air, bend and lurch before some mighty unfelt gale. Rapidly the airy vessel swept through the strange ocean of thin transparent mist. At length a deeper gloom began to settle round them like a cloud. Still on they sailed, till at last black darkness reigned around, and hid all from Orpheus' anxious gaze. Hither and thither he ran to clasp Eurydice in his arms; but no sound, no touch told him where she was. As he pursued his eager search, he was conscious of a power unseen bearing him upwards through the thick darkness. Suddenly he started, for now he felt his feet press firmly on the solid ground. He raised his head, and with joy beheld a ray of sunlight struggling through the gloom. Quickly he tuned his lyre and sung. Between him and the light he saw his companions in the voyage passing before him in a long narrow train, which seemed to disappear as it approached the opening, through which he now distinctly saw the blue unclouded sky. But he heeded not the ghostly throng, for his mind was filled with thoughts of Eurydice alone. Now he saw her walking by his side, and as he sung and played upon his lyre, he thought he felt the pressure of her hand, and heard her footstep as she passed along. Excited with hope and love, he made the echoing rocks resound with rich music; when, almost having reached the outer air, the strings of his lyre broke. In dismay he stopped and listened. He only heard the rustling of the leaves without. He saw Eurydice assume her ghostly form again, and, as if compelled by some unfriendly power, pass towards the opening where she disappeared. Orpheus rushed after her, shouting aloud as he ran, "Eurydice, Eurydice!"

Soon he passed without the cavern's mouth into the wide-spreading valley.

The birds filled the air with their song, the cattle lowed in the rich meadows, and the ploughman whistled at his work; but he nowhere found Eurydice. She was lost to him for ever.

* * * * *

Such was my dream, for dream it was; and yet how sad is the tale, and how true the moral which these misty thoughts of mine shadow forth. Alas! and yet not so; for the day-dream is often a pleasant reality, though its fair visions may at last be rudely disenchanted, leaving but the disappointed hopes behind. Yes, indeed, the cup of love soothes us into a land of dreams, where we seek to embrace a beautiful ideal; which, when we think we have gained, often vanishes from our gaze, leaving us standing on the hard, hard shore of reality, to yearn for the past, and contemplate the bleak dark future. Yet who that has tasted of love's fountain, even though they have to mourn a lost Eurydice, would envy him who has not; for

> "'Tis better to have loved and lost,
> Than never to have loved at all."

GEO. SMITH, M.A.

IN THE WOODS.

SLOWLY a steed paced through a forest glade,
With easy motion and loose-hanging rein,
Ranging at leisure in the sylvan shade,
As loth to leave it for the open plain
Where waves of grass roll like the surging main
Moved by the winds; while foamy flakes of snow
Fall thickly scattered round
Upon the daisied ground,
And the soft velvet turf beneath its feet bends low.

The rider—one of those who love to read
The works of God in all their native grace,
As pictured in the mount, the stream, the mead,
And best of all in our own favoured race—
Gazes around with calm and thoughtful face,

Admiring in deep contemplative mood
The faultless art displayed,
The wondrous light and shade,
Painted by Him above, the Source of every good.

A thousand oak, and elm, and birchen trees
Uprear their gnarled stems on every side;
Their leafy branches, quivering in the breeze,
Stretch'd out like friendly arms in circle wide,
Praying the wearied traveller to abide
Under their cover, and not rashly tempt
The blinding scorching blaze
Of the sun's noontide rays,
But be beneath their shade from such a heat exempt.

And countless birds—those choristers of heaven—
Hymn their sweet songs upon the trembling spray,
Or fly from bush to bush with speed of levin
Like lightning's flash across the horseman's way,
Cheering the woods with many a warbled lay
Of praise and joyaunce, thankfulness and love
To Him who made them all,
Who marks the sparrow's fall,
And watches o'er the birds in every scented grove.

Deep hidden in the hawthorn's rugged breast,
Secure from every harm and sad mischance,
The anxious mother, from her moss-lined nest,
With ebon eyes that ever restless dance,
Peers through the twigs with a suspicious glance
Upon the passing steed, whose steel curb rings
Loud, resonant, and clear,
And to her frighted ear
Dread threat of danger for her household brings.

While high upon a neighbouring bough, her mate
Pours out a full cascade of silvery notes,
His little bosom happy and elate
Beside the tiny home on which he doats;
Then on extended wings he lightly floats
Above his partner through the ambient air,
Or snaps the glittering fly
That idly buzzes by,
Then bears the morsel sweet for little beaks to share.

The noisy squirrels skip from tree to tree,
Choosing with taste intuitive their store
For future use; which they hide carefully,
Then sally forth again to gather more
To serve till Winter's stormy reign be o'er,
And Spring, the young year's smiling morn,
Refill the woods again,
And clothe the furrowed plain
With fragrant flowers and buds, with green and juicy corn.

Within the chalice of the wild harebell
The kirtled bee, with longing ever new,
Drinks the pure nectar from the crystal well
Formed by the liquid diamonds, summer dew;
Or roves from flower to flower of varied hue
Till, satiated with his labours, he,
Humming a farewell sigh,
Soars upward toward the sky
And lines his rapid flight straight for some hollow tree.

Bright sunbeams struggle through the fretted boughs
Like golden arrows in a shield of green,
And by their piercing radiance seem to rouse
The myriad insects in their glittering sheen,
To flash like light-spots o'er the woodland scene;
Their wings of gauze reflecting every hue
Which the arched rainbow holds,—
All glee till night enfolds
Trees, birds, and insects, everything, from view.

The simple flowers are open to the day;
The crowfoot lifts its gold and crimson head
In groups of beauty o'er the rider's way;
And from the cool and shaded primrose bed
Fragrance unequalled all around is shed.
The bluebell proudly nods its azure cup
To where the wild hedge-rose
In pride of beauty blows,
And purple foxgloves from the brooklet's marge look up.

Close by, the stream—a little purling brook—
Rolls lazily along beneath the trees,
Slumbering awhile in some sequestered nook,
Or whirling round the pebbles at its ease,
Until from stones the mimic torrent frees

Itself; then, once more loosened, gaily glides
Beneath both sun and shade,
Past meadow and through glade,
Out to th' absorbing deep, where it at last abides.

"Glory to God!" the feathered warblers sing,
"Glory to God, from whom all beauties come;
Glory to God!" with such the woodlands ring.
Nor bush, nor stream, nor gnarled tree is dumb.
The very bees with thankful hearts do hum
Their psalm of praise. The rider now let fall
The reins, and bared his head:
"Glory to God!" he said,
"All that is good is Thine, and Thou art Lord of all."

JNO. F. MILL.

Tales of Edinburgh.

BY IAN MOHR.

II.—MUSCHET'S CAIRN.

FRIEND Tourist! you are gazing on a lovely scene. Not many cities in the habitable globe can display a panorama equal to the one you now look down upon from the frowning muzzle of old Mons Meg; but there are many black spots on the picture which you don't observe, and as you say you are somewhat of an antiquary, follow me down the High Street, just a little way past the Tron Kirk, and I will endeavour to give your imagination something to feed upon.

We will stop here. This is Blackfriars Wynd; not the sweetest, not the fairest spot in Auld Reekie, but, nevertheless, one fraught with many interesting associations. Imagine, if you can, the dark, foulsome, loathsome alley you now look upon, once an aristocratic thoroughfare; imagine those houses, now inhabited by the dregs of the population, and ringing from morning till night with drunken quarrels and frightful oaths, once considered amongst the richest and most aristocratic buildings in the land; imagine that house in particular to be once the favourite residence of the ruling ecclesiastics; imagine those crazy stairs once ringing under the armed heels of a lord's retainers; imagine those filthy floors once trodden by the noblest and the fairest in the land; imagine all this, and exclaim with Hamlet, "Oh, what a falling off was there!"

Originally formed as an entrance to the Blackfriars Monastery, the Wynd was formerly considered a wide and spacious passage; but its day, like the day of many another place, has passed away; it no longer leads to a monastery, but to—the Cowgate! Could these weather-beaten and smoke-begrimed old walls only speak, what scenes, comical and tragical, could they tell us of. As I have already said, the best days of the Wynd are over; among others, the Clerks of Penicuik have forsaken the dwelling of their ancestors, and the Lords Home are known in the place no more. Friend, as we wend our way to some spot more frequented by sight-seers, I will tell you a story connected with the Wynd which may interest you. The date, let me add, is 1720.

Although the season was summer, the night was a very tempestuous one. In short, it was a thunder-storm. Deserted and dismal looked the wet streets in the light of the frail oil-lanterns that swung backwards and forwards in the breeze, creaking and groaning on their rusty hinges.

One thing only seemed to possess life, and that was a muddle-headed old watchman, enveloped in a multitude of capes, like a stage-coachman on a winter night. What a contrast did the old guard, with his Lochaber axe and primitive lantern, present to the present "bobby," with his smart uniform, shining buttons, and area-visiting propensities. Look at the old guardian of the peace as he stands within the mouth of the Wynd with his back against the wall, and his lantern on the ground. He is but a sorry specimen—is he not? standing gazing at that light in a window opposite. Let us get out of the rain, and grope our way up the dark stair to the room where the light is.

The room is small and old-fashioned, and the scanty furniture is of the plainest materials. Round the bright fire which burns cheerily on the hearth sit two men and a woman, whose whole attention seems to be attracted by a huge iron pot which swings above the fire, and the contents of which have just reached the stage known as "come-a-boil."

"Gude save us!" exclaimed the woman, "sic a nicht."

"Peace, Ailie," replied one of the men, motioning with his hand for her to be silent; "what hae we to dae wi' the weather? I jaloose it maitters unco little to you or me, or John Blackadder, whether it's wat or dry ootside this nicht."

"I dinna ken aboot that, Nicol," replied Blackadder, a stout-built, rosy-faced man of forty or so, proprietor of an extensive tailoring establishment in the Cowgate, and a burgess of the town. "I dinna ken aboot that; the craps aboot East Louden and that airt hae been sair held back for want o' rain; but I'm thinkin' this shower will mak' up for the drouth."

"What's that ye say aboot craps, and Louden, and rain?" cried Nicol, a little man with a thin pale face, and long light hair floating over his shoulders.

