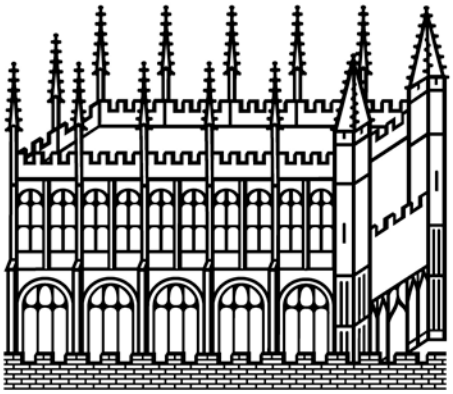

THE LIFE OF HUGH MILLER.

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BY

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LIFE OF HUGH MILLER.

[1802-1856.]

CHAPTER I.

"Now, lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea;
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,
Is't not a rich and wondrous melody?
I have lain hours and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone."—Tom Hood.

THE name of Hugh Miller gives to the little town of Cromarty, on the Moray Firth its greatest claim for renown. He was born in a cottage on its shores, 10th October 1802. The town of Cromarty stands on a point of land, beneath a hill, beautifully variegated with gardens, fields, and woods; and in front

is a bay which, ere the days of maritime discovery, was considered one of the finest in Europe. Writing of Cromarty, Mr Peter Bayne says, "It is exposed at all seasons to high gales from the North Sea, laden with mist and sleet, and even in summer keen blasts from the Atlantic make their way through the western hill-gorges, send the spray of the firth whistling through the air, and pierce to every nook and cranny of the shivering town. But there are fertile spots in its immediate neighbourhood, and in sheltered nooks the elm and poplar flourish; the air, except when darkened by sea-fog, is clear and bracing; a chain of hills, running along the firth to the north, leads the eye to the heights of Ben Wyvis, sleeping in the pearl-blue of distance; there are brooks rippling through wooded dells, and caves hollowed in the rocks; and at all times, and from almost every point of view, there is a gleaming of green and purple waters, wreathed with snowy foam."

There is a strange mixture of races in the in-

habitants of this sea-coast town; a strong vein of the Celtic element mixing with the less susceptible Norse. The people are full of superstition. They believe in everything supernatural, and on certain days will not go to sea, not considering it *lucky* to sail at such times.

Hugh Miller was just waking up to "the pleasures of boyish life," when his father, "a patient, hardy man, of thoughtful brow," steered out into the Moray Firth, but was never again seen in his native town. He was a seaman who, by dint of hard work and great care, had contrived to obtain a sloop of his own, in which he sailed the seas. Miller, in his "Schools and and Schoolmasters," has left us a powerful sketch of his father. A brave, honest fellow he doubtless was; and when every one else had given up all hopes of his return, his little boy, Hugh, a child about five years old, would go to the banks by himself, and sit and look out for "the sloop with the two stripes of white and the two square topsails," that was never to return—

"Alone he climbed the grassy steep,
And waited for his father's sail,
But vainly stayed till from the deep
The sunset trail
Had faded, and the evening star
Gleamed like a silvern shield beheld afar.

"The seaman never would come back
For greeting in his own dear town,
The tempest shrieked along his track,
And he went down
The depth which hath no upward stair,
And ocean flowers were tangled in his hair.

"The boy was fatherless, and felt
His mother's tears fall on his face;
But grief smote faintlier, and he dwelt
Amid the grace
Of fairy sisterhood, who bore
The antique symbol of romantic lore.

"The school-house, with its seaward door,
And roof of thatch, his haunt became;
But what to him the master's lore,
Or scholar's fame?
Too careless of his tasks to reach
Beyond the glories of his native speech!

"With wild companions he would roam
From ledge to ledge, through idle days;
Or light the wave-hewn cavern's dome
With ruddy blaze

Of fires high heaped with broken spars,
Washed from torn keels on rock and foaming bars.

"And thus he grew high-hearted, free,
The gleam of genius in his eyes,
Skilled in the ancient poesy
Of changeful skies,
And his own Firth and Sutors, yet
Disdaining rule, as untamed horse the bit.

"And who could see the boy's heart swell
With scorn of bonds, and bard-like love
Of lovely things, and not foretell
That he would prove
To Cromarty a larger shame,
Or sphere it in the zodiac of fame?"

And so, the father dead, the young widow must work hard and fare scantily to provide for her three children, the son of five, and two sisters younger. All she had to depend upon was an income of twelve pounds yearly, so she must eke out the rest with her needle. Somewhat to make up for the want of a father's authority, the children had two maternal uncles, "Uncle Sandy," and Uncle James, hard-working, sensible men; and, as Hugh showed early strong self-will, he needed the governing hand of these

shrewd, thoughtful men. The one was a carpenter, the other a saddler; and as Uncle Sandy, the carpenter, had been a soldier, and fought in the French wars, he told the boy many a strange tale of adventure, which he drank in with greedy ears. His mother seems to have been, though a weak, on the whole, a well-meaning woman; nevertheless, her treatment of the susceptible son was without doubt most injudicious, in the long winter evenings beguiling the time by the weirdest of ghost stories, developing in his nature an element which he never got above. His uncles were wise enough to try and counteract this influence; and he owns that he owes more to them than to any of the teachers whose schools he afterwards attended. No sooner could he read than he began to compose; and when only six or seven years old, he would go to the seaside, and, "sauntering for whole hours, pour out long blank effusions about sea-fights, storms, ghosts, and desert islands."

"Meanwhile," writes his biographer, "he has been learning to read in a book whose lessons he

could not outgrow, and whose illuminated lettering of gem, and flower, and shell, has a charm for eye and heart which had been absent from the Latin rudiments. Upon the sands at ebb-tide, when the slant sunlight strikes ruddy from the west, the boy may be seen trotting by the side of Uncle Sandy, hunting for lump fish in the weeded pools, hanging in ecstacy over the sea-moons, that glow through the lucid wave with more delicate splendour of rubied flush and scarlet gleam, of golden truss and silken fringe, of tender pearl and beaming silver, than graced the jewelled princesses of his fairy books, and drinking in with eager attention every word uttered by his guide. We can picture him, a kilted urchin, probably barefooted, with bright auburn hair, glowing blue eyes, cheek touched with the crimson of health, the face marked by quiet thoughtfulness and incipient power."

CHAPTER II.

"Events are nurtured best in solitude,
But character on life's tempestuous sea."—GOETHE.

WHEN Hugh's school-days were over, he chose the trade of a mason, keeping this fact in mind—that masons had long winter holidays. That was not for amusement, however, but to gain time to improve his mind by a careful study of nature, as well as to make acquaintance with the best works in English literature. He was accordingly apprenticed to one of his uncles—old David Wright, who had married his mother's sister. David was a character. "The man who, standing on the thwarts of his boat, which had just sunk, the sea-water being at the moment up to his throat, could so assuredly appreciate the points of the situation, and retain so clear a perception of the thing to be done, as to say, on seeing his snuff-

box floating off 'Od, Andro man, just rax (reach) out your hand, and tak' in my snuff-box,' must have had an enviable firmness of nerve, and greatness of self-possession."

Dressed in a suit of moleskin and a pair of heavy shoes, Hugh was ready for his work. His master was quarrier as well as builder, and he had to go with him into one of the Cromarty quarries to help in hewing stones; but he put a brave spirit to the work, and without murmuring did his day's tasks well, though his body was feverish and his hands "burnt and beat at night, as if an unhappy heart had been stationed in every finger, and cold chills used to run, sudden electric shocks, through his feverish frame!" Yet he enjoyed, in the midst of this, the out-door life; he loved the birds and bees, and watched them carefully and lovingly, and the strange marks on the rocks excited his curiosity and interest. There his love of scenery was gratified; he delighted to look on the bay with the two Sutors towering over the opening, and in the distance "the undulating line of blue mountains,

swelling as they retire into a bolder outline and a loftier altitude, until they terminate, some twenty miles away, in the snow-streaked, cloud-capped Ben Wyvis."

At this time he was sorely tempted to become a dram drinker. He thus describes the temptation and triumph over it:—"When laying down the foundation-stone of one of the larger houses built by Uncle David, his partner and the workmen had a royal 'founding-pint,' and two whole glasses of the whisky came to my share. A full-grown man would not have deemed a gill of *usquebaugh* an overdose, but it was considerably too much for me; and when the party broke up, and I got home to my books, I found, as I opened the pages of a favourite author, the letters dancing before my eyes, and that I could no longer master the sense. I have the volume at present before me,—a small edition of the Essays of Bacon, a good deal worn at the corners by the friction of the pocket, for of Bacon I never tired. The condition into which I had brought myself, was, I felt, one of degradation.

I had sunk by my own act, for the time, to a lower level of intelligence than that on which it was my privilege to be placed; and though the state could have been no very favourable one for forming a resolution, I in that hour determined that I should never again sacrifice my capacity of intellectual enjoyment to a drunken usage; and with God's help I was enabled to hold by the determination."

His bodily strength began to be developed at this time also, and so labour was now no punishment; his fellow-workmen, who at first despised his awkward attempts, began to respect him as one of the most expert hewers amongst them; "and that" he writes, "so flattered my vanity, by the respect which they paid me on this account, and such satisfaction did I derive from emulating them in what they confessed the better department of their profession, that the coming winter, to which, a few weeks before, I had looked forward as good men do to the pleasures of another state of existence, was no longer an object of desire."

In 1821, Miller accompanied his uncle to Conon-side, where the two men were employed in building a jointure-house for the widow of a Highland Laird. Old David Wright, unable to get work on his own account, had to descend from the position of master to that of journeyman; and Hugh, though he might, and the other apprentice did, seize the moment for regaining his freedom, still kept on in his service, his sense of justice was so strong.

In this place the young apprentice was first introduced to barrack or bothy-life, and was lodged with about four-and-twenty men, in a large building, open from end to end. Rough beds of undressed planks were on each side, and there was a row of fires for cooking at one end of the gables. Hugh had to cook both for himself and his uncle. By practice he became a tolerable cook; but the meal being seen to be diminishing rapidly, one day his uncle told him that he must only bake two cakes a week. Taking the chance, when the old man was out, he mixed about a peck of meal, rolled it out into

the circumference of a grind-stone, divided it, and then put the portions before the fire. While thus employed, his uncle entered, and seeing the huge array of cakes, exclaimed in astonishment, "What's this laddie, are ye baking for a wedding?" "Just baking one of the cakes, master," he replied, adding "I don't think we'll need the other before Saturday night." There was a roar of laughter through the barrack in which the old man joined. After that he never interfered with Hugh or his baking.

His relations to his fellows at this time were of the best description. He says: "I had determined to conform to every practice of the barrack, and as I was an apt pupil, I had in a short time become one of the freest, and not the least rude, of its inmates. I became an excellent baker, and one of the most skilful of cooks. I made wonderful advance in the art of practical joking, and my *bon mots* were laughed at and repeated. There were none of my companions who could foil me in wrestling, or could leap within a foot of me; and after having taken the

slight liberty of knocking down a young fellow who insulted me, they all began to esteem me as a lad of spirit and promise."

Before Hugh Miller left Cromarty, a mutual improvement society had been formed, of which he was a member; they wrote essays, edited magazines, and kept up a correspondence with each other. Perhaps some of the finest letters ever Hugh wrote were at this time, to his absent friends, and it was by that means he first trained himself in his masterly English style.

Though he mixed freely amongst his fellow-workmen, still he spent no more time than was necessary with such rough companions. There were delightful walks in the neighbourhood, and, in "the red light of gorgeous sunsets," he inspected Druidical stones, haunted old castles, and wandered amidst woods blue with hyacinths. He wrote poetry when themes to engage his attention attracted him, and at this time appeared his lines upon seeing a dial-stone encrusted with lichens, in a solitary

churchyard, of which two verses may be given as a specimen.

"Grey dial-stone, I fain would know
What motive placed thee here,
Where sadness heaves the frequent sigh,
And drops the frequent tear.

Like thy carved plain, grey dial-stone,
Grief's weary mourners be;
Dark sorrow metes out time to them—
Dark shade marks time on thee."

It was during his residence in Conon he got aquainted with Mad Bell—a remarkable maniac of whom he has given a short account in the "Schools and Schoolmasters." Seeing, one night, a light moving among the ruins of an old chapel, situated in the midst of a graveyard, he thought at first it was something supernatural; but it proved only a lantern carried by Bell, who, all the time was crooning a Gaelic song. On one occasion Miller attracted her attention and won her regard by interfering between her and her captors, and saving her from being chained to the damp floor of a hut. After giving him a keen and scrutinising glance, when she had been rescued,

she exclaimed, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Bell was the sister of a popular Highland minister, who had died two years before. Her intellect was powerful, though disordered; and often after that she loved to seek out her deliverer, and discuss abstruse questions of theology with him. One time she asked him abruptly, "What makes *you* work as a mason?" "I made," he said, "some commonplace reply; but it failed to satisfy her." "All your fellows," she said, "are real masons, but you are merely one in disguise, and I have come to consult you on the deep matters of the soul." She had the sagacity to discover that the young man was of a different strain from his surroundings.

The experience of Miller of bothy-life at this time, made him use his influence in after years against the system, which has been in many ways a curse to the Scottish peasantry. Even then there were serious thoughts occupying his brain, which were in time brought to maturity for the good of his fellows.

From Conon-side he went to Gairloch, with another mason lad and a carter, to procure materials for building purposes. They had their trouble with the carter, who bullied, and swore, and told lies innumerable. One day keeping them waiting for him two hours, while he sat drinking in a public-house at Dingwall, they drove off, leaving him to follow on foot, thirty miles, as he best could. Miller adds, after writing this account to a friend, "I am stronger, however, and more active than he, and must give him a beating when I have recovered my lameness, to make my commission good;" for Miller, though the youngest, was entrusted with the charge of the others.

"During his apprenticeship," says his biographer, "the character of Miller began to reveal the essential traits which we afterwards find in it." Gloomy many of its seasons were, the gloomiest of his life—at least, until he became a literary celebrity, and editor of a religious newspaper; but both its gloom and its gladness went to the making and maturing of his char-

acter. The aching joint, the feverish pulse, the breast oppressed with pain, the eye swimming in bewildered trance of agony and exhaustion; the meditative midnight hour, when his eye marked the stars, as they crowd the rent in the roof; the weary wanderings in woodland and by stream, when sunset clothed in ruddy light the old tower on the craig,—these constituted the true education of Hugh Miller. Henceforth we recognise him as the man he was, and are able to trace in his countenance those lines of fortitude and resolution which so strongly marked that of his father. He had won the first decisive victory of life, earnest of all other victories, the victory of reason and conscience over momentary inertion, of intelligent will over laggard indolence and lawless impulse. He had developed the wayward activity of boyhood into manly force. He had chastened rude strength into ordered energy. Blustering, self-assertion, juvenile conceit, had given place to deliberate self-respect; and that rebellious disposition which had perplexed his uncles, and been the despair

of his mother, was calmed and concentrated into modesty, into self-command, into the gentleness of conscious power. The flawed and brittle iron had become steel. "Noble, upright, self-relying toil," he exclaims, with grand enthusiasm, "who that knows thy solid worth and value would be ashamed of thy hard hands and soiled vestments, thy obscure tasks, humble cottage, hard couch, and homely fare?"

Not, however, to all men is toil an education, and hardship a blessing. Hugh Miller came to his apprenticeship fortified against evil and prepared for good, by that training in courage and truthfulness, in quiet thought, and manly feeling, which he had unconsciously earned in companionship with his uncles. Those "men of nature's finest modelling" were, though he knew it not, the examples by which he shaped himself. He acted on all occasions as he felt that Uncle James or Uncle Sandy would have acted in the circumstances. Nor can we err in affirming, that the incidents and results of Miller's apprenticeship prove that there was a

remarkable soundness in his original constitution, a fund of natural health, moral and intellectual, of grim humour, and of homely wisdom. How bravely he makes the most of adverse circumstances! How cheerfully he accommodates himself to his situation! How kindly are the relations he establishes between himself and his coarse and riotous associates! There is nothing which he cannot assimilate and apply to his mental nutriment, and he is animated by a half-conscious but steadfast ambition for self-culture. He has a deep-lying conviction of his ability to rise above the sphere in which he finds himself placed; but he has already got firm hold of a very ancient philosophy of life, a philosophy which has been of use to wise men in every age, and it has made him comparatively indifferent to what is called science. According to this philosophy, happiness is too subtile an essence to be purchased with gold, or to be dealt out wholesale to one class of men as distinguished from another. The rude fare of the peasant is as sweet to him as his dainties to the

peer; the honest pride which warms the heart of the capable artisan is as instinct with joy as the aristocrat's pride of rank and birth. Nature's face has a smile for all who will lovingly look into it, and rising in the world may mean falling in all that makes life precious, character illustrious, man happy.

CHAPTER III.

"Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul,
Sweetener of life, and solder of society,
I owe thee much, thou hast deserved of me
Far, far beyond what I can ever pay."—BLAIR.

WHEN Hugh Miller had completed his apprenticeship, his old uncle, David Wright, declares that, though unsecured to him by any written agreement, Hugh had been "beyond comparison more tractable and obedient than any indentured pupil he ever had had," and uncle James has to acknowledge that "after all there is in him the making of a man."

His first employment as a journeyman was not remunerative; but, as he tells, the story simply, and as if deserving no praise, he began to build a cottage to "Aunt Jenny," on a little bit of ground at the head of a strip of garden

left him by his father. He can only give the labour, for he has no money; but Aunt Jenny had saved a few pounds,—enough to buy wood for the roof, and to pay the carting of stones. And so her cottage is soon erected, and still stands in the town of Cromarty, witnessing to the powers of Miller as a competent workman.

"There is nothing that gives me a more mortifying picture of human life," says Burns, "than a man seeking work." After the cottage for his relative was finished, Hugh felt a little of that misery, but not for very long. "Work came direct in my way," he writes, "without solicitation;" and again his home was to be on Conon-side, to hew a Gothic gateway. Again he lives in a bothy—a hovel from which water, a foot deep, has been drained off to render it habitable; his food, as before, oatmeal without milk; his companions, for the most part, illiterate youth. Yet it never strikes him that there is anything to complain of in his lot. It only makes him have more sympathy with sorrow and suffering in others. Of the Highlander he

writes: "The Highlander himself, and more particularly his wife—for here, as in all semi-barbarous countries, the woman seems to be regarded rather as the drudge than the companion of the man. It is the part of the husband to turn up the land and sow it. The wife conveys the manure to it in a square creel with a slip bottom, tends the corn, reaps it, hoes the potatoes, digs them up, and carries the whole home on her back. When bearing the creel, she is also engaged in spinning with the distaff and spindle. I wish you but saw with what patience these poor females continue working thus doubly employed, for the greater part of a long summer's day. I frequently let the mallet rest on the stone before me, as some one of them passes by, bent nearly double with the load she is carrying, yet busily engaged in stretching out and turning the yarn with her right hand, and winding it up with her left."

We again quote from his biographer:—"Might not some Scottish artist try to realise for us that picture drawn by Miller of himself,

with so little thought of picturesque effect, where the pensive lad drops his mallet and looks at a Highland woman, bent nearly double with her burden, yet, as she wearily trudges past, working with both hands? One can see the kind, grave, deep-thoughted face, the steadfast blue eyes moistening with compassion, the lip touched, perhaps, with a faint, mournful smile of stoical, not cynical, acceptance of the sterness of fate."