"I was saying," began Blackadder; but the other cut him short with an impatient "Wheisht!"

"Look, John Blackadder," exclaimed Nicol, pointing to the pot on the fire; "look, d'ye see the lid rising off the pot noo the water's bilin'?"

"Ou ay," replied the other, "I see't weel eneuch; but that's naething new. A body may see that ony day in the week."

"And did the sicht never gar you think?" asked Nicol.

"Think! atweel I wat no," was the answer. "I dinna see onything by the ordinar in't to set me thinkin'."

"I daur say ye dinna," said his companion, contemptuously; "an' yer head wasna sae muckle ta'en up wi' that Tulliallan affair the noo, ye'd maybe think mair than ye dae."

"Maybe I micht," replied Blackadder; "but it strikes me that the Tulliallan affair, as ye ca't, is a mair sensible affair than sittin' glowerin' like a wild-cat at a pat o' bilin' water."

"John Blackadder, ye speak wi' the sense ye hae," retorted the other. "I tell you the day's coming—and it'll come lang afore you're Baronet o' Tulliallan or onywhere else—the day's comin', I say, when I shall set the haill toon—ay, the haill length and breadth o' the country—in a bleeze wi' bilin' water."

"My certie, Nicol," exclaimed the burgess tailor, "but that'll be something to crack aboot when ye manage that. Od! man, I'd walk a gude bittock mysel' to see the sicht. Ha, ha, I trow it's no every day we see a toon in a bleeze wi' het water."

"Awa' wi' yer havers, Nicol," cried his wife, who had hitherto acted the part of a listener; "awa' wi' yer havers! ye've been sittin' ower lang at thae weary books again. Yer brain 'ill be turned some day wi' readin', tak' my word for't."

"Peace, Ailie," replied her husband; "what dae ye ken aboot the mysteries o' science, woman?"

"No muckle, atweel," was the response; "an' if that be yer science, the less ye ken aboot it the better."

"But hoo are ye gaun to raise this bleeze, Nicol?" inquired Blackadder, interfering with a view to prevent a matrimonial squabble; "what are ye gaun to dae?"

"I'm gaun to mak' coaches rin withoot horses, and mills gang withoot sails or water," replied the man of science.

This was more than either the guest or the wife could stomach; and the former broke out into a scornful laugh, while the latter exclaimed, "Hear till the man, hear till him! Gudesake, Nicol, hae ye gane gyte a'thegither?"

"Ance mair, woman, peace," was the rejoinder. "I see, John, ye are an unbeliever; but I'll try and mak' ye understand. Gin I was to fill that pat wi' water, souther down the lid, and put it on to bile, what wad be the upshot, think ye?"

"The pat wad burst."

"Preceesely! An if I was to mak' a sma' hole in the lid, and put a wecht owre the hole, what then?"

"The wecht wad be blawn aff."

"Richt again," said Nicol; "and if bilin' water can burst pats and blaw up wechts, it can mak' coaches rin."

"But how wil't dae that, Nicol?" inquired the tailor, "hoo wil't dae that?"

"Ye sall see that by-and-by," was the cautious reply. "Tak' my word for't," continued the embryo discoverer, in a tone of conscious self-satisfaction, "the day's near at hand when Nicol Muschet will mak' a name for himsel' which sall lang be remembered in Edinburgh."

"Od, Nicol, man, but ye cowe a'!" exclaimed the astonished partner of his joys and sorrows; "there surely must be something wrang wi' yer head."

To this observation the scientific husband deigned no further reply than a look of supreme contempt.

With a desire to change the subject of conversation, Muschet turned to his guest, and inquired how he was progressing in his lawsuit, anent the claim to the baronetcy and estates of Tulliallan, in Perthshire.

"The trial's owre," answered Blackadder, "and we shall ken the verdict the morn's morning."

"And dae ye think, John, that ye hae established yer claim to the satisfaction o' the Lords o' Session?"

"Yes," said the other, "I'm rather thinkin' we hae gotten on the blind side o' their lordships this twist; an' whan ye're dead, Nicol," continued the speaker with a smile, "Ailie, here, will be Leddy Tulliallan."

These latter words, although spoken in mere jest, went straight as an arrow to Muschet's heart, and an angry scowl shot over his face.

He had long fancied that his wife and Blackadder entertained for each other a regard much warmer in its character than became their respective positions, and his jealous nature could not bear even the most jesting allusion to the subject.

Next morning all traces of the previous evening's storm had disappeared, and the sun was shining merrily as Nicol Muschet issued from his lodging in Blackfriars Wynd, and proceeded up

the High Street to the Parliament House, to hear the issue of his friend Blackadder's trial regarding the right of title to the Tulliallan baronetcy. He was rather late, and entered the crowded court just in time to hear the following words :—

"They (the Judges) find that the said John Blackadder is a false and perjured witness, and therefore appoint him to be imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh till the 21st day of this month, and upon that day to be taken to the Market Cross of Edinburgh, with a paper on his forehead, with these words written on it—'John Blackadder, for the crime of perjury;' and to have his ear nailed to a post, and there to continue from eleven to twelve o'clock in the forenoon, and thereafter to be set at liberty; and they also declare the said John Blackadder to be infamous in all time coming, and ordain his whole moveable goods and gear to be escheat and inbrought to his Majesty's use."

Not a person in all that crowded court-house heard the issue of Blackadder's infamous and impudent claim to the estates in dispute with greater inward satisfaction and pleasure than did the claimant's *quondam* friend, Nicol Muschet.

I say *quondam* friend, because Nicol had at one time been Blackadder's boon companion; but latterly, in consequence of the jealousy already alluded to, he had cherished an inward hatred to the unfortunate tailor.

Hastening homeward, Nicol lost not a moment in acquainting his wife with the sentence he had that morning heard pronounced against her supposed lover.

What an immense pleasure human nature seems to derive from the sufferings of a fellow mortal! Of course, I speak generally! There is never a rule without an exception.

Take an execution, for instance. Look at the immense concourse of people, of all grades and ages, who are sure to be collected together at such spectacles. Look at the intense anxiety displayed by every one to have a good place, a commanding window, for the use of which several shillings—nay, pounds even, are ungrudgingly given; and the loud murmurs of complaints against anything that in any way interferes with their view. That the sight which they have come to witness is not painful to their feelings is to be inferred from the patience with which they have waited for hours previous to the appearance of the criminal, and the unsuppressed jest or smile even at the moment when the unhappy being is launched into eternity.

The days of John Blackadder's imprisonment soon passed over, and a large number of people were assembled on the morning of his liberation to see the unfortunate tailor undergo the last and most barbarous portion of his sentence.

Scarcely a window of the High Street, from the Tron Church to the Tolbooth, from which it was possible to see the Cross, but had its two or more occupants, while it seemed as if the whole population of the city had poured through the closes and alleys leading to the High Street, and colonised round the Cross.

At a quarter to eleven o'clock the prisoner, preceded by the executioner, and guarded on each side by an old watchman, left the Tolbooth and proceeded to the Market Cross, amid the yells and jeers of the multitude. Here the sentence already given was again read aloud, and precisely as the first stroke of eleven sounded from St. Giles's Church, the executioner drew from his pocket a long sharp nail and drove it through Blackadder's ear deep into the wood of the Cross.

Not a sound escaped from the lips of the sufferer when this act of cruelty was perpetrated; but his face turned ghastly white, his teeth were tightly clenched together, and he glared round on the mob of spectators with hatred in his eyes and a devil in his heart.

"Ha! ha! Sir Baronet o' Tulliallan, is this the way ye come into yer estate?" cried a voice among the crowd.

Turning his eyes towards the quarter whence the sound proceeded, Blackadder recognized the thin white face of Nicol Muschet, with a smile on his lips, and his eyes fixed on him as if he were gazing on a serpent.

"Ho! Nicol Muschet, are ye here tae?" asked the prisoner. "I thocht ye wadna miss this fine sicht. Hoo's Ailie? Is she here?"

Muschet said not a word, but he *looked* his reply; and his silence encouraged Blackadder to make another sally.

"Od, man, Nicol, whan ye kent what ongauns were here, ye micht hae brocht a pat o' het water and ta'en a tenpenny nail oot an auld friend's lug. It's but a sorry kind o' ear-ring at the best."

This produced first a smile amongst those of the bystanders who heard it, then a titter, and at last a roar of laughter, Nicol's weakness being pretty widely known. Even Blackadder, though the blood was streaming from his ear, and he was suffering agonizing torture, could not refrain from joining in the laugh against his former friend.

In the midst of the general mirth the discomfited man of science disappeared, and at twelve o'clock the paper was taken from Blackadder's forehead, the nail extracted from his ear, and himself at liberty to go where he list. Little shame was left in him, but enough was left to prompt him to avoid the public gaze as much as possible, and he soon slunk away down one of the numerous wynds leading to the Cowgate.

Friend tourist, while I am finishing my story, we may as well be walking down towards the Queen's Park.

"Yes, friend, that's Holyrood Palace, which you shall go and see before you leave the town. That is St. Anthony's Chapel—or at least all that's left of it—on the hill there. By-the-by, I shall have a story to tell you concerning it some day. This is the park where the great Volunteer Review was held. Ah, that was a sight! But here we are; let us rest a while on this cairn of stones while I finish. Oh, yes, light your pipe, and I will join you; I am a great believer in the virtues of the weed."

The Queen's Drive there, my friend, did not exist at the date of which I am speaking, but it was represented by a narrow footpath little better than a sheep-walk, leading from Holyrood to what we call the Jock's Lodge Road. Well, on the evening of the day that John Blackadder was nailed up by the ear to the market cross of Edinburgh, two persons were walking along this little-frequented path.

To describe their appearance to you is useless; they were Nicol Muschet and his wife Ailie.

"Nicol," said the wife, as they jogged along, "whan we get to Restalrig, dinna be coming oot wi' ony o' yer clavers aboot the bilin' water."

"Silence, Ailie," responded Muschet; "ye speak o' a thing ye ken naethin' aboot."

"And dinna want to ken," retorted the woman, continuing to speak as women will do when asked or told to be silent. "Ye ken weel eneugh that John Blackadder, puir man, wasna the only ane that leuch at yer notions."

"Lauch at my notions! And what care I, woman, gin the haill warld was to lauch at me? Did not the warld lauch at Galileo, syne imprison him? Did not an ignorant, doited, idiotic warld lauch at Archimedes and his screw? I say, did not the warld lauch at——"

"What div I care for your Galilees and your Meadows?" said Ailie; "I trow they never wrocht me ony guid wi' their new-fangled inventions, as they ca' them."

"And did they ever dae ye ony harm?" asked her husband.

"Weel, I canna say they have."

"Then let's hae na mair o' yer havers," said Nicol, putting his bonnet over his brow, and giving himself a general shake, by way of putting an end to the chain of conversation which they had been carrying on.

A few yards of the ground were got over in silence, and everything bade fair to be peaceable for the rest of the journey; but,

as bad luck would have it, Ailie espied the form of a human being stealthily creeping along by the wall separating the park from the highway.

A hasty glance at the person showed her that it could be no other than the unfortunate sufferer of the morning, John Blackadder, and with a woman's true compassion and pity for the miserable, she immediately attracted her husband's attention to the skulking figure, which, to all appearance, had not as yet noticed their proximity.

"Nicol," she said, "d'ye see that body creepin' doon by the dyke there. Isn't it unco like John Blackadder, puir man?"

"And what gin it was the man, Ailie?" asked Muschet.

"It wad be a Christian act to gi'e the miserable body a lodgin' for the nicht. He's no gaun near the Coogate, I'se warrant; the Lords o' Session hae made that place owre het for him noo."

"He'll be in a hetter bit yet, the perjured scoundrel," exclaimed Nicol in a burst of passion.

"Oh, wheisht, wheisht, Nicol," remonstrated his wife; "the man never did you ony harm."

"Harm, harm, woman?" cried Nicol. "Does the crawlin' serpent that bites the bosom o' the man wha nestled it dae him nae harm? Does the man that enters his neighbour's house and strives to breed mischief in a family dae nae harm? Never tell me that John Blackadder has dune me nae harm; and you," he continued with rising passion, "you were airt and pairt in working the destruction. Did you think I was blind, woman, and no able to see a' yer ongauns? or did ye think me deaf that ye covered the rascal wi' sugared phrases in my very presence?"

"Gudesake, Nicol, what d'ye mean?" asked his wife.

"Mean! Weel ye ken what I mean, ye fause woman," shouted Muschet. "Hae ye no betrayed yoursel' this nicht by your deevilish anxiety aboot Blackadder? I say, hae ye no betrayed yoursel'?" and the irritable man of science seized a rough hold of his wife's shoulder.

"Oh, Nicol! Nicol!" cried his wife, "what are ye daein'? Are ye oot o' yer senses?"

"Yes!—ha! ha! ha!—oot o' my senses; yes, I'm oot o' my senses, and sae shall ye be sune!"

Ailie ventured to remonstrate with the savage who was so roughly handling her; but a tight compression of the throat rendered speech out of her power, and the expression of her glance was lost on Nicol.

Insane, maddened with jealousy, Muschet had no distinct knowledge of what he was doing, and it was with an exultant shout of

triumph that he drew a sharp pocket knife across the throat of his unfortunate partner. In an instant after John Blackadder had sprung upon the maniac and secured him.

At this point, friend tourist, I will discontinue my narrative. I have no desire to drag you up as a spectator at Muschet's execution; but you can imagine it. This brutal and uncalled-for murder so incensed the inhabitants of Edinburgh against the murderer that they raised a cairn of stones on the spot where Ailie was killed, as a memorial of their undying hatred for Muschet, and sympathy for his wife.

Friend, we are sitting on MUSCHET'S CAIRN; let us rise and go home.

THE DESTINY OF MAN.

II.

IN this paper we have to consider the second division of this subject,—Man grouped together in Nations. The advantages accruing to the individual from men collecting themselves together in communities are so apparent that we need not enumerate them, and the more especially as they are foreign to the subject from the point of view from which it is proposed to consider it. They seem, however, to be so universally recognised and received, that we believe no people have yet been found but they are grouped together, if not in nations, at least in tribes.

Let us, then, consider these communities or nations in their corporate capacity, treating the subject in the same way as we have done man as an individual. We find a nation small in its beginnings. Composed at first of a number of barbarous tribes, owning but a slight, if any, allegiance to a common head. By degrees these tribes become united and consolidated, and the foundation of the future nation becomes more apparent. By intercourse with civilised countries a knowledge of the arts and sciences is introduced, and the ameliorating influences of civilisation begin to make themselves felt. The nation then comes forward and takes its stand among the other nations of the globe; but as its star rises, the star of some one of its predecessors wanes. It then takes its part in the speeding onward of the torch of knowledge. It sends forth its sons to plant the germs of civilisation in some other land. During this time its own lamp is burning brightly; it is nearing the acme of its grandeur. The period of time required to reach this point will be longer or shorter, according to circumstances; but at last the

summit will be gained. For a while its fame is spread far and wide, but afterwards it begins to descend the opposite side of the hill to the valley of decay. The period occupied in the descent will be, like that occupied in the ascent, longer or shorter, according to circumstances; but in process of time the bottom will be surely reached. Such seems to be the fate of nations. Like the animal life of man, small in its infancy, by degrees growing into manhood, and then sinking into old age, and lastly dropping into oblivion, leaving, however, its impress on the sands of time.

In discussing this question, we can do so aright only in the light of history. We must not only look at the nations we see around us at present, but also cast our eyes back upon the fate of those that have gone before. It is not by confining our regards to the stately spreading oak, even though in its hundredth year, that we come to the conclusion that, although let alone by man, it will nevertheless droop and die; we must look at those whose branches are withered, and whose trunks are rotting on the ground. It is thus only that we can draw just conclusions as to the fair tree before us. Let us, then, consider some of the instances of the rise and fall of nations as contained in the history of the world. Let us approach the subject with that solemnity which it requires. Our every step will be among the upheaved foundations of kingdoms, and the disjointed corner-stones of empires; we will be treading over the buried dust of nations, and the remains of potentates and powers. Let us at least have reverence for the mighty dead, and try and learn the lesson which they so impressively convey.

Without recounting all the nations of antiquity, we will confine ourselves to the principal ones. First in the grand array comes the land of the Pharaohs, with all its imposing pomp and splendour, with its towering pyramids and its strange and mystical hieroglyphics —a land to which we owe much. Sesostris towers at the head of its armies, leading them forth to conquer. As it passes before our astonished gaze, the lamp of knowledge and civilization is burning brightly, a few sparks from which are to pass the sea and kindle the fire in other lands. Onward the grand procession moves; but now as it passes we observe a change, and remark that its glory is on the wane. The nation has performed its appointed duty, and is now to give place to others.

As we had gazed, we observed a small band dart forth with haste from the midst of the grand array, a band which had not mixed with the rest of the nation. Portents dire and prodigies attend their separation. We follow them with our eyes, and as we do our wonder increases. Behind and before they are guarded by more than mortal power. The clouds supply their food, and

the rock yields them drink. They journey on till they come to their appointed place, and soon after they lay the foundation of their kingdom. The power and glory of the nation grow apace, and its fame is wafted over the length and breadth of the known world. Words of wisdom and truth such as were spoken nowhere else upon earth vibrate through the valleys and along the mountain sides. If, then, any nation could withstand the effects of decay, one would think this kingdom of Judah would be the one. But, alas! traitors to their God and to themselves, they sink. Forth ranges the Babylonian monarch, and Judah's lion quails before his proud and haughty glance.

Another empire now comes within our range of vision. Babylon, the queen of nations, sits proudly on the banks of her beloved river, rearing her lofty head in defiance of both God and man. Her sons pour forth from her brazen gates and bring in the trophies of vanquished nations. Earth trembles at her nod, and she would fain have heaven do the same; but such impunity will receive a check that makes us tremble for her fate. It soon comes; she has reached her zenith, but her western sun is not allowed to burn out amid the expiring glories of his evening couch, for his brightness is suddenly quenched in blood.

A Median king now sits upon the throne of the Nebuchadnezzars, and the Persian monarchy takes the place of the Babylonian. The successors of Darius spread their conquests farther even than the Chaldean king had dreamed of. Their sun soon flamed high in his noonday splendour; but permanency is a thing unknown in this mundane scene.

As we look back the vista of time another power comes under our view. The Grecian king is mustering his armies to march forth on the road to conquest. Onward he carries his victorious arms, and the Persian power is shattered before his onslaught, and the Macedonian hero is acknowledged as the master of the world. Nor is it in the arts of war alone that that kingdom stands unrivalled. The civilization of the ancient world is here carried to its highest pitch. When we are asked for the most sublime efforts of human genius and intellect, we point to the monuments of Greece. Her sons have won a deathless fame. Fain would we stop a little longer and contemplate her wonderful greatness; but even while we gaze our vision is distracted by the ever-shifting scene.

Upon a few hills to the north-west of this land of poetry, we observe some rude tribes gathering together and fixing upon a site for a common town. The spot is chosen, and the first outlines of the future city drawn. Wonderful success attends their conflicts with the neighbouring tribes. Stern in their devotion to their new

city, they make everything subservient to its interests. Conquest follows conquest, and the name of the seven-hilled city is echoed over many a land. Greece wanes before the rising greatness of this new empire, and at last sinks submissive at its feet. Farther than ever Persian or Macedonian arms had been carried, the Roman eagles flew to conquest and to victory. From Albion's wave-lashed shores to the burning suns of Ind; from the Baltic's frozen wastes to the shifting sands of Sahara, the nations were obedient to her sway. Such greatness the world had never before beheld, and the ambition of man was to be called one of her citizens. Roman citizen was indeed a proud title. Surely, one is ready to exclaim, as he casts his eyes over the length and breadth of her wide domain, she sits as a queen, and shall never see death; such greatness must surely be exempt from the common lot of weak humanity; her duration will surely be lasting as the name she has assumed, "The Eternal City."

As we gaze, far off upon the opposite horizon a cloud is gathering which attracts our attention. We watch its movements, and see it outspreading far and wide. Its force is for some time stemmed by the living iron wall of the stern Roman legions; but at last its pent-up might sweeps away the barriers, and it rushes like an avalanche upon the doomed city which falls beneath its weight. Round and round upon all sides a torrent is poured upon the Roman world, and the edifice whose imposing structure we were but a short time before admiring, is hurled to the ground; the Roman empire has fallen. Alas! we now exclaim, for the stability of human greatness, and the continuance of human power!