When Miller was at home, before he set out again to Contin, he renewed his acquaintance with William Ross, of whom he often speaks in his "Schools and Schoolmasters." Five years before, Ross had come from the neighbouring parish of Nigg, as apprentice to a house-painter; but, though known to each other, there was too great a disparity between them for friendship. William was a lad of genius, drew well, and had a nice sense of the beautiful, besides possessing the true poetic faculty. The child of parents who were crushed with poverty, a half-imbecile father, and a mother, though strong-minded and

of a devout Scottish stock, feeble in health and dispirited, he had a temperament of fine fibre, enriched with tender elements. Then he was a born musician, and had constructed for himself a clarionet and a fife of young roots of elder. Affectionate and gentle, with a nature alive to his own imperfections, but quick to see beauties in those he loved, and withal of a child-like faith in a divine love and care, William's friendship was no little boon to his stronger companion, and many of Hugh Miller's letters to him at this time showed how he prized him. Hugh imparted to his friend all that was in his heart, showed him the poems he was writing, and benefitted greatly by his faithful criticism. Hear, for instance, what Ross writes to him of his drawings and poetry: "Your drawings have but little merit, nor can I regard them even as works of promise—neither by any means do you write good verse. And why do you think I tell you so? Only to direct your studies to the proper object. You draw ill, because nature never intended that you should do otherwise;

whereas you write ill, only because you write seldom. You are possessed of talents which, with due culture, will enable you to attain no common command of the pen; for you are an original thinker, your mind is richly imbued with poetry, and, though devoid of a musical ear, you have from nature something much better, — that perception of the harmonies of language which is essential to the formation of a good and elegant style."

When they were together, many a moonlight walk the friends had, listening to the voices of the night—the breeze, as it moaned through the tops of the pine trees, or the sound of the waves on the shore. There was a difference between the manner the two youths enjoyed those scenes. Miller, full of life, joy, and hope of a bright future casting its rainbow tints before him: Ross carrying about with him the consciousness that for him there was no future in this world, "no continuing city," and that soon, very soon, his eyes would be closed to all that was doing under the sun. But, though such thoughts made

him a *sober* man, they did not make him a *sad* one, for he knew that his times were in the hands of an all-wise God, and that it would "be weil."

CHAPTER IV.

"Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers."—BURNS.

WORK failing in the north, Hugh Miller, when just attaining his majority, sailed from his native town of Cromarty for Edinburgh. On the evening of the fourth day after losing sight of the hill of Cromarty, he landed at Leith. How he had been in part employed on board, we see from the following verses of an unfinished poem he wrote then:—

"Thou may'st boast, O Edina! thou home of delight,
For thy gallants are gay, and thy ladies are bright,
August is thy palace, thy castle sublime
Has braved the rude dints of fire, battle, and time.

"Thou may'st boast, O Edina! thou famed abode
Of the wise and the learned, the great and the good,

Thou may'st boast of thy worthies, may'st boast of thy towers,
Thy halls and thy temples, thy grots and thy bowers.

" Yet lovelier by far, and more dear to this heart
Than all your gay trophies of labour and art,
Is the home of my fathers, the much-loved land
Of the dauntless of heart and the mighty of hand.

" 'Tis there the grey bones of my fathers are laid,
'Twas there that my life's sunny friendships were made,
And, till death chills my bosom and closes my e'e,
Those friends and that land shall be dear unto me."

After a somewhat hasty survey of a small property he was unfortunate enough to possess at Leith, Hugh Miller proceeded at once to the Scottish capital.

While sauntering along the streets, admiring the ancient buildings, he was laid hold of by a slim lad in pale moleskins. It was his friend William Ross, and during the evening the two explored the city together.

Through the good offices of a friend, Hugh procured work at a manor-house then being erected beneath the shade of Niddry woods. The squad with which he worked appears to have been amongst the most ignorant class of

the community, though they were skilful workmen. The Highlander, they thought, if allowed to remain amongst them, would convey home half the money of the country, so they regarded him with undisguised hostility and dislike, and persecuted him in no ordinary degree. "The foreman, however," says Hugh, in his "Schools and Schoolmasters," so often quoted, "a worthy, pious man, a member of a Secession congregation, stood my friend, and encouraged me to persevere." He was joined in his lodgings by a mason's labourer, who, though not getting half the wages of the skilled workmen, was in much better circumstances than the greater number of them. He was, besides, an honest, God-fearing man. In his constant cheerfulness, this man, John Wilson, his fellow-lodger in Peggy Russel's cottage, presented a remarkable contrast to another labourer, who, though aristocratic in the cast of his face, was made miserable by the feeling that there lay between him and the Crawford peerage only the loss of a "missing marriage certificate." Twenty times in a day

this poor man's ears were saluted by the cry, "John, Earl of Crawford, bring us another hod o' lime."

At this time Hugh Miller made acquaintance at once with natural and social phenomena in that neighbourhood. In the woods of Niddry he discovered not a little that had no existence two degrees further north, and in the neighbourhood he met with a rude and ignorant race still bearing the brand of slavery.

When in 1842 Parliament issued a Commission to inquire into the results of female labour in the coal pits of Scotland, there was a collier still living who could state that he had wrought for years in a pit in the neighbourhood of Musselburgh, where the majority of the miners were also serfs—serfs at the time when poets, orators, and statesmen were declaiming about England's freedom, and that no slave could breathe its air, and yet Scottish lairds held the liberties of poor colliers in their iron gripe. As might have been expected, these poor creatures carried in their faces the index of their social and intellectual

condition, being for the most part what we see in the likeness of savage tribes.

It was while at Niddry also that Hugh Miller first became practically acquainted with combinations and strikes, with which, perhaps, he had too little sympathy, and his friend William Ross too much; but they agreed to differ on that question, while they helped each other in their mutual tastes and sympathies. It was with no little grief that Miller saw his friend fading like a flower on its stem; and, in reply to an effort to rouse him, Ross replied, "Ah, Miller, what matters it how I amuse myself? You have stamina in you, and will force your way. But I want strength. The world will never hear of me."

At the time Miller was working as a stonemason at Niddry, the Scottish capital could boast of a galaxy of spirits such as the world has seldom seen. The Wizard of the North was charming young and old with his wondrous powers. The lyre of the Minstrel being unbroken, Miller often lingered in Castle Street to get a

glimpse of him, but was always unsuccessful. Then Dugald Stewart yet lived, while Jeffrey and his brilliant compeers were in the height of their fame, proving themselves worthy antagonists of Christopher North and his Blackwood Club, who were enjoying their famous "Noctes Ambrosianæ." The historian of the Reformation still preached in his homely chapel, and him Miller heard and admired enthusiastically.

The stonecutters of the metropolis of Scotland are a short-lived race. The peculiar firmness of the stone amidst which they work induces disease of the lungs and chest. Miller, though a temperate man, found himself affected with that malady, and resolved at once to quit the scene of his labours and go home for rest. He accordingly engaged a passage to the north in an Inverness sloop, and took leave of his work and the metropolis, being accompanied to the boat by his friend William Ross, with whom, though he knew it not, he was parting for ever. The voyage was a tedious one, but Miller enjoyed

the yarns with which the sailors beguiled the tediousness of the journey, and, after some days on the sea, he reached Cromarty, and met with a hearty reception from his relatives. The stonecutter's malady had made deeper inroads upon his constitution than Miller first thought. Ultimately, however, he began to throw off the disease, and to experience the great pleasures of convalesence.

There was another friend of Hugh Miller's who exercised a great influence over him, and that was John Swanson, the companion of his boyhood. They had together shared an adventure in a cave called the Doocot, which had been the theme of his early muse. This very John Swanson and he found themselves at one time, as night came, by the unexpected upcoming of the water at a neap tide, prisoners in that place, until boats hailed them. Their terror was at its height, for midnight was at hand—the sea before them, impassable rocks on either side, and a dark cavern behind.

Miller, on his return to his native town,

renewed his acquaintance with Swanson, who had recently thrown up a growing business there, to become a preacher of the gospel. Swanson urged upon Miller the faith and love with which his own heart was all aglow.

Miller had had a sceptical vein in his constitution from childhood, and he felt at this time that he must either yield to it, or satisfy himself about the truths of Christianity. His friend's giving up every worldly advantage under the impulse of religious devotion, had a beneficial effect, but it was long before he could be convinced. He studies hard—writes poems, and confides the secret of his soul's unrest to both Swanson and Ross. At last he is satisfied that "Christianity is not the cunningly-devised fable" he once thought it to be, and from this time it is no sentiment, but a real living power, which he receives into his heart, and which guides ever after his life and reason.

CHAPTER V.

" All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of love,
And feed his sacred flame."—COLERIDGE.

WHEN Miller's health had become more fully established, he continued in Cromarty, varying the heavier labours of his trade by cutting inscriptions on tombstones. The style in which this work was executed was superior to any that had been before attempted in the North, while his biblical knowledge and literary tastes secured correct composition.

Work failing Miller in the vicinity, he visited Inverness, and inserted an advertisement in one of the newspapers soliciting employment. His skill as a stonecutter received the promptest

recognition in that place, but his merits as a poet, for he had printed his volume of poems, were more slowly acknowledged. One good thing, however, they did for him, they brought him into communication with Mr Robert Carruthers, of the *Courier*, one of the most accomplished of modern journalists and litterateurs, who afterwards became his friend, and a valuable counsellor to the young mason.

This volume of poems, with the exception of the lines to a sun-dial, two verses of which were before quoted, have passed completely out of sight. Though free from anything weak or foolish,—Miller could not have written such,—they nevertheless furnish no clue to his talents; something of massive strength is in them, but little of the sweetness and delicacy which are seen in his prose writings. Yes William Ross was right when he told him that poetry was not his strong point, and his own words describe them

"Scarce hauflins warmed wi' minstrel fire."

And yet, even in that book, now forgotten, there

must have been genius, else it would not have attracted the attention of two lads at Aberdeen College. They found it in an old book-shop of that town, and wrote to their father, a minister in the far north, craving permission, when they came home for their holidays, to go by Cromarty and see the writer of these poems. The father, pleased by the taste thus early shown by his sons,—for the one was only fourteen, and the other two years younger,—gave at once his consent, and they (not to put their father to any additional expense), partly by walking, and partly by other primitive modes of travel, for which for months before they had been saving their small stock of money, at last arrived in Cromarty, and found the writer busy in the churchyard engaged at his work. Miller could not fail to be pleased with this appreciation of his muse, and spent four hours talking to the lads, entertaining them as he only could, and perhaps never, even in the most brilliant assembly, did he shine as he shone that day.