Let us now review what we have written, and reckon the sum of it. We have seen one nation after another rise to opulence and power, to refinement and civilisation, and then each in its turn sink into decay. We might have adduced more examples; but all would have borne the same testimony, and that to the effect that from the beginning of the world until now, what may be called the ruling nations of the earth have succeeded each other in continual succession, and that there is no permanence in the greatness of any nation.

What conclusion can we draw from this? One of the principal conclusions, we conceive, is, that *there is a law operating in human affairs, even as in the individual human body, by which, when a nation has reached a certain pitch of greatness, it then begins to decay and to make room for some other nation to occupy its place.*

Is there no exception to this law? one is ready to inquire. We are forced to say we know of none, and from what we know of natural laws reason says, that *what has been is what we are to expect*

shall be, unless in those cases where we have plain intimation to the contrary.

Must, then, our own nation sink under the sweep of this seeming general law? Must this kingdom, whose power extends farther than Persian, Grecian, or Roman conqueror, even in his maddest ambition, ever dreamed of, be shattered to pieces and fall to decay? Is our island home to cease to be the sanctuary of freedom, and the protector of the oppressed, and come to require protection herself, should she even be thought worthy of oppression? How painful the thought! Are these monuments of genius and art which we see surrounding us on all sides to crumble into dust? Is the modern Athens to share the same fate as her great predecessor, and the antiquary from other climes to wander among her ruins, and seek to identify her more illustrious spots? Shall shivering peasants creep about among her stones, eating their scanty fare, and tending their little flocks? Did she perish in the crash of nature's final wreck, and did the trumpets of the heralding angels sound her fate—were her lamps still burning brightly when the sun was performing his last circuit in the skies, and were its flame quenched only when the throes of nature's mortal agony began, there would be consolation in the thought. But, oh! how agonising to think she must decline in the usual ordinary way! Other nations will rise and flourish while oblivion spreads her mantle over this. Oblivion, did we say? No, surely never. Lethe shall never roll his deep black waters over this land. Her greatness may decay, her glory may be dimmed; the salt waves may lash a barren shore, cold winds sweep over fruitless plains, and darkening mists settle down upon her mountain tops; but forgetfulness shall never close the wing, nor even hover over her. She will leave an impress on the face of time which shall never be obliterated; the memory of her deeds in science and art shall last while time endures.

But let us enquire whether changes have not taken place which may modify the workings of that law which we have seen operating in the nations of antiquity. Will not our higher degree of civilization exempt us from that law? Have not our railways and our steamships, our printing-presses and our telegraphic wires, effected a change, not only in the *degree*, but also in the *kind*, of our civilization? Fain would we be to think they have: but let us reflect.

Let us admit that the civilization of the present day is far in advance upon the whole in degree of that of the nations of antiquity: will that suffice to turn aside the operations of the law? Might not Greece have said the same with reference to many of her predecessors? If she could, mere advancement, then, in civilization is not sufficient to take the fate of a nation from under the

operation of that general law—at least, such does our experience teach—unless, perhaps, the nation had reached the utmost bounds of knowledge attainable by man in his present state. We are, however, inclined to think that no nation has yet attained that degree. It may, perhaps, be said here, May not the present civilized nations go on increasing in their civilization until they reach that point? To this we can only answer, as we have to do in the other points of this question, from our experience of the past; and, judging by that criterion, we must say there is no great likelihood of such a desirable event. Judging from the progress of knowledge during the historical period of the world's existence, it would require a series of revolutions such as we have never heard of, to bring about that end; nay, one is almost inclined to think it would require a special interposition of Providence such as has never before been exerted; and, of course, we can found no solid argument upon such a supposition. In discussing this question, it is safe to proceed only upon facts, and not to form theories in opposition to them.

It may, however, be said that we believe in many things which are contrary not only to our own experience, but also to the experience of most men. But if our beliefs in such things are examined, they will be found to rest upon evidence which we consider is entitled to more respect than our experience. Now, if such evidence is produced bearing upon the present question, we will most gladly accept of it; but until this is done, we are under the necessity of trusting to such evidence as we have, and that seems to point to the conclusion that the mere degree of civilization attained by the present nations will not exempt them from the law of decay under which the ancient nations fell.

With reference to the *kind* of civilization at present existing; we do not think that the powers called into operation by the application of steam, and by the invention of printing and the telegraph, have effected any change in the kind of civilization, but merely a great progress in the degree of the same kind which formerly existed. Our inventions but display a greater knowledge of the powers of the forces of nature, and the practical application of them, than was displayed by the ancients. They are applications of the forces of nature; but the application of some of these forces was well known in former times. Our knowledge is all gathered from the same field in which the sages of old laboured, only we have tilled it with greater success; or, rather, we have carried on their operations to more successful issues.

The inventions of the present day tend to spread knowledge wider over the face of the earth; but will that have the effect of

retaining it in all its splendour at one place? We hardly think so. Means of communication had not that effect in the ancient world. Communication was easy enough between Egypt and Greece, Greece and Rome, Rome and Gaul; yet the three of these decayed; and if we are right in our inferences, the last is but waiting its time. Undoubtedly the means of communication then were not so swift; but swiftness of communication, far from having the effect of retaining knowledge in one place, would rather seem to have the opposite tendency.

Another objection which may be stated to our conclusions, is the introduction of Christianity. It may be said that Christianity has had the effect, if not of changing the kind of civilization, at least of placing it upon a new basis, of giving it a foundation of rock in place of the sandy one upon which it stood before. Let us reflect. The Jews were worshippers of the true God, and Christianity was in Athens, Corinth, and Rome; nay, Constantinople was termed by some of the fathers of the Church, the New Zion; and yet how low is the lamp of knowledge burning in these places at the present day. These examples speak far more eloquently than any arguments; we therefore point to them in silence, and ask an explanation.

These things are mysterious; but nations in this respect seem only to follow the laws of nature operating in many other things around us. We have observed this law operating in the natural life of man, and it may also be observed in families. How are many of the noble families of our own land dying out, and being replaced by others; and if you reflect, you will find this has been the case in all ages, and we have every reason to believe it will continue to be so. Why, we cannot tell. We say it is a law of nature; but that is a phrase which merely hides our ignorance of the real cause.

From what we have said, it would appear, then, that as man and all other animated things are subject to the law of growth and decay, nations, as such, are no exception to that general rule; and that they have also what may be called their infancy, manhood, and decay; and that, as they are on the decline, the higher forms of knowledge and civilization take refuge with some other rising nation.

Nor, when viewed justly, is this a matter to be lamented. We might as reasonably grieve at the fact that man's body is not immortal, that it is subject to weariness, or that man does not possess some of the qualities of a higher order of beings—their swiftness of flight, for example, so that he could range at will over the magnificent panorama of nature, or speed along through the

airy realms of space to view the wonders of the glittering sky, and study the laws of other systems, and then return to tell the tale. These are powers which many a man would like to possess; and it would, perhaps, be difficult to tell the reason why we do not possess them, otherwise than that it has pleased our Creator so to form us; and that being the case, no reasonable man grieves at the want of them.

So should it be with reference to nations. Nations, like individuals, have a duty to perform in the plan of the divine government of the world; and when such duty is performed, they have played their part and can be dispensed with. The length of time required for the performance of the duty assigned, will be longer or shorter according to circumstances, as is the case with the individual; yet though it seem to tarry, the end will surely come.

Still we believe knowledge will go on increasing, and the discoveries and inventions of the succeeding generations will as far surpass those of the present, as the ones of the present surpass those of former generations. And to effect this, modern inventions have contributed greatly, as there is not the same danger now, as formerly, of the experience and knowledge of any nation being lost. The printing-presses have secured that benefit to mankind, and it is no small one. The progress of knowledge will not now have such obstacles to overcome as it once had, thanks to the efforts of modern nations whose names will ever be mentioned with respect wherever civilization travels. Yes, let Britain decay when she will, we think she has nobly performed her part in the history of the world.

VICTOR AMARANTHUS.

EVERMORE.

I beheld a golden portal in the visions of my slumber,
And through it streamed the radiance of a never-setting day;
While angels tall and beautiful, and countless beyond number,
Were giving gladsome greeting to all who came that way.
And the gate, for ever swinging, made no grating, no harsh ringing,
Melodious as the singing of one that we adore;
And I heard a chorus swelling grand beyond a mortal's telling,
And the burden of that chorus was hope's glad word Evermore!

And as I gazed and listened came a slave all worn and weary,
His fetter-links blood-crusted, his dark brow cold and damp,
His sunken eyes gleamed wildly, telling tales of horror dreary,
Of toilsome struggles in the night amid the fever swamp.
Ere the eye had time for winking, ere the mind had time for thinking,
A bright angel raised the sinking wretch, and off his fetters tore;
Then I heard the chorus swelling grand beyond a mortal's telling,
"Pass, brother, through the portal, thou'rt a freeman Evermore!"

And as I gazed and listened, came a mother wildly weeping,
"I have lost my hopes for ever; one by one they went away;
My children and their father the cold grave hath in keeping;
Life is one long lamentation. I know nor life nor day."
Then the angel softly speaking, "Stay, sister, stay thy shrieking;
Thou shalt find those thou art seeking beyond that golden door."
Then I heard the chorus swelling grand beyond a mortal's telling,
"Thy children and their father shall be with thee Evermore!"

And as I gazed and listened came a cold bare-footed maiden,
With cheeks of ashen whiteness, eyes filled with lurid light;
Her body bent with sickness, her lone heart heavy laden,
Her home had been the roofless streets, her day had been the night.
First wept the angel sadly, then smiled the angel gladly,
And caught the maiden madly rushing from the golden door;
Then I heard the chorus swelling grand beyond a mortal's telling,
"Enter, sister, thou art pure, thou art sinless Evermore!"

I saw the toiler enter to rest for aye from labour,
The weary-hearted exile there found his native land;
The beggar there could greet the king as equal and as neighbour,
The crown had left the kingly brow, the staff the beggar's hand.
And the gate for ever swinging made no grating, no harsh ringing,
Melodious as the singing of one that we adore;
And the chorus still was swelling grand beyond a mortal's telling,
While the vision faded from me, with the glad word, Evermore!

EMMA HARDINGE.

AN HISTORICAL GLANCE AT SPIRITUALISM.

IT is impossible in our limited space to do full justice to a subject of such vast importance as that now before us, so that we will limit our observations to bear upon those of a liberal mind—those who have shaken themselves free from the fetters of an hereditary faith—those who think nothing too sacred, or too holy, for their investigation, and who are prepared to

> "Seek truth where'er it may be found,
> On Christian or on heathen ground."

We doubt not, however, in the very outset, that many will consider the spiritual theory, and spiritual phenomena, only of very recent date; whereas, it is simply the resurrection of a truth established amongst the ancients, and well known in ages long gone by. The Koran, the Zend Avesta, and the Vedas, are filled with accounts of spiritual phenomena; and, what is of much more importance to us, the Bible teems with it from beginning to end; so that with hopeful hearts we look forward to a time when the love taught in the Bible, the Koran, the Zend Avesta, and every similar book, shall have gained the ascendency, when there shall be "one Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism."

In taking an historical glance at this subject, let us commence with the spiritual phenomena of the Old Testament. Probably amongst the earliest of these are the spirit voices. The Lord spake face to face with Adam and Eve, Gen. ii. 16, and again, Gen. iii. 9 to 22; again, He spake with Cain, Gen. iv. 6, and also spake and walked with Enoch; then, to pass over some twelve or sixteen hundred years, we find the Lord still in communication with man, telling Noah of his danger, and how to escape from it, whilst the people laugh at Noah's credulity in believing that a spirit had spoken; just as the Noahites are laughed at in the present day. Next comes Abraham the faithful—what a life of spiritual experience is his. In Gen. xviii. is related the memorable visit of the angels to Abraham, and afterwards their visit to Lot,—"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Again, angels of the Lord met Jacob on his return from Pandanaram, Gen. xxxii. 1; also at Peniel an angel met and wrestled with Jacob; refusing to give his name, he wrestled all the night, until he said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." "Ah!" says the sceptic, "why fear the morning light? Why refuse his name? Surely his deeds must have been evil." And if any of our modern manifestations take place in the dark, they say, "They, too, are of the devil. They love the darkness, for their

deeds are evil." Let us, again, notice that the Lord was continually speaking to Moses, who was evidently in constant communication with the spirit world; the reader will remember the great miracles he performed; having cast down his rod, it became a serpent; the Magi cast down their rods, and they, too, became serpents. "Oh!" says Middleton, and other sceptical Christians of the same school, "it was only a clever illusion, a trick of the Magi." But the Bible says differently, and we consider it of the first authority: their rods *did* also become serpents—probably through the agency of some evil spirits; when, to show the superiority of the spirit which supported Moses, his serpent swallowed up all the others. Then there were the plagues which followed one after another, showing the power of the angel or spirit of the Lord which attended the prophet. There were also the dividing of the Red Sea; and forty years after, the dividing of the Jordan, besides the intervening miracles of bread rained from heaven, water from a barren rock, etc. All supernatural events, caused by spiritual laws (which are superior to material) operating upon matter, and guided in their operations by spiritual intelligences.

Now, the reader cannot but be aware of the numerous instances of miraculous cures occurring in the Old Testament; we can only recommend the reading of a few passages, being compelled to omit a great proportion, as we have also been compelled to omit a vast proportion of the supernatural events recorded in the Old Testament. Read Lev. xiv. and xv., Num. v., 1 Kings xiii., 1 Kings xvii., 2 Kings ii. 4, iv. 5, xix. 20, Joshua x., etc. Hundreds of such cases could be cited from the Old Testament, hundreds from the New Testament, and hundreds are occurring in the present day; for Christ said this power would continue always, and that these signs should always follow those that believe: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 17 and 18.)

But again the modern sceptic is ready to say, "Poor simple Joseph believed in a divining cup." "Is not this the cup whereby thy Lord divineth?" "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" (Gen. xliv. 5, 15.)

Next there was the Urim and Thummim, gazed into by certain persons, who saw mysterious things in the breastplate of the high priest. Just a similiar case to that of poor superstitious Zadkiel, who has a crystal ball in which persons of a certain temperament see strange sights.

It were madness now-a-days to hear sounds such as Samuel heard

in the still midnight hour. Notice here how suspicious this case is, viewed in the light of modern scepticism. The child was alone, in the dark, of very nervous sensibilities, easily overcome by fear; yet it was not madness, not nervousness, nor the imaginative creation of fear that haunted Samuel.

It were madness now-a-days to hear such sounds as the whole host of Syrians heard when they fled in fear; this case too, however, is open to the often urged objection of having occurred in the dark.

Many cases are related in the Bible history where sounds strange and mysterious were heard by good as well as bad persons; but they *must* not be heard *now*, except by the insane.

Madness is also made to account for all spiritual visions, though the youth who stood with Elisha saw the mountain full of chariots, and horses of fire. We are accounted mad if we say, "We have seen writing on glass, which was never written by mortal hand;" or if we say, "Our hands were moved to write unconsciously to ourselves;" although spirit-writing appeared on Belshazzar's palace wall, and although Ezekiel (ii. 9) says, "And when I looked, behold a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein, and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without." There we have two distinct instances of spiritual manifestation, very similar to those coming under our own notice in the present day. Spirit hands and spirit writing were seen, without the seers being either mad, dreaming, or even entranced. "All this," said David, "the Lord made me understand in writing, by his hand upon me, even all the marks of this pattern." (1 Chron. xxviii. 19.)

And, again, who more fit, in the estimation of some, for a lunatic asylum, than the man who would believe that a spirit could lift a table, "thus," say they, "violating the established law of gravitation." Yet axes of iron were made to swim, and men were carried through the air, so often, indeed, that Obadiah was afraid lest the spirit should carry away Elijah, after he had announced his presence to the king (1 Kings xviii.); but the law of gravitation had not apparently so materialised men's minds then, as now. All the instances cited here are true, else the Bible is a fable. We accept the former position, and hold that these things did all appear.

Let us now pass over a few hundred years of darkness in Israel, —darkness similar to that which has of late enshrouded ourselves, when the Lord, in consequence of man's materialistic tendencies, sent, in his own words, a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of the hearing of the word, a famine of revelation. "Therefore night shall be unto you, that you shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then

shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded." (Micah iii. 6 and 7.) This dismal night of materialistic intellectualism we pass over, and look hopefully to the East, to see the first faint flush on the eastern sky, betokening the rising sun, and Saviour.

It was in the midst of this darkness, when all religion was ceremony, and faith in miracles a thing of the past,—when the seers and the diviners and the mediums were despised and maligned, as they are now, that the world was startled by the utterance of a voice from heaven, proclaiming, "Peace on earth, and good will towards men;" then the light of the world broke forth to chase away the gloom that had so long oppressed them, and to restore the broken ties of spiritual communion.

And now we come to the spiritualism of the New Testament. A people in the midst of darkness groping their way, are looking for a king from heaven trailing clouds of glory in his path; but are bitterly disappointed to find that their hopes have clung to the child of a carpenter, born in a stable. "This is the King of Glory." "Ecce Homo!"

The humble and "credulous" chiefly believe on Him; but the orthodox Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees—the philosophers of the day—reject alike Himself and His supernaturalism; and meeting together, say, "If we let this man alone, doing these mighty works, all the world will believe on him;" for the people were "filled with astonishment, and praised God;" and, referring to the darkness of the preceding age, said, "A great prophet hath arisen in Israel."

Glancing hastily at Christ's career, and at the histories which follow, we notice that Jesus Christ cast out devils. It is urged by the theoretical Christian, but practical infidel, of the present day, that these were only diseases mental and physical which Christ cured; all we say is, Christ spoke to them as devils; they answered Him as such, and we have yet to learn of any instance of a mere disease holding a conversation with the physician.

A celebrated traveller (Dr. Wolfe) says that cases of evil possession are still common in the East. And are they not common here as well? Let the demoniac yells which rend the walls of our lunatic asylums answer the question.

We would wish you to particularly notice here, that the first impulse of the proud and haughty Jew was to say that Christ had tricked them; but when compelled to admit that Christ *had cast out devils*, they said, "It is by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Thus it is when men gaze on the modern phenomena, and dare not call them imposture, like their materialistic representatives of the olden time, with a stoical sneer they say, "It is the devil."

But to proceed: there are also many instances of angels, spirits,

or apparitions, appearing to men, related in the New Testament. It is unnecessary we should go over all these, we merely hint at one or two.

When the disciples saw Christ walking on the water, they thought He was a spectre (*φαντασμα*), not even a spirit as translated, else the word in the original would have been *πνευμα*); they thought he was an apparition, or spectre.

When Peter was in prison, an angel came to him, snapped his chains, burst the prison doors, and set him free; but this is not all. The disciples being met together at prayer in the house of Mary, thither Peter took his way. He knocked at the door, and the servant, turning to those within, said, "It is Peter;" when they replied, "It can't be he; it is his angel." Showing that such appearances were believed in, and common to them.

Demonology, also, was recognized by the early Christians, for the apostle John warns us against sorcery and witchcraft, and said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God."

How are we to account for the meeting between Moses and Elias, and Christ and his disciples; the several cases of the raising of the dead; the carrying of persons through the air (for Philip was carried off by the spirit, and found in Azotus); the innumerable cases of cured diseases, etc., except on the hypothesis that spirit power was exercised, spirit communion felt, and spiritualism believed in?

Of course, while all this is going on, there are those of whom it had been announced that, "Hearing they should hear and not understand, seeing they see and not perceive;" these were much too learned, and far too orthodox to believe in the supernatural; they smiled at the credulity of believers in Christ; while Christ reprovingly said, "O ye of little faith!" We ought to remember that *faith* is one of the Christian graces, and should not be ridiculed and nicknamed "credulity."

We think that now we have proved both the Old and New Testaments to be filled with records of spiritual manifestations; and we beg to lay down the universally received axiom that "what has happened once, may happen again."