Years after, one of these lads, the youngest,

went to hear him lecture in a town near which he was a minister. Miller was in the height of his fame, and after the meeting was over many were pressing forward to shake hands with the lecturer. The boy of years before stepped forward like the others, and, holding out his hand, said, "Do you remember me?" First a baffled look passed over his countenance, and then a flash of recognition, as he clasped him warmly by the hand and exclaimed, "Yes, I remember the churchyard at Cromarty; but where is the other one? I have been looking and watching to see that youth take no mean place in his country's fame." "Alas!" replied his brother, "he was not spared, death took him when he was but a lad." "Is it so?" said Miller sadly. "Then that accounts for my missing him, and looking so long for his name in vain."

To the columns of the *Inverness Courier* Miller contributed some descriptive sketches, unsurpassed by anything he ever afterwards wrote. The topic was a humble one—the herring fishing; but this homely subject in his hands

aroused no common interest, and at once revealed the man of genius, who does not need to travel far to seek themes for his pen, finding them all around, in men and things instinct with poetry and nature.

It may not be uninteresting to our readers, if we give an extract from one of these papers, entitled—

"A NIGHT ON GUILLIAM."

"In the latter end of August, 1819, I went out to the fishing, then prosecuted on Guilliam, in a Cromarty boat. The evening was remarkably pleasant. A low breeze from the west scarcely ruffled the surface of the firth, which was varied in every direction by unequal stripes and patches of a dead calmness. The Bay of Cromarty, burnished by the rays of the declining sun until it glowed like a sheet of molten fire, lay behind, winding in all its beauty beneath purple hills and jutting headlands, while before stretched the wide extent of the Moray Firth, speckled with fleets of boats which had lately left their

several ports, and were now all sailing in one direction. The point to which they were bound was the bank of Guilliam, which, seen from betwixt the Sutors, seemed to verge on the faint blue line of the horizon; and the fleets which had already arrived on it had, to the naked eye, the appearance of a little rough-edged cloud resting on the water. As we advanced, this cloud of boats grew larger and darker; and soon after sunset, when the bank was scarcely a mile distant, it assumed the appearance of a thick, leafless wood, covering a low brown island.

"The tide, before we left the shore, had risen high on the beech, and was now beginning to recede. Aware of this, we lowered sail several hundred yards to the south of the fishing ground, and after determining the point from whence the course of the current would drift us direct over the bank, we took down the mast, cleared the hinder part of the boat, and began to cast out the nets. Before the moon appeared in the line of the Gaelic Chapel (the landmark by which the southernmost extremity of Guilliam is

ascertained) the whole drift was thrown overboard, and made fast to the swing. Night came on. The sky assumed a dead and leaden hue. A low, dull mist roughened the outline of the distant hills, and in some places blotted them out from the landscape. The faint breeze, that had hitherto scarcely been felt, now roughened the water, which was of a dark blue colour, approaching to black. The sounds which predominated were in unison with the scene. The almost measured dash of the waves against the sides of the boat, and the faint rustle of the breeze, were incessant; while the low, dull moan of the surf breaking on the distant beach, and the short, sudden cry of an aquatic fowl of the diving species, occasionally mingled with the sweet, though rather monotonous, notes of a Gaelic song. "It's ane o' the Gairloch fishermen," said our skipper. "Puir folk, they're aye singing an' thinking o' the Hielands."

Our boat, as the nets were not powerful, drifted slowly over the bank. The buoys stretched out from the bows in an unbroken

line. There was no sign of fish; and the boatmen, after spreading the sail over the beams, laid themselves down on it. The scene was at the time so new to me, and, though of a somewhat melancholy cast, so pleasing, that I staid up. A singular appearance attracted my notice. "How," said I to one of the boatmen, who a moment before had made me an offer of his great-coat, "how do you account for that calm, silvery spot on the water, which moves at such a rate in the direction of our drift?" He started up. A moment after he called on the others to rise, and then replied, "That moving spot of calm water covers a shoal of herring. If it advances a hundred yards further in that direction we shall have some employment for you." This piece of information made me regard the little patch, which, from the light it caught, and the blackness of the surrounding water, seemed a bright opening in a dark sky, with considerable interest. It moved onwards with increased velocity. It came in contact with the line of the drift, and three of the buoys immediately sank. A few

minutes were suffered to elapse, and we then commenced hauling. The two strongest of the crew, as is usual, were stationed at the cock, the two others at the ground baulk. My assistance, which I readily tendered, was pronounced unnecessary, so I hung over the gunwale, watching the nets as they approached the side of the boat. The three first, from the phosphoric light of the water, appeared as if bursting into flames of a pale-green colour. The fourth was still brighter, and glittered through the waves while it was yet several fathoms away, reminding me of an intensely bright sheet of the aurora borealis. As it approached the side, the pale green of the phosphoric matter appeared as if mingled with flakes of snow. It contained a body of fish. "A white howe! a white howe!" exclaimed one of the men at the cock baulk, "lend us a haul." I immediately sprang aft, laid hold on the rope, and commenced hauling. In somewhat less than half-an-hour, we had all the nets on board, and rather more than twelve barrels of herrings."

Miller's poems, and those contributions to the

Courier, drew to him many friends throughout the country, and amongst these were Principal Baird and Miss Dunbar of Boath,—the latter, a lady about twenty years his senior, to whom he refers in terms of adoring affection in the "Schools and Schoolmasters." The strength of the almost motherly love with which he inspired Miss Dunbar is remarkable, and nothing is more unique and fresh in his life than that friendship, so devoted, unselfish, and self-respecting. She offers him pecuniary assistance in the most delicate way, which he, in a chivalrous manner, declines. She wearied and longed for his "Scenes and Legends" to be published, and, alas! when they were published the hand of death was on her.

From Inverness he was recalled to Cromarty by the death of his Uncle James; at the same time he heard of the decease of William Ross. Both of these men had been invaluable friends to him. From his uncle he had caught up the spirit of integrity which always distinguished him, and in Ross he had seen the delicacy and

beauty of gentleness wedded to the Christian hope and life. His death, too, was as touching and unselfish as his life had been. Living in Glasgow, and sharing the same rooms with a brother mechanic, who was dying of consumption, Ross worked for him, and exerted himself beyond his strength, shielding from want one who was only fading a little faster than himself. He saw him laid in the grave, and then lay down himself to die, sending his last message to Hugh in these words, "My hope of salvation is in the blood of Jesus. Farewell, my sincerest friend."

Miller did not return again to Inverness, but busied himself with his carving tools, writing the "Scenes and Legends" at the same time. His acquaintance also deepened into intimacy with his minister, Mr Stewart, for whom he had ever afterwards the greatest reverence and love. Besides, he had met his fate in the person of Miss MacKenzie Fraser, and his courtship was engrossing much of his thoughts.

In 1830, a widow lady of good family wrote

to her daughter in England:—"You may guess what are Cromarty's literary pretensions, when I tell you, that from my window at this moment, I see a stonemason engaged in building a wall. He has just published a volume of poems, and likewise letters on the herring fishing—both of which I now send you."

When Miss Fraser returned to Cromarty she very soon saw Hugh Miller, who by this time had become a sort of lion in the place, for his good qualities of heart as well as head. They were at once mutually impressed with each other. Of their first meeting he writes,—"She had come to speak to friends where he was at work, and her light and somewhat *petite* figure, and the waxen clearness of her complexion, which resembled rather that of a grown woman, made her look from three to four years younger. She stayed scarce a minute ere she tripped off again; nor did I observe that she favoured me with a single glance. But what else could be expected by an ungainly, dust-besprinkled mechanic in his shirt-sleeves, and

with a leathern apron before him? Nor *did* the mechanic expect aught else; and when informed long after, by one whose testimony was conclusive on the point, that he had been pointed out to the young lady by some such distinguished name as "the Cromarty Poet," and that she had come up to her friends somewhat in a flurry, simply that she might have a nearer look of him, he received the intelligence with surprise. All the first interviews, in all the novels ever I read, are of a more romantic and less homely cast than the special interview just related; but I know not a more curious one."

Soon they became friends and had many talks on all subjects save one. "On that mysterious affection," says Miller," which sometimes springs up between persons of the opposite sexes when thrown much together,—though occasionally discussed by the metaphysicians, and much sung by the poets,—we by no chance ever touched. Love formed the one solitary subject which, from some curious contingency, invariably escaped us." Then he goes on to say—

"Nature had not fashioned me one of the sort of people who fall in love at the first sight. I had even made up my mind to live a bachelor life, without being very much impressed by the magnitude of the sacrifice; but I dare say it did mean something that, in my solitary walks for the preceding fourteen or fifteen years, a female companion often walked in fancy by my side, with whom I exchanged many a thought, and gave expression to many a feeling, and to whom I pointed out many a beauty in the landscape, and communicated many a curious fact, and whose understanding was as vigorous as her taste was faultless and her feelings exquisite. One of the English essayists—the elder Moore—has drawn a very perfect personage of this airy character (not however, of the softer, but of the masculine sex) under the name of the "maid's husband," and describes him as one of the most formidable rivals that the lover of flesh and blood has to encounter. My day-dream lady—a person that may be termed with equal propriety, the 'bachelor's wife'—has not been so

distinctly recognised, but she occupies a large place in our literature, as the mistress of all the poets who ever wrote on love without actually experiencing it, from the days of Cowley down to those of Henry Kirke White; and her presence serves to intimate a heart capable of occupation, but still unoccupied. I find the bachelor's wife delicately drawn by Alexander Bethune as a 'fair being,'—the frequent subject of his day-dreams—

> "Whose soft voice
> Should be the sweetest music to his ear,
> Awakening all the chords of harmony;
> Whose eye should speak a language to his soul,
> More eloquent than aught which Greece or Rome
> Could boast of in its best and happiest days;
> Whose smile should be his rich reward for toil;
> Whose pure transparent cheek, when pressed to his,
> Should calm the fever of his troubled thoughts,
> And woo his spirit to those fields Elysian,—
> The paradise which strong affection guards."

"It may be always predicated of the bachelors' wives that they never very closely resemble in their lineaments any living woman. Were the case otherwise, the dream maiden would be

greatly in danger of being displaced by the real one whom she resembled; and it was a most ignificant event, which, notwithstanding my inexperience, I learned by and by to understand, that about this time my old companion the bachelor's wife utterly forsook me, and that a vision of my young friend took her place. I can honestly aver, that I entertained not a single hope that the feelings should be mutual. On whatever other head my vanity may have flattered me, it certainly never did so on the score of personal appearance. My personal strength was, I knew, considerably above the average of my fellows, and at this time my activity also; but I was perfectly conscious that, on the other hand, my good looks fell below rather than rose above the medial line. And so while I suspected, as well I might, that, as in the famous story, 'Beauty' had made a conquest of the 'Beast,' I had not the most distant expectation that the 'Beast' would in turn make a conquest of 'Beauty.' My young friend had, I knew, several admirers,—men who were younger and dressed

better, and who, as they had all chosen liberal professions, had fairer prospects than I; and as for the item of good looks, had she set her affections on even the least likely of them, I could have addressed him with perfect sincerity, in the words of the old ballad—

"Nae wonder, nae wonder, Gil Morrice,
My lady lo'es ye weel;
The fairest part o' my body,
Is blacker than thy heel."

Strange to say, however, much about the time that I made my discovery, my young friend succeeded in making a discovery also,—the maid's husband shared on her part the same fate as the bachelor's wife on mine; and her visits to the churchyard suddenly ceased."

The result of such a friendship Mrs Fraser did not relish. Though now poor, her family were well connected, and she thought it would lower her daughter to marry a workman, even though that workman was a Hugh Miller. As was natural, she, even before the lovers themselves had found out the state of matters, had inter-

dicted the two from meeting. The young lady was disconsolate, and felt "like a poor little parasite, which had succeeded in laying hold of some strong stately tree, and which a powerful blast had laid prostrate in the dust." Then follows, by the same hand, these words,—

"It was late on the evening of a very hot summer Sabbath during the time of interdict, that, feeling restless and weary, I crept out a little to breathe the air. I had no intention of walking—did not even put on my bonnet and shawl. I stole down the gray garden path and listened to the murmur of the sea, whose waves beat on the shore at a stone's throw beyond. But the night was still sultry, and I imagined that, by getting to the top of some eminence, I might find the cooling breeze for which I longed. So I found myself, I scarcely knew how, at the ancient Chapel of St Regulus. There the trees, which line the sides of the ravine by which it is surrounded, waved the tops of their branches, the blue sea looked forth between, and, as the twilight gave place to night, the stars began to

twinkle forth. I stood on the edge of the hill enjoying the slight breeze, and the soft brightness of earth and sky, when suddenly I perceived that Hugh stood beside me. He spoke of the sweetness of the evening and the beauty of the landscape, and so on; but his speech was cold and reserved, and he made no allusion to our peculiar position. Possibly his pride was touched by it. At that very time, however, as he afterwards told me, he cut a notch in the wood of a beam which crossed the roof of his cottage for every day which we had not met. He staid but a short time there, leaving me standing just where he had found me, but there was no notch on that day. I on my part knelt at a cold grave-stone, and registered over the dead a vow, rash and foolish perhaps, but it was kept." Thus much of their love story.

Seeing, however, that her daughter's health was likely to be injured by the strength of her affection, Mrs Fraser only consented to a marriage upon condition that Miller should rise to a higher grade. Such a thing had never entered

into the brain of the Cromarty mason, notwithstanding his devotion to science and literature, which he had wooed from the love of them, not for any dreams after wealth and distinction. But now, when he found that he must either sacrifice all prospects of union with the only woman he had ever loved, or try to better himself in the social scale, his love carried the day. His own judgment also was convinced, and he began in good earnest to seek a situation which would enable him to ascend.

CHAPTER VI.

"All other goods by fortune's hands are given,—
A wife is the peculiar gift of Heaven.
A wife! Ah, gentle deities, can he
That has a wife e'er feel adversity?
Would men but follow what the sex advise,
All things would prosper, all the world grow wise."

POPE.

MRS. FRASER was not to be blamed for this resolve, that Miller should try to raise himself before she would allow the marriage, and he nobly acceded to her wish, though he knew not how long they must wait until he was in a position to marry. He felt it would be selfish, and he would not ask the sacrifice, though it had been granted, that the young lady should descend to his grade; neither would he consent to sell himself to a life of mere money-making, though by so doing, he might have shortened the time of waiting. So they

will both be patient and hope that God in His own good time will make the way clear for their hands to be joined, as he has already joined their hearts. He had once thought of emigrating to Canada, but that idea was soon abandoned. About this time a branch of the Commercial Bank was opened in Cromarty; the office of accountant was offered him by the agent, and after some hesitation accepted. To gain the necessary experience of the workings of such an establishment, Miller visited Edinburgh, and was transferred to one of the branches of that bank in Linlithgow. He at first found his new vocation irksome. His old Uncle David despaired of ever making him a tradesman, his mental peculiarity being such, that until he mastered the central principle around which the details grouped themselves, he produced upon his superiors an impression of incompetency. No sooner, however, did he find that out, than he astonished every one with the manner in which he proved himself completely at home in the subject, and able to outstrip those who had been

longer at the work. So accomplished an accountant did he soon become, that he was left in charge of the bank during the absence of the manager, and not a single bad bill did he discount.

Meanwhile the lovers were waiting. Miller penned to his mistress a series of as pure and beautiful love letters, as ever were written. The privacy of that time, and the secrets of these hearts, having been laid open, we may quote from some of them. How deep is his love for her is seen when he writes: "I am thinking long for you, dearest, and for the last week have been counting the days, counting them in the style of the fool whom Jaques met in the forest. 'To-day is the 19th, the 20th comes to-morrow, and the 21st will be here the day after;' they will creep away, one by one, and Lydia will be with me ere they bring the month to an end. My heart is full of you, full of you every hour, and every minute, and all the day long. I walked last Saturday on the hill, and I saw our beech-tree, but lacked heart

to go down to it. I thought it looked dreary and deserted, and I felt that, were I to lose you, it would be, of all places in the world, the place I would least love to see again.

"I have no words to express to you, my own Lydia, how much I long for your return, or how cold a looking place Cromarty has become since you left it. Ordinary pleasures and lukewarm friendships do well enough for men who have not yet had experience of the intense and exquisite; but to those who have, they do not seem pleasures or friendships at all. I am amusing myself, however, as I best can." Again—"I have been walking about the streets of Inverness for an hour, looking at people's heads and faces, and at the booksellers' windows. I wish I knew the house that you were born in; I would pay my respects to it with a great deal more devotional sincerity than some pilgrims feel when kneeling before the virgin's house at Loretto. I have been walking in the suburbs; it is still too early to call on any of my acquaintance. You little know, my lassie, how covetous

I have become. I have hardly in the course of my walk seen a snug little home, with woodbine on the walls and a garden in front, without half ejaculating, 'Here, with my Lydia and with a very little of that wealth which thousands know not how to employ, I could be happy.' Well, though not born to riches, I have been born to what riches cannot purchase,—to the possession of an expansive heart that can be sincerely attached, and happy in its attachment, and to the love — the pure, disinterested, unselfish love—of a talented and lovely woman."

But he is not always in that passionate strain; sometimes he can sketch truthfully. For instance—

"On my return I saw Mr Carruthers [Editor of *Inverness Courier*]. He was very kind, and showed me his library, and kindly offered me the loan of any of his books. I saw with him a fine, shall I say affecting, print of Cowper. It bore, in the fixed lines of the face, the marks of a vigorous intellect and a playful wit; but, oh, the expression of withering blight and hopeless

despondency that rested on the features! There was sadness in the beautiful eye, and on the expansive forehead—a sadness which the voice of friendship, or of fame, or the bright ray of genius vainly strove to dissipate; and the meek firmness of the lip was a firmness which seemed to contend with agony. I could almost cry as I contemplate it."

The time fixed for his marriage drawing near, Miller writes to Finlay, a friend of his boyhood, whom he had not seen for seventeen years:

"I cannot tell you how much and often I have thought of you, and how sincerely the *man* has longed after and regretted the friend of the *boy;* you were lost to me ere I knew how much I valued and loved you. What, dear Finlay, have the seventeen intervening years been doing with your face and figure? The heart, I know is unchanged; but what are you like? Are you still a handsome, slender, high-featured boy, dressed in green? John Swanson is a little black *manny* with a wig, and I have been growing older, but you won't believe it, for the

last eighteen years. Great reason to be thankful, I am still as ugly as ever. Five feet eleven when I straighten myself, with red hair, which my friends call brown, my not-friends red; features irregular, but not at all illnatured in the expression; an immense head, and a forehead three-quarters of a yard across. Isn't the last a good thing in these days of phrenology? And isn't it a still better thing that a bonny sweet lassie, with a great deal of fine sense and a highly cultivated mind, doesn't think me too ugly to like me very much, and promises to marry me sometime in spring? Do give me a portrait of yourself next time you write, and, dearest Finlay, don't let other seventeen years pass ere then. Of all our late companions, only John Swanson survives. John is a capital, fine fellow. He was as wild a boy, you know, as either of ourselves, and perhaps a little more tempered; but growing *good* about twelve years ago, he put himself to college with an eye to the Church, and is now a missionary at Fort-William. Dearest Finlay, have you grown *good*

too? I was in danger of becoming a wild infidel,—argued with Uncle Sandy about cause and effect and the categories, read Hume and Voltaire, and Volney, and all the other witty fellows who have too much sense to go to heaven, and was getting nearly as much sense in that way as themselves. But John cured me, and you may now say of me, what Grey says of himself, 'No very great wit; he believes in a God.' The Bible is a much more cheerful book than I once used to think it, and has a world of sound philosophy in it besides."

In 1837, after a courtship of six years, Lydia Fraser became his wife. The spirit in which that important step was taken may be seen from the following verses he inscribed upon a Bible which he presented to his bride:

"Lydia, 'twere ill by sordid gift
Were love like mine expressed;
Take Heaven's best boon, this Sacred Book,
From him who loves thee best.
Love strong as that I bear to thee,
Were sure unaptly told
By dying flowers, or lifeless gems
O' soul-ensnaring gold.