Before leaving ancient manifestations, we desire to call your attention to the fact, that other histories as well as the Bible are filled with records of the supernatural; for instance, it is related of Alexander of Macedon, that when marching against the Persian empire, the Pamphyllian Sea was divided miraculously to let his army pass over. This is related by both Josephus and Calisthenes, and, as we are told, by all the other historians of the time.

Further, the chief incidents in the life of Cyrus were prophesied by Pagan prophets, as well as by Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.

Then there were those remarkable women, the sybils, who prophesied many important events that had yet to happen, and in as plain terms as Isaiah himself did they prophesy the coming of Christ. Again, there are the wonderful miracles of Vespasian, Constantine, and Hadrian, which should be familiar to every reader; of those of Vespasian, Hume says, in his "Essay on Miracles," that they "are the best authenticated in all history;" whilst Josephus, Calisthenes, Tacitus, and other ancient writers, are full of supernaturalism.

The early fathers of the Church, also, not only believed in it, but themselves wrought miracles upon miracles. We need name none of these; they are so numerous that no one can be entirely ignorant of them.

Whilst down the dark ages of Romanism, in the midst of much that was fictitious—much, indeed, that was diabolical in the wonder-working way, there were genuine men to be found, with genuine faith, who wrought genuine miracles—who could say with Paul, "I can do *all* things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Then, after the throwing off of the Roman yoke, the leaders of the Reformation recognized spiritualism. Luther himself, in two cases at least, cast out devils; and while doing so, repeated the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of Christ, "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." We need hardly remind the reader that Luther conversed with demons at *other* times; that he said, "Avaunt thee, Satan," and cast his ink-bottle at one, and that he held a long controversy with a spirit on the sacrament; these circumstances must be well known to every reader. Melanchthon, too, was a believer; for among many other cases, which it would take too long to enumerate, he tells us that his father's sister appeared to her husband after her death, and earnestly conjured him to pray for her. Beza also affords us material testimony. He says, "It often occurs in profane history that brutes and idols have spoken; which, indeed, by no means is to be rejected as false;" and then he accounts for these occurrences by evil spirits taking possession. He also informs us that John Calvin regarded Satanic wonders as supernatural and real, and not mere sleights, and that he (Calvin) had the genuine spirit of prophecy.*

But to proceed. Next we have the astonishing miracles at the church of Paris in 1731, all authenticated by thousands of witnesses.

* Notes on the New Testament.

Again, there was the case of Mr. Greatrakes, a healing medium of extraordinary power, who by the mere laying on of hands, cured cancers, scrofula, blindness, lameness, and many other diseases accounted incurable for years; and these cures were attested by such names as Dr. Denton, Dr. Astel, Dr. Fairclough, Dr. Wilkins, and hosts of others of equal if not greater celebrity. And time would fail to tell of the hosts of mediums, who by the power of spirit have suffered persecutions, cast out devils, cured diseases, taken up serpents, drunk deadly things, and were not hurt—who, in fact, having the germ of true faith, love itself, in their hearts, were able to fulfil the prophecies of Christ regarding the mission of the faithful of the world. These things, which were not done in a corner, cannot be passed by; they are facts indubitable, innumerable, eternal, therefore must be faced, whatever theory they may lead to in the end.

We would only name John Wesley, George Whitfield, Emmanuel Swedenborg, and Edward Irving, and refer you to their several histories in confirmation of our statement that they, too, were spiritualists.

But as space, which is limited, forbids our dwelling longer here, let us now shortly revert to a great revival in the history of spiritualism, which broke out in the year 1847 in America.

In the village of Hydesville, state of New York, on December 11th, 1847, Mr. J. D. Fox, his wife, and two of his children, took up their abode. Immediately on entering their house there were strange mysterious noises heard, which, within a month or two, began to assume the form of distinct raps, and gradually increased until they became quite a disturbance; heavy footfalls were also heard through the house.

One night, when the knocks had been very loud, little Kate Fox, nine years old, thinking it was the devil, said, "Here, Old Splitfoot, do as I do;" she then snapped her fingers, and immediately a rap was heard. Mrs. Fox, struck with this, said, "Please count ten;" immediately ten raps were given. "How old is my daughter Margaret?" Twelve raps. "How old is Kate?" Nine raps. "How many children have I?" Seven raps. "Ah! wrong this time; try again." Seven raps. A sudden thought struck her, and she said, "How many are living?" Six raps. "How many are dead?" One rap.

About the end of March, 1848, when there were seventy or eighty persons present, the spirit informed them that it was that of a travelling tradesman, who had been murdered by J. C. Bell, a blacksmith, that he had been robbed of his property, and that his body had been buried in the cellar by Bell. The servant girl living

with the Bells at the time of the murder gave evidence that she had been suddenly sent away while the pedlar was there, and brought back again when he was gone. She found the cellar floor had been dug up, and Bell afterwards repaired it in the night time; the pedlar was never seen again, and *on the floor being dug up to the depth of more than five feet, the remains of a human body were found.*

Of course, the publication of these events created an immense sensation; and it was found upon enquiry, that the spirits had adopted the same mode of communication, now that they were understood, in other houses as well as the Foxs'.

This was the rise of modern spiritualism; and in 1855 its progress was at the rate of 300,000 per annum; and though many of its converts might be numbered amongst the humble and credulous, yet the truth, always invincible from its nature, knocked at the very doors of their colleges, and carried conviction to the centre of their schools. When we find a Judge of the Supreme Court, of a sceptical turn of mind, yielding to its influence, as did Judge Edmonds; when we find professors who are confirmed materialists meeting once a week for five years to investigate and expose its errors, becoming converted by its truth; when we find such men as the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, leader of the infidel party in America, succumbing to its evidences; such men as Professor Hare of Philadelphia, the great chemist and electrician (but determined infidel), setting to work to prove the whole a delusion and an electric dodge, but after three years' investigation, yielding before its influence, publishing his recantation and dying a Christian; when such men as Professor Bush, Professor Gray, Adin Bullon, and countless others equally eminent, have thrown themselves into our ranks; and when we find it related by Professor Hare that in his own day 25,000 infidels had been converted by its influence to Christianity;—we cannot for the life of us see why men continue to press on us the question, "If it be true, what is the use of it?" An interesting experiment tried by Dr. Hare, in his investigation, is worthy of rehearsal here. He himself having become a medium, and being on a visit to Cape May, 100 miles from Philadelphia, asked a spirit professing to be that of his sister, to go to Philadelphia and desire Mrs. Gourley, a medium there, to get Dr. Gourley, her husband, to call at a certain bank, and ask the note clerk a question as to the passing through of a bill, and bring him an answer; the spirit returned in half an hour with the answer. A fortnight after, when Dr. Hare returned to Philadelphia, he found that his message had been received by Mrs. Gourley, and had been delivered by her husband at the bank; he asked of the note clerk

what question had been asked, and what answer given, and they corresponded exactly with those delivered by the spirit messenger.

Judge Edmonds in one of his tracts gives us from thirty to forty well authenticated cases of mediums speaking in tongues entirely unknown to themselves; using Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, etc., when he knew them to be entirely ignorant of these languages.

For ample and abundant evidence of modern *physical* manifestations, you have only to read "Incidents of my Life," by D. D. Home. It were useless in me to make quotations from this book; you must read it for yourselves. Only let me give you one instance. "At the Tuileries, on one occasion, when only the Emperor, Empress, a distinguished lady, and himself were present, a hand appeared, took up a pen, and wrote in a strong and well-known character the word 'Napoleon.' Napoleon's spirit-hand was then presented to the several persons present to kiss."

As representing inspirational mediumship, we will name Mr. Andrew J. Davis, Rev. P. L. Harris, Mrs. Emma Hardinge. A. J. Davis, under the title of "Nature's Divine Revelations," has published 157 lectures, delivered in New York while in a clairvoyant state. A wonderful book to have been delivered through an uneducated youth. Whilst the Rev. P. L. Harris has delivered sermons which can only be characterised as perfect torrents of living language, fit to burn their way into the very coldest and hardest of hearts, his book, "Truth and Life in Jesus," will bear out what we have said; and whole epics have been given through him under the influence of Byron, Shelley, Keats, Pollok, and others. Take as an instance, the "Lyric of the Golden Age," containing 381 pages, which was delivered and written down in ninety-four hours, and might have been in less time had the scribe been able to write quicker; whilst the inspirational addresses through Mrs. Emma Hardinge have once and again electrified the people, both here and in America; but, like the foregoing, must be read to be comprehended.*

For manifestations that have occurred near our own doors, we would refer the reader to the "First Annual Report of the Glasgow Association of Spiritualists."† In it will be found a few striking instances of spiritual phenomena in Glasgow, all of which can be vouched for by gentlemen resident in the city.

And now in conclusion (for our space is already taken up) What is the meaning of all this? If it means anything, it mean

* Spiritualistic literature may be ordered from Mr. James M'Geachy, bookseller, Union Street, Glasgow; or Mr. James Burns, 1, Wellington Road, Camberwell, London.

† To be had on application to the secretary, A. Cross, 171, Hospital Street.

that those who have left us are "not dead, but gone before;" and that the love of their hearts, which is the relationship of heaven, is still as strong as ever; and that they are bound to us by ties stronger than blood,—ties of love; for blood is *not* thicker than water unless mixed with love, *true* love—love that cannot die, but ever liveth in their hearts; for *they* are not dead.

> There is no death: what seems so is transition.
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
> Whose portal we call death.

And within the portal there is indeed a truer life than this we live without, when the great body—death, but spirit-birth of man takes place. The gross nature is thrown off, and the freed spirit treads the interminable paths of infinitude; living under the influence of the eternal law of progression, he continues to advance while the ages of eternity roll on.

Again the orthodox draw their sword and contest the ground. They charge us with holding universal salvation. We thank God that while we admit His justice, we dare not ignore His love. But this point does not come within the province of the present subject.

These things, however, happening around us, encourage us to face death; for while the waters of Jordan lave our feet, and we are shrouded in darkness, how, otherwise, are we to know whether we attempt to cross a narrow stream or the overwhelming depths of annihilation's sea?

And not only so, but they clear the eye of faith to see through the mists of the future.