I know 'twas He who formed this heart,
Who seeks this heart to guide;
For why?—He bids me love thee more
Than all on earth beside—
Yes, Lydia, bids me cleave to thee,
As long's this heart has cleaved;
Would, dearest, that His other laws
Were half so well received!

Full many a change, my only love,
On human love attends;
And at the cold sepulchral stone,
The uncertain vista ends.
How best to bear each various change,
Should weal or woe befall,
To love, live, die, this Sacred Book,
Lydia, it tells us all.

O, much beloved! our coming day
To us is all unknown;
But sure we stand a broader mark,
Than they who stand alone.
One knows it all; not His an eye
Like ours, obscured and dim:
And knowing us, He gives this book,
That we may know of Him.

Then O, my first, my only love,
The kindest, dearest, best!
On Him may all our hopes repose—
On Him our wishes rest.

His be the future's doubtful day,
Let joy or grief befall :
In life or death, in weal or woe,
Our God, our guide, our all."

Miller set up house on an income of sixty pounds a year, and, to eke it out, he began to write for periodicals, while Mrs Miller took a few pupils. A parlour, bedroom, kitchen, and attic, was their whole accomodation, and one servant did the menial work.

CHAPTER VII.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

BAILEY

THE first periodical that came in Miller's way was "Wilson's Tales of the Borders," to which he contributed some of the best tales that appeared in that serial, though they are perhaps, of all his compositions, the most unequal. He tells us he had no enthusiasm either for the memory of Wilson or the publication he had set a going; besides, the routine of a bank clerk, dreary and unintellectual, seems to have had a chilling effect on his literary powers. Then the remuneration was miserable —five pounds for a pretty long story. He next made an offer of his services to Mr Robert Chambers, and during the years he contri-

buted to his journal, received the most liberal remuneration. And now Miller is content. He has his wife beside him, to "share his sorrows and divide his joys," and he has abundance of work in his own "dearly beloved Cromarty;" and so, writing to Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, some time after his marriage, he says—"I had the pleasure last winter, when on a two-days' visit to Elgin, of seeing the Priory of Pluscardine, which you have so beautifully described in your tale of the 'Rival Lovers.' I saw much during my brief visit, and enjoyed much, for the occasion was a joyous one—my marriage. . . . It was the hermit-like priory, in its sweet half-Highland, half-Lowland glen, with its trees, and its ivy, and all its exquisite innumerable combinations of the simple and the elegant, that impressed me most strongly. I found, too, that my companion, whose taste had been much more highly cultivated than mine, was quite as much delighted. You, who are yourself so happy in your domestic relations, will not be displeased to learn, that, after having enjoyed for full five

years all that a lover enjoys in courtship, I now possess all that renders a husband happy in a wife. I have now been rather more than eight months married, and am as much in love as ever."

When an infant daughter was placed in his arms, his cup of joy seemed full. "She was," says Mrs Miller, "a delight and wonder to Hugh above all wonders. Her little smiles and caresses sent him away to his daily toil with a lighter heart. When he took small-pox, I, of course, slept on a couch in his room, and was with him day and night. But the great privation was, that he could not see her. We ventured, when he was mending, to open the room door, and let him look at her across the entrance-lobby and allow her to stretch out her little arms to him. Her own illness began soon after. It was a very tedious one, connected with teething, and lasting nine or ten months.

"All our mutual variations, and many of my employments, including a school for fisher-lads, which I had taught for some years at eight

every morning, had to be given up. In the spring of '39, I had a close nursing of several weeks; then there was a marked amendment. One lovely evening in April, I went out for the first time that spring, to breathe the air of the hill. When I returned, I found the child in the nurse's arms, at the attic window, from which she used to greet her papa when he came up street. She had been planting a little garden in the window-sill, of polyanthus and other spring flowers. When she saw me, she pushed them away with the plaintive 'awa' awa'' she used to utter, and laid her head on my breast. An internal fit came on! The next time she looked up, it was to push my head backwards with her little hand, while a startled, inquiring, almost terrible look, came into her lovely eyes. All the time she lay dying, which was three days and three nights, her father was prostrate in the dust before God, in an agony of tears. Whether he performed his daily bank duties, or any part of them, I do not remember. But such a personification of David the King,

at a like mournful time, it is impossible to imagine. All the strong man was bowed down. He wept, he mourned, he fasted, he prayed. He entreated God for her life. Yet, when she was taken away, a calm and implicit submission to the Divine will succeeded, although still his eyes were a fountain of tears. Never again in the course of his life was he thus affected. He was an affectionate father, and some of his children were at times near death, but he never again lost the calmness and dignity, the natural equipoise, as it were, of his manhood. This was the first and last poignant domestic sorrow Miller experienced. He cut the little headstone for his darling, and never again put chisel to stone." Doubtless this grief, coming, in the prime of manhood, to a heart which loved as few hearts can love, so deep a wound would never be thoroughly healed, and something of his high aims and noble ambitions would be buried beneath the daisies of his child's grave.

About this time Miller was feeling that he had worked out the vein of traditions and

legends, and that he was becoming more and more interested in science, which had been his hobby from childhood.

His essays and tales had drawn upon him the eyes of literary people, and one chapter in his "Scenes and Legends," he says, "has attracted more notice among the learned, than all the other chapters put together." This was the one on geology. The Old Red Sandstone was an almost unknown region, and therefore soon Miller began to correspond with Sir Roderick, then Mr Murchison, and M. Agassiz and other *savants*.

At the same time, he took an interest in all that was going on in his native town. In the summer of 1838, rejoicings took place on account of the recent accession of Queen Victoria to the throne. Some squibs, written in defence of his favourite minister Mr Stewart, who had refused to subordinate his sacramental services to commemorate that day, brought down on Miller a gentle reprimand from the bank authorities. This was the beginning of controversy, which

soon took a more important turn than any mere local squabble. The conflict was getting more eager and intense, between the old Moderate party in the Established Church and the Evangelical, headed by Chalmers, and into this conflict Miller threw himself heartily, and soon afterwards became known as the champion of Evangelical principles. He never had, however, any sympathy with extreme voluntaryism, holding firmly by the theory of the State Church. The leaders of the Evangelical section of the Established Church carried into her courts the sentiments they expressed from the platform, and these sentiments brought them into conflict with the Court of Session. It was then that the voice of Miller was known as a controversialist. After having heard the decision of the House of Lords in the Auchterarder Case, when that house declared that the Presbyters had acted illegally in refusing to induct Mr Robert Young to that charge, against the wish of the people, Mr Miller spent a sleepless night, and this resulted in "A Letter from one of the

Scotch people to the Right Hon. Lord Brougham." This letter was despatched from Cromarty, so soon as finished, to the manager of the Commercial Bank, Edinburgh,—Mr Robert Paul, a gentleman who had shown Mr Miller great kindness. Mr Paul showed the letter to his minister, Mr Candlish of St George's, Edinburgh, whose keen eye was not long in seeing that this was the man his party had been looking for to edit a paper just then contemplated. This first *brochure* of Miller's was a great hit. It was read by most of the members of the ministry of the day. Daniel O'Connell delighted in its racy English, and Mr Gladstone noticed it with approval in his work on "Church Principles." It was scathing in its irony, and convincing in its statements. He showed that a political right had been most unjustly, and directly in defiance of pledges, created by an Act of Parliament—which Act was not only doing serious injury to the Scottish Church, but damaging the whole nation; and he pointed out how much at variance were the positions

which Lord Brougham had taken on political questions, with those he had assumed on this great ecclesiastical one.

The Non-Intrusion leaders, as we have seen, had been considering the propriety of establishing a journal to advocate their principles, but the difficulty was to find an editor; and so, no sooner did Mr Candlish see the letter than he exclaimed, "Here is an editor for our *Witness*."

A letter was despatched to Cromarty, inviting the bank-clerk to meet the leaders of the Evangelical party in Edinburgh. In obedience to the summons, he came and accepted the editorship of their projected organ, returning to Cromarty to terminate his employment with the bank.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Can that man be dead
Whose spiritual influence is upon his kind?
He lives in glory; and such speaking dust
Has more of life than half its breathing moulds."

L. E. L.

IT was no matter of whim, but only at the call of duty, that Miller flung himself into the stormy sea of ecclesiastical controversy. He came to Edinburgh in the end of 1839, and on the 15th of January 1840, the first number of the *Witness* newspaper appeared. Never, perhaps, was more substantial aid given to a party, than did Miller by this paper. Week by week issued from his pen such remarkable heart-stirring appeals, that Scotland heard them in castle and cottage, and its men became welded together, in thought and sympathy, with the

cause. Writing on this subject, his biographer says: "Of the influence exerted upon the public mind of Scotland by Hugh Miller's articles in the *Witness* on the Church question, there are thousands still living who can speak. A year or two before the Disruption, I passed a winter in a Highland manse. I was too young to form a distinct idea of the merits of the dispute. But there was a sound in the air which I could not help hearing. It seems as if it were in my ears still. Never have I witnessed so steady, intense, and enthralling an excitement, and I have no difficulty, even at this distance, in discriminating the name which rang loudest through the agitated land. It was that of Hugh Miller — the people's friend, champion, hero! It was appropriate that a self-educated man should speak for the commonalty of Scotland. It suited the stubborn independence and self-helping vigour of the race. . . . He shared the excitement which he contributed so largely to produce. Not only was he animated by the dearest sense of duty, and profoundly convin

that the cause was that of conscience, liberty, and Scotland; but he was conscious that the fray was not without its spectators. 'The series of events which terminated in the Disruption,' —the words are his own,—'formed a great and intensely exciting drama, and the whole empire looked on.' If he shared the excitement of his countrymen, he also, it may scarcely be added, suffered from it. Never did Hugh Miller toil, as during these first three months of his editorship of the *Witness*. He wrote not merely the leading articles, but a large proportion of the remarks introductory to the reports of public meetings, paragraphs on the decease of eminent men, and so on. The paper was published twice a week, and Miller would often have more than one regular leader in each number.