> I can almost see to the land of light;
> But there's a mist before my eyes.
> The path, I know, stretches out before,
> But I cannot *see* where it lies;
> For there is a valley that lies between,
> And a shadow as dark as night,
> That sends up its gloom from a loved one's tomb,
> And a blur is on my sight.
>
> But there's some one stands on the golden sands,
> And lifts up the nebulous bars,
> Throwing back the door to the shining shore,
> And there's light beyond the stars;
> And the flashes bright that fall on my sight
> Seem to scatter the night away;
> And I know—I know where I shall go
> At the close of some weary day.

On adopting spiritualism, the reader would find that it would break down all creeds and mould them to the will of God. It

subjects all to the test of God-given and God-enthroned reason, and teaches the true religion taught by Christ, the only religion that can conquer the heart and conquer the world—love.

> Our religion is love; 'tis the noblest and purest.
> Our temple the universe, 'tis the widest and surest.

ANDREW CROSS.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NOETIC SOCIETY,

BY JOHN L. JOHNSTON, PRESIDENT.

TIME, in its ceaseless course, has again rolled on, and the sandglass of our Noetic year has once more marked its close; and at the approach of this our parting night, pleasure is not altogether unmingled with regret. At such periods a train of peculiar dreamy musings is suggested to the philosophic mind, half saddening, half gladdening, like the poet's meaning to the words—

> There is a mood, a pleasing, solitary mood,
> Called melancholy.

Such periods suggest to us, in retrospective light, the world a scene of disquiet and disorder; life a succession of sunshine and shadow, storm and calm, beginning with the cradle and ending with the grave. To all individuals, the reviewing of their past life may be productive of pleasure or pain, blessing or bane, according as they reap the reward of virtue or the wages of vice; and at all times this reviewing is the most normal of mental exercises.

But a few days ago we stood by the closing grave of an old friend, one associated with the most vivid recollections of earliest childhood, and as the returning sod fell with a heavy thud upon our ears, an involuntary train of thought floated, like a panoramic dream, before our mental vision, conjuring up little scenes of twenty years ago, when the actors, now at rest, were ripe in vigour, sanguine in the possession of temporal affluence and the pleasing prospect of anticipations some day to be fulfilled. How changed now! Memory in vain seeks to recognise some

well-known features of the long-ago. All have passed into the land of spirits, and *he*, the last of that once social throng, closes the scene in the end of all that's mortal.

The vicissitudes of time have wrought a change on all animate objects, although externally all is mantled in a seeming sameness. The face of nature never seems to change. The stoutest nerve grows lax and feeble; raven locks assume a silvery grey; wrinkles deform the finest face; and the once graceful step goes tottering to the grave;—even the mind itself seems to partake in the laws of decay, as if this immortal spirit were to perish with its mortal tenement. But the years which work such changes on us roll over our world like shadows o'er a sleeping lake, leaving no trace behind. Each returning spring is welcomed with the same songs; every summer decks mountain and moorland with the same flowery verdure. The sun rises over the same hill, the moonbeams glitter on the same stream. The roaring cataract still rushes to the yawning gulf, and the mighty avalanche still thunders from the giddy height. The waters of the boundless deep surge to and fro ever the same, and the giant peaks are yet covered with eternal snow. Justly speaks science of unceasing change; but to us it is almost imperceptible. Nature's changes are most apparent in the noblest work of nature's God.

Let our thoughts revert for a minute to our schoolboy days, and to our then companions, careful of nought save furnishing the fleeting hour with wild hilarity. Run the mental vision down that line of laughing eyes, where the free intermingling of simple and confiding minds reflects the various tastes, tendencies, and temperaments which must prove the chart and pole-star of their future career. Follow them in their different paths to manhood, and mark their various moorings on the dubious sea of life. Some grace the pulpit, some the bar; some are the favourites of fortune, others are engulphed in hopeless ruin. One forms part of Britain's pride, and his plain scarlet coat marks his station. Another, decked out in all the superfluity of lace, feels himself a creature of a finer mould. Two met and measured lances in opposing ranks at Richmond—(where was boyhood's friendship then?) One fired the train that burst the Cashmere gate, and his comrade died of sunstroke. One was poisoned, some were drowned, and not a few have responded to nature's universal call. America, New Zealand, Australia,

and India, have each a representative of our former classmates and companions.

Still nearer to the present purpose: the fluctuations of the Noetic Society cannot be void of interest. We have not met for so many years round this table without forging some links in that chain of friendship, which binds us as with that Gordian knot no conqueror can sever. Even time fails to efface the memory of those who, one by one and year by year, drop from off our midst, to play their varied parts in this eventful world. Almost imperceptibly, in a few years, those seats are filled by strangers, and the roll remodelled, like our physical component parts, which, as science asserts, are septennially renewed. But picture the scene that fifty years may bring. Our fondest hopes shall have been realised or shattered; our prizes or our blanks drawn in the lottery of life. The banner of the Noetic Society may be still unfurled, and its seeds of usefulness still budding in a luxuriant foliage. But alas! how many of the hearts that throb so gaily now shall then have ceased to beat! How many of the cheeks that shine so brightly have ceased to glow! The hands we grasped shall have grown cold, and the eyes we sought have hid their lustre in the grave.

> The only amaranthine flower on earth is virtue,
> The only lasting treasure truth.

How long could fancy dwell in depicting such a theme as the prospects of our transitory state, the measured strides of time, and the development of preconceived principles and schemes? Schemes ever varying, yet unanimous in the like design. For throughout the varied phases of life, and the lack of harmony in the minds and actions of man, there is but one goal—one object looming afar off, or dangling before the eyes like the dagger of Macbeth. A comprehensive term to all man's aims is happiness. And were there ever such varied means to one end? A celebrated painter has thus depicted the "Pursuit of Pleasure." Symbolical of pleasure is a phantom nymph floating into air, while the infatuated world are pursuing with the energy of desperation. The Bacchanalian seeking pleasure from the flowing cup; the miser from his hoarded coins; the gambler from his vein of madness; and the young lord in a wild debauchery. The warrior from the cannon's mouth; the fop from his gaudy dress; the statesman from his

popularity; and the prince from his power. But the horde of vanities, as the work pourtrays, perish unsatiated in a sea of troubles, and the bubble bursts to show its instability.

Life is an enigma none can fathom. Whence, where, and whether, baffles all philosophy; we know of life but through material organs, a bundle of phenomena.

But enough of reverie. We must break the spell of dreams, and take life in its stern reality, reduce the ideal to the real, and let plain words guide us in a few remarks of a more practical nature.

Men who disentangle themselves from the common herd, guide their words and actions by a code of laws of their own construction, named principles; the formation and training of which ought to form one of the most important objects of early life; as by them, man, as a responsible being, may fix his fate for weal or woe, for time or eternity. Principles, or conscientious resolutions, are chiefly the result of experience and observation. They are often deduced from proverbial sayings, but this is an unsafe guide; though many illiterate persons are influenced by them for good or evil as the adage may declare. Thus the gambler's motto is, "Never venture, never win;" and backed by his belief in a short life and a merry one, his principles of degeneration are founded on acknowledged facts.

The slothful man scorns the industrious. "There's luck in leisure," he thinks, yet overlooks the codicil, "but not in laziness." We might run over scores of such fallacious maxims, and show the folly of accepting their teaching. Nevertheless, there are many aphorisms and proverbial sayings teeming with wisdom and suitable as rules for life. Under exciting embarrassment or indecision men are more susceptible to impressions from such a source. A word will turn the scale for right or wrong, heroism or cowardice. A well-chosen thought imprinted on a soldier's mind is more effective than a train of reasoning. All great generals have studied this, with what result history shows. But in the ordinary course of life what can be more encouraging to the young mind whose aspirations have been thwarted than the aphorism, "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and bear manfully whatever may come;" or, "A head properly constituted can accommodate itself to whatever pillow the vicissitudes of fortune may place under it;" or, "In the lexicon of youth that makes a man, there's not such word as

fail;" or Bishop Hacket's motto (the best I know of), "Fear God, and be cheerful"? Or, for extremes, take the extreme philosophy of Milton, "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." And thus you scorn all the ills that flesh is heir to, and rise superior to every circumstance. But to all who would study maxims, I would recommend that most ancient and reliable assortment found in Solomon's Book of Proverbs.

Everything is bought with a price, and the standard rate of a sound set of principles is judicious reflection, energetic perseverance, and thorough self-discipline. Knowledge is power, and the great lever of success. It is the philosopher's stone, the only alchemy that turns all it touches into gold. This most valuable possession is to be acquired from numerous sources, amongst the more prominent of which stands reading. Reading stocks the mind, forms the style, and stimulates our mental energies into operation. "Reading," says Bacon, "makes a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an exact man." To read advantageously, the primary object is to fix and concentrate the attention, to the exclusion of all ideas apart from the train of thought which the subject may suggest. Do not read too many books, but read what you do thoroughly. Endeavour by observation to derive some instruction or improvement of the mind from everything which occurs in human life, within and without you. Keep the mind free from passion and prejudice; avoid personal observations, and that busy curiosity which is ever prying into private and domestic affairs. Let the enlargement of knowledge be one constant aim and design in life.

As a general rule, conversation is the most common and agreeable means of acquiring knowledge, though in more philosophic minds meditation takes the foremost rank. Thinking is, indeed, the very germ of self-cultivation, the source from which its vital influence springs. No reading can make a man wise without thinking. Thinking will do much for an active mind even in the absence of books or living instructors, the reasoning faculty growing firmer, expands and discerns its own powers, and acts with increasing facility and precision. Thought is the fountain-head of all progress, of all we see, hear, and do. It makes the distinction between man and other animals, between man and man, and, to some extent, between man and Maker.

Thought is self, soul, the mystery of being; and the destiny of man consists in its correct impressions and thorough discipline. Since, then, thought is of such vital importance, let us ponder well and watch warily. Self-knowledge is a noble study, and self-government a great achievement. Is not he who conquers himself greater that he who conquers nations? Certain it is there are no royal roads to such attainments, no patent paths to learning, no excellence to be acquired without great labour, determined application, and thorough self-discipline.