"It has been said," says his biographer, whom we have often cause to quote, "that Miller as editor of the *Witness*, felt himself in his place. The stimulus of a strong excitement was useful in rousing his mind to full exertion, and in dispelling the meditative, pensive, almost languid

mood in which, in the stillness of Cromarty, he might have indulged. His style, after he came to Edinburgh, compared with that of the 'Scenes and Legends,' is improved in energy and fervour. To do his best, he required to be moved; and his most powerful compositions are, I think, his earliest newspaper articles and the letter to Lord Brougham. Dr Guthrie said, with reference to the article on the siege of Aire, that he would rather have written it than taken the fortress. Doubtless, also, Miller was at this time happy. 'He drank delight of battle with his peers.' Fervid emotion bathed the framework of his intellect in flame. The excitement brought its own reward. The additional power and keener sympathetic joy, which a great agitation produces, more than compensates for the daintier pleasures of the intellectual nature. But, of course, in this heroic joy there is a burning which consumes the earthen vessel. While Miller rejoiced in spirit as a strong man to run a race, his body and brain bore unmistakable evidence that the pace bore hard upon him.

Hour after hour, he would sit writing, until the letters danced before his eyes, and every nerve tingled under the strain. Heedless of exposure, and working deep into the long winter nights, he caught influenza. No matter; he would not pause; he would not lay aside the pen which he had taken up in defence of the cause of his Church and his country. The giddiness of mere exhaustion became the semi-delirium which accompanies inflammatory affections of the lungs and pleura. Had the intense excitement of the conflict been suspended, he would probably have fallen into a state of prostration like that which overtook his father in the sea-fight, who, while the guns continued to roar, did the work of two men, and when they ceased, fell upon the deck more feeble than a child. Miller grew haggard in the conflict, but he never flinched."

But not so engrossed was Miller with Disruption affairs as to make him heedless of other things. In the spring of 1843, the religious mind of Scotland was deeply agitated by the Sabbath question—as to the propriety of running

railway trains on that day. Much as Miller loved his Church and his country, he loved his Sabbaths even more, and feared national disaster on a large scale if, by this means, the Sabbath were desecrated. The result of his fears appeared in an article in the *Witness*, in March, headed "A Vision of the Railroad," in which a dark future was predicted if the Sabbath were trampled upon. Dr. Chalmers—thinking only on his financial difficulties—when he heard of it, said, "Writing a vision of the railroad when we want money!"

Upon this article Mr Bayne remarks: "We should hardly have known Miller for what he was without reading this remarkable performance. It will occasion astonishment to not a few. Puritanism so austere, confronting us in the middle of the nineteenth century, seems like a massive boulder, standing, grey and stern, in the midst of a modern meadow. . . . . Miller knew that in Scotland devout religion had for two centuries been inseparably connected with Sabbath observance, and he naturally looked

upon desecration of the day as leading to profanity and licentiousness."

At length, in 1843, the great shock of the Disruption came. More than one-third of the ministers, adhering to the Claim of Right, tabled their protest in the General Assembly, and left the hall to constitute themselves into a General Assembly of the Free Church, a name given to them by Miller in his *Witness* months before the Disruption. Dr Chalmers, by his wonderful arrangement, was not unprepared for this event. He had foreseen, and organised a system of visitation and collection which would be sufficient to keep alive and ensure ready contributions to the cause, and this he called the Sustentation Fund. Besides all this, churches had to be built, missionaries supported, etc.

Hugh Miller, next to Dr Chalmers, was the agent in this scheme. He never wearied, never flagged. He was instant in the work, labouring to disseminate right and proper views of spiritual freedom, and to establish and mould the Free

Church of Scotland, at the same time giving a power and dignity to newspaper articles never before felt.

The march of the Disruptionists from St Andrew's Church to Tanfield Hall need not be dwelt upon. For twelve days the Assembly held its sittings, and at the end Hugh Miller writes—"The Free and Residuary Assemblies have closed their sittings. The over-strung mind of the Scottish public demands its interval of rest, and thrilling excitement and incessant labour give place, for a brief period, to comparative quiescence and repose. For our own part, for at least a few months to come, we shall see the sun rise less frequently than we have done of late, and miss oftener the earliest chirp of the birds that welcome the first gray of morning from among the old trees of Heriot's and the Meadows. The chapter added to the history of the Church of Scotland has just been completed—the concluding page presents the usual blank interval, and we feel inclined to lay down the volume for a space, and ponder over its contents. . .

"That man must have studied to but little purpose the events of the last twelve days who does not see that there is a guiding hand ordering and regulating all. The powers in this great game do not move of themselves,—the adorable Being who has "foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass" is working out His own designs in His own way;—the usurpations of the civil magistrates, the treachery of unfaithful ministers, the errors and mistakes of blind-hearted and incompetent statesmen,—all tend to accomplish His decrees. And it would be well, surely, since in one way or other all must forward His purposes, to be made to forward them rather as His fellow-workers than as His blind, insensible tools. Let the Disestablished Church take courage; there is a time of severe conflict before her, but the result of the battle is certain."

No sooner was the Free Church organised than her triumph, in the Highlands particularly, brought her into conflict with the Scottish nobles. It could not be for a moment brooked by these peers of Britain that the peasantry of Scotland

should dare to think for themselves; such a state of matters must be trampled down—hence arose the great site-controversy, in which Miller took no small part. The editor of the *Witness* feared no man, and his sturdy independence brought him into keen contact with the aristocracy of Scotland. Where principles were at stake, he spared no one.

The London press, religious and secular, were down upon him, enraged at the boldness of his attacks. The most notable of his articles was called "Lochiel's Warning." The descendant of that old house, in answer to the petition of his tenantry for sites, had counselled them to stick by the old ship. This article was followed by another called "Position of the Scottish Lairds," which concludes in the following way:—

"There is one point in the letters of our hostile proprietors which we have not yet directly adverted to, but which strikes us as tolerably rich in the ludicrous. Nothing can be more natural to men than the proselytising spirit. It extends not only to all modes of reli-

gious belief, but to almost all the various negations of religious belief. It forms not only the battle-cry of fanatics, but of atheists also. But there is one specific form in which it has begun to manifest itself in these latter times, in which it does not seem to have existed before. The fanatic has striven to make fanatics after his own type. The atheist has laboured to make the atheists. It has been reserved for our Scottish proprietors to exert themselves in behalf of a religion not their own. They recommend to others what they reject for themselves, as if to realise to the letter, and that after a very striking mode, Voltaire's remark, that the princes who protest, or change the religion of a country, seldom have any religion themselves. 'I am not a member of the Church of Scotland,' says Lochiel. 'I am, myself, you know, a member of the Church of England,' says Sir James of Roseavoch. Thus runs the general preamble, and yet in every case the advice is the same—We pray you hold fast by the Establishment; we ourselves have life, or, as Lochiel pithily ex-

presses it, 'Stick to the ship.' Does it seem exceedingly natural to ask in reply, 'Then pray, gentlemen, why have you not stuck to the ship? If desertion be at all a bad thing in us, pray, what must it have been to you? We quit the vessel because the plague has broken out in her —because the plague-flag of the Court of Session floats portentously at her mast-head. We feel it would be death for us to remain in her longer and therefore do we betake ourselves to the long-boat, determined to effect a landing, let you frame your quarantine laws as you may.'"

From sites he passed on to the Highland clearings; and his appeals to the Duke of Sutherland are models of dignity and courtesy at the same time that he faithfully condemned his policy.

CHAPTER IX.

"A group of muse-encrowned men,
Great masters of the golden pen,
His lofty powers discuss,
And own him of the brotherhood,
Of glorious front and fiery blood,
Who make time luminous."

THE first four years of the existence of the Church, and the severe literary strain Hugh Miller underwent in connection with its organ, compelled him for a time to forego all work during the greater part of the years 1845 and 1846. On returning, however, in restored health to his editorial duties in the beginning of 1847, he found the Church on the eve of a great educational controversy. Hitherto, the course of the editor of the *Witness* and the ecclesiastical teachers had run on smoothly together, with exceptions of a few slight varia-

tions in opinion. Now, however, he felt called to combat the whole Church.

The Free Church had projected a magnificent educational scheme, gathering around it a phalanx of teachers. Two years of seclusion had led Miller to see clearly how matters stood. He was national in his educational views, and did not wish the schools of the youth of Scotland to be made the clerical preserve of any sect. With such views and feelings he opposed the proposal to identify the teachers with the sacred office, and strongly opposed the absurdity of taking money from the State for a merely denominational education. No doubt he was right. His views on this subject were far in advance of his contemporaries, and public opinion at this moment agrees with him. He, while advocating the exclusion of denominationalism from the scheme, proposed that the power in connection with it should be vested in the body of the people. He would have repudiated, at the same time, the very idea of excluding the Bible from the national schools.

Hugh Miller's pen did much to make matters clear, but his words were not always well chosen. Alas! it is not given to any man in this state of being to accomplish unmixed good—the purest gold has some alloy, and the loftiest human wisdom has at times some grains of weakness—and so Hugh Miller, on this occasion, by too vigorous self-assertion, turned fierce and defiant, sometimes ungenerous, to his oponents. Unhappily, the misunderstandings which then arose, and the heats and jealousies they kindled, had a corroding influence upon himself, and ultimately almost drove him from taking part in the discussion of Church policy. Changes of views and discussions gradually sprung up amongst those who had fought the same battle, and borne the burden and heat of the day together; and Miller, frank, open, and blunt, without a touch of *finesse* in his character, became, in a degree, a victim to misunderstandings and petty squabbles.

We need not wonder, when matters were in this state, that Miller left the thorny path of ecclesiastical polemics, and renewed with greater

eagerness his pursuit of literature and geology, which, even amid the interest he took in the great popular conflict, he had never thrown aside.