No mere aspirations for eminence, however ardent, will suffice. Wishing and sighing for greatness will no more bring greatness than imagining and dreaming of it will. To get to the summit, where stands the Temple of Fame, it is not enough to stand wishing to be there; the loins must be girded up, and the task of climbing undertaken, with all the indomitable energy of Hannibal when he scaled the Alps. Laborious study and diligent observation are essential to the attainment of intellectual independence. It is true we cannot all be Miltons and Franklins; but by imitating their mental habits and unwearied industry, we may reach an eminence which we should not otherwise attain. Franklin was a fine model of a practical man, contra distinguished from a visionary theorist, as men of genius are prone to be. He was great in the greatest of all good qualities, sound strong common-sense. Learn to think, then, deeply, comprehensively, powerfully; and the simple nervous language which is appropriate to that kind of thinking. Read the brightest lights of literature; read them, study them, and observe with what an omnipotent sweep of thought they range over the whole field of every subject they take in hand. Brace yourself up to those great efforts, strike for this giant character of mind, this herculean power of thought, and leave prettiness and frivolity to triflers.

While seeking to improve the mind, there is another object which must not be lost sight of, the attainment of which is productive of happiness; its possession is greater than rubies; without it life itself is a burden. With all your getting, get health.

Physiology, the noblest of all sciences, is sadly neglected, and the one-half of mankind are hurled into premature graves through carelessness and ignorance. Every naturally healthy man has under his control the improvement of his vital force, and,

from their connection, that of his mental vigour. We think by an organ—the brain; and by the health of that organ our thoughts are brilliant or flat, wise or otherwise.

We all know the lively sympathies that exist between the brain and the stomach, and the influence of diet on our mentality. Amongst the greatest evils in the world is over-eating. With few exceptions, all eat too much, and this kills inconceivably more than plague, pestilence, or sword. When the digestive apparatus is habitually over-wrought, it gets enfeebled, and, like the main-drain of a field, when choked, all the lesser ones are thrown into irregularity. This is the leading cause of madness and the milder forms of insanity, such as hypochondria, eccentricity, etc. It is chiefly by improper diet that man's physical power appears to be degenerating.

> The first physicians by debauch were made;
> Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade;
> By chase our long-lived fathers earn'd their food,
> Toil strung the nerves, and purified the blood.
> But we, their sons, a pamper'd race of men,
> Are dwindled down to threescore years and ten.
> Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught;
> The wise for cure on exercise depend;
> God never made his work for man to mend.

We have all a certain power of controlling the condition of the frame, for the mind rules the body, and the more thoroughly its structure and functions are understood, the better is it ruled. It is the duty of every one to be acquainted with the laws of physiology, and the influences that operate on the body in the promotion of health, and the production or prevention of disease. The body is a wonderful framework, fitted up to serve as a temporary home for the spiritual nature, and the house should be well preserved for the sake of the tenant. Time will not permit us to enter more fully into the science of health, and a few maxims for general guidance must suffice.

Eat little and masticate well. Avoid physic and adopt abstinence: such was Napoleon's rule. Go to bed and rise early. Take daily exercise in the open air. Use the cold bath frequently, but never after a full meal, or when cold and fatigued. When bathing, avoid the practice of sitting half undressed. Strip as quickly as possible, and plunge into the water at once. Avoid alternate immersion in the water and exposure to the air. Use a good rough towel, eat a crust, and walk home

briskly, so that a thorough reaction may be produced. Avoid heavy suppers. Be regular and simple in your diet. Endeavour to perspire a little every day. Keep the feet warm and the head cool. Bring the body under the government of reason, and reason under that of sound principle. The only medicine we would recommend is a good hearty laugh. Solomon says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones;" and the old proverb says, "Laugh and grow fat," which will be found a very economical fattening. In short, if you wish health, be self-denying; if you wish wealth, be industrious and prudent; if you wish happiness, seek it from its truest source, namely, in promoting that of others. Seek it more from a pure conscience than from external circumstances and sensation hunting. Seek it in knowledge. And where do we find pleasure and edification more cordially harmonise than within the walls of the Noetic Society?

But time compels me to close. Had I followed in the train of my predecessors, my subject should have been, either the advantages of such societies as the Noetic, or a review of its past session. These I have purposely avoided, not through any distaste; but a change may be refreshing, and the knowledge of the former is personified by your presence, and by your presence you have become acquainted with the latter.

The past session may be ranked as among our most successful. The attendance has been full, the business abundant and replete with interest; enhanced by the introduction of two highly entertaining open meetings, and a very successful soirée. As, also, the introduction of a new feature in our advancement with the advancing times, viz., the printing of our NOETIC MAGAZINE, a scheme which we trust may be the means of originating and propagating a friendly feeling among kindred societies, of encouraging the literary efforts of their members, and of developing that stability alone to be attained from unity. We must wish and work for its prosperity; work as if its success were pending on our own individual efforts, and success is certain. The barometer of the Noetic future is fixed at fair; true, the needle has more than once inclined to cloudy. But every cloud has had its silver lining, and, like Mungo Park's coat, we have turned the lining outwards. Prosperity, then, seems looming in the future; and that hope which is said to cheer the mind, and heighten the aspirations, seems pointing us over the clouds

of despondency to the laurel of success, as if inspired by the lines from Campbell,—

> Angel of Hope, in thy sweet garden grow
> Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe.

There is said to be a tide in the affairs of every man, which, taken at the full, leads on to fortune. Let us grasp the present as the ebbing tide of our Society. Unfurl, like the Alpine youth, the mystic banner with the strange device. But, unlike him, allow no baseless fabric of a vision to beguile the fancy. But the realization of our fondest hopes, the furthering of our fostered aims, the utility of our objects, the ability of our members, and the stability of our constitution. In conclusion, fellow Noetics, for a time, good-bye. Before we meet again, we may have studied nature on our heather hills and Highland glens; or art and science in the capital of France, in true Parisian grandeur; but with the falling leaf let us rally round the old flag. Aroused to our duty, true to our trust, invigorated and cheered, let us spread a halo of brightness round the coming session, that will inscribe it as with an iron pen upon the annals of our union; that we may hand it down to posterity still better than we found it, still dealing with a bounteous hand its powerful influence for good, loaded with our most cordial wishes for its unlimited progress in all that is noble and excellent; and to its members success in all that secures a happy life and a blessed immortality.

CHRISTIE'S WILL.*

By JOHN B. GRAHAM, Author of "Oak Leaves," &c.

Oh, ever alack for our richtfu' king!
And ever alack for his freens sae true!
And aye fair fa' the gude Traquair
Wha ever has dune what man can do!

Wha ever has dune what man can do,
A' for his sovereign lord sae dear;
In spite o' Cromwell, snivellin' loon,
And a' his Whigs, baith far and near.

* An account of the adventure which forms the subject of this ballad will be found in the third volume of the "Border Minstrelsy," prefixed to a ballad by Sir Walter Scott, relative to another exploit of this very last Border freebooter of any note.—J. B. G.

Noo, Lord Traquair has written a letter,
And sealed it wi' his bearin's fair;
Syne doon he rade by the waves o' Tweed,
Syne up by the bonnie banks o' Quair.

"And is there never a Borderer bauld,
Wha for gude-will and this gowden ring,
Will tak' this letter to gude King Charles,
And word again frae him will bring?"

He hadna ridden a lang Scots mile,
Atween the gloamin' and the mirk,
When he was aware o' a stalwart loon
Cam' prickin' doon by the braes o' birk.

I wat he was a wicht yeoman,
And a sturdy staig he did bestride;
As soon as he saw the Lord Warden,
He drew the bricht blade frae his side.

"Oh rusty, rusty is the splent
That covers baith your briest and spauld!
But your blade gleams bricht in the pale starn-licht,
And I trow ye are a Borderer bauld.

"Oh, dinted sair is your bonnet o' steel
Wi' the strokes o' Southron brand and bill!
By the gait ye guide your bridle-hand,
I trow that ye are Christie's Will."

"Though mirk the nicht on the wan water,
And mirker yet 'neath the birks sae bare;
By the jewel that gleams in your bonnet blue,
I trow ye are my Lord Traquair."

"Noo, Christie's Will, I hae been your freen,
And sae I wat hae ye been mine;
And ye maun tak' this letter braid,
That's fasten'd with the silken twine;

"And ye maun ride this very nicht,
A' for gudewill and this gowden ring,
Wi' this braid letter to gude King Charles,
And word again frae him ye'll bring.

"The rebel loons the passes guard,
And wary, wary ye maun be;
Gin ye be ta'en by the Whiggish crew,
Ye'se get short shrift at the nearest tree."

"It's I will dae your errand, Warden,
Ay, three times owre, if need there be;
No for your gowd, but for richt gudewill,
And sune ye shall hae news o' me.

"Trust me, I ken ilk hill and glen
Frae Berwick shore to the Solway sands;
And I will dae your errand, Warden,
Spite o' the Whigs and a' their bands."

Noo Will has gane to the king richt sune,
And low he looted on his knee;
But never a knicht bore a baulder broo,
In a' the gallant companie.

"What news? what news? thou stalwart wicht;
Thy errand tell but, and thy name."
"My liege, my name is Willie Armstrang,
A Borderer o' little fame;
I bring this letter frae Lord Traquair,
And word again I maun tak' hame."

But when the king had the letter read,
I ween the tear-drap filled his e'e;
"A blyther day wad this hae been,
Were a' my subjects like to thee.

"Tak' ye this belt, and buckle o' gowd,
This packet tied wi' the silk sae sma';
And stint na spur, nor bridle slack,
Till ye hae passed fair Carlisle wa'."

But when he cam' to Carlisle wa',
And slackened rein on the Eden brig,
The northern bank was covered owre
Wi' the roundhead rogues o' the rebel Whig.

He lookit north, he lookit south,
Baith banks were clad wi' the grim dragoons;
"Noo, by my faith," quoth Christie's Will,
"Ye haena snared me yet, ye loons.

"Oor auld Mess John has aften said,
Nae water will stap an Armstrang's breath;
And sae, I trow, it aye has been,
They a' hae dee'd a dryer death."

John Paul Min. of St Cuthberts 1836
Gave a testimonial to
Wm. J. Gunn Headmaster of
Lauriston Academy — 1836

Grierson who completed his education
at High School — [illegible]
previously a Headmaster of Lauriston Academy
Both J & J Grierson were old schoolfellows
? which school
Is it certain — Lauriston academy.