In 1840, there had appeared in the *Witness* the first of a series of articles under the title of "The Old Red Sandstone." There were seven numbers of them, and the last was published in the 17th of the following month. It had been thought before that time that the old red sandstone formation was remarkably barren of fossils. Now, he said he could prove that they were "remarkably numerous." Such remarks won for Miller a reputation as a geologist; and when the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held its annual meeting, on the 23rd of that month, his discoveries were brought under the attention of the leading geologists. The arguments and facts Miller brought forward were conclusive and unanswerable; and with one stride, as it were, the stonemason of Cromarty took his place amongst the greatest magnates of science of the day, and was warmly welcomed by them as a brother.

During the time that Miller was taking rest materials for a book were gathered in eight weeks of wandering in England, and this appeared afterwards under the title of, "First Impressions of England and its People." There is in none of Miller's other works so much fresh and charming language, and such an admirable style. It is the accumulation and reflections of years which appear in every page; and these are so natural; there is no strain nor striving after grand words or metaphors. Of an English hillside he writes, and what in the language is finer than such a description—"Was it the sound of the distant surf that was in mine ears, or the low moan of the breeze, as it crept through the neighbouring wood? Oh, that hoarse voice of ocean, never silent since time first began—where has it not been uttered? There is stillness amid the arid and rainless desert, where no spring rises, and no streamlet flows, and the long caravan plies its weary march amid the blinding glare of the sand, and the red unshaded rays of the fierce sun. But once and again, and yet again, has the

roar of ocean been there. It is *his* sands that the winds heap up, and it is the skeleton remains of his vassals—shells, and fish, and the stony coral—that the rocks underneath enclose. There is silence on the tall mountain peak, with its glittering mantle of snow, where no insect murmurs, and no bird flies, and where the eye wanders over multitudinous hill-tops that lie far beneath, and vast dark forests that sweep on to the distant horizon, or along long hollow valleys where the great rivers begin. And yet, once and again, and yet again, has the roar of ocean been there. The effigies of his more ancient denizens we find sculptured on the craigs, where they jut out from beneath the ice into the mist-wreath; and his later beaches, stage beyond stage, terrace the descending slopes. Where has the destroyer not been,—the devourer of continents,—the blue foaming dragon whose vocation it is to eat up the land? His ice-floes have alike furrowed up the steppes of Siberia and the rocky flanks of Schiehallion; and his ichthyolite and fish lie embedded in the great stones of the pyramids,

hewn in the times of the old Pharaohs, and in rocky folds of Lebanon, still untouched by the tool. So long as ocean exists there must be disintegration, dilapidation, change; and should the time ever arrive when the elevating agencies, motionless and still, shall sleep within their profound depths, to awaken no more, and should the sea still continue to impel its currents and to roll its waves, every continent and island would at length disappear, and again, as of old, when 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up,'

'A shoreless ocean tumble round the globe.'"

When the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation" was published, it had nearly as great a run as the last novel, it was written in so popular and interesting a style; but its tendencies were most dangerous, not only calling in question the evidences of revealed religion in some mere outworks, but sapping its very foundations. A rod of pseudo-philosophy traced the genealogy of man, through a maze of degrading links, down

to, not the monkey, but the mollusc. Without loss of time, the "Foot-prints of the Creator was ready." From the facts of science, Hugh Miller, with his sledge-hammer power, demolished the subtile sophisms of the "Vestiges." At the same time, Lord Rosse's telescope exploded entirely the nebular hypothesis. This work was more popular than were the others, and his friends began to think that Mr Miller's talents were too great to be subjected to the toil and drudgery of a public journal. It was suggested that if some situation could be found to secure him leisure to make further investigations in science, he would be a public benefactor. The offer of a Government situation was at this very time made him by the Marquis of Breadalbane, with a salary of £800 per annum. The duties were merely nominal, but he would have been responsible for money passing through the hands of his subordinates, and, because of this, he conscientiously refused the tempting appointment. No remonstrance of friends was of any avail. He said "his memory was not as it formerly was, and he now forgot

things he used to remember with ease, and so, in such circumstances he was not clear in taking upon him money responsibilities." Alas! was this confusion of memory a prelude to that more awful confusion, when the steadiness of his intellect was shaken, and reason was hurled from her throne?

In 1852 Mr Miller, in his zeal to diffuse a taste for science among his fellow-countrymen, began to give lectures in Scotland on his favourite study. These lectures were most popular,—crowds flocked to hear him,—and though he might have made thousands by their delivery, he did his work without fee or reward, save the reward of benefitting his fellow-creatures. From these lectures was evolved the "Testimony of the Rocks," and of this book it has been said, "it nobly crowns the labours of a noble life, and will take rank with the works of the fathers of English geology, even for the profundity of its science; while in affluence of illustration, in wealth and beauty of poetic diction, it is unapproached by either Buckland or Murchison,

Sedgewick, or Lyell." In this work Miller goes at great length into the question of the antiquity of the globe. We must quote the wonderfully beautiful passage from it of the Mosaic Vision of Creation, a splendid piece of writing.

"Let us suppose that it" (the Mosaic vision) "took place far from man, in an untrodden recess of the Midian desert, ere yet the vision of the burning bush had been vouchsafed; and that, as in the vision of St John in Patmos, voices were mingled with scenes, and the ear as certainly addressed as the eye. A 'great darkness' first falls upon the prophet, like that which in an earlier age fell upon Abraham, but without the 'horror;' and as the Divine Spirit moves over the face of the wildly-troubled waters, as a visible aurora enveloped by the pitchy cloud, the great doctrine is orally enunciated, that 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Unreckoned ages, condensed in the vision into a few brief moments, pass away; the creative voice is again heard, 'Let there be light;' and straightway a grey diffused light springs up in the east, and,

casting its sickly gleam over a cloud-limited expanse of steaming, vaporous sea, journeys through the heavens towards the west. One heavy, sunless day is made representative of myriads; the faint light waxes fainter—it sinks beneath the dim, undefined horizon; the first scene of the drama closes upon the seer, and he sits awhile on his hill-top in darkness, solitary but not sad, in what seems to be a calm and starless night.

"The light again brightens—it is day, and, over an expanse of ocean without visible bound, the horizon has become wider and sharper of outline than before. There is life in that great sea—invertebrate, may be also ichthyic life,—but from the comparative distance of the point of view occupied by the prophet, only the slow roll of its waves can be discerned, as they rise and fall, in long undulations, before a gentle gale, and what most strongly impresses the eye, is the change which has taken place in the atmosphere and scenery. That lower stratum of the heavens, occupied in the previous vision by seething steam, or grey, smoke-like fog, is clear and trans-

parent; and only in an upper region, where the previously invisible vapour of the tepid sea has thickened in the cold, do the clouds appear. But there, in the higher strata of the atmosphere, they lie, thick and manifold—an upper sea of great waves, separated from those beneath by the transparent firmament, and, like them, too, impelled in rolling masses by the wind. A mighty advance has taken place in creation; but its most conspicuous optical sign is the existence of a transparent atmosphere — of a firmament stretched out over the earth, that separates the waters above from the waters beneath. But darkness descends for the third time upon the seer, for the evening and the morning have completed the second day.

"Yet again, the light rises under a canopy of cloud; but the scene has changed, and there is no longer an unbroken expanse of sea. The white surf breaks at the distant horizon, on an insulated reef, formed, mayhap, by the Silurian or Old Red coral zoophytes, ages before, during the bygone yesterday, and beats, in long lines of

foam, nearer at hand, against the low, winding shore, the seaward barrier of a wide-spread country. For, at the Divine command, the land has arisen from the deep—not inconspicuously and in scattered islets, as at an earlier time, but in extensive though flat and marshy continents, little raised over the sea-level; and a yet further flat has covered them with the great carboniferous flora. The scene is one of mighty forests of cone-bearing trees—of palms, and tree ferns, and gigantic club-mosses on the opener slopes, and of great reeds, clustering by the sides of quiet lakes and dark rolling rivers. There is deep gloom in the recesses of the thicker woods, and low, thick mists creep along the dark marsh or sluggish stream. But there is a general lightening of the sky overhead; as the day declines, a redder flush than had hitherto lighted up the prospect falls athwart fern-covered bank and long withdrawing glade. And while the fourth evening has fallen on the prophet, he becomes sensible, as it wears on and the fourth dawn approaches, that yet another change has taken place. The Creator

has spoken, and the stars look out from openings of deep unclouded blue; and as day rises, and the planet of the morning pales in the east, the broken cloudlets are transmuted from bronze into gold, and anon the gold becomes fire, and at length the glorious sun rises out of the sea, and enters on his course rejoicing. It is a brilliant day; the waves, of a deeper and softer blue than before, dance and sparkle in the light; the earth, with little else to attract the gaze, has assumed a garb of brighter green; and as the sun declines amid even richer glories than those which had enriched his rising, the moon appears full-orbed in the east—to the human eye the second great luminary of the heavens—and climbs slowly to the zenith as night advances, shedding its mild radiance over land and sea.

"Again the day breaks; the prospect consists as before, of land and ocean. There are great pine woods, reed-covered swamps, wide plains, winding rivers, and broad lakes; and a bright sun shines over all. But the landscape derives its interest and novelty from a feature unmarked before.

Gigantic birds stalk along the sands or wade far into the water in quest of their ichthyic food; while birds of lesser size float upon the lakes, or scream discordant in moving flocks, thick as insects in the calm of a summer evening, over the narrower seas, or brighten with the sunlight gleam of their wings the thick woods. And ocean has its monsters: great "*tanninim*" tempest the deep, as they heave their huge bulk over the surface, to inhale the life-sustaining air; and out of their nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a 'seething pot or caldron.' Monstrous creatures, armed in massive scales, haunt the rivers and scour the flat, rank meadows; earth, air, and water are charged with animal life, and the sun sets on a busy scene, in which unerring instinct pursues unremittingly its few simple ends—the support and preservation of the individual, the propagation of the species, and the protection and maintenance of the young.

"Again the night descends, for the fifth day has closed; and morning breaks on the sixth and last day of creation. Cattle and beasts of

the field graze on the plains; the thick-skinned rhinoceros wallows in the marshes; the squat hippopotamus rustles among the reeds, or plunges sullenly into the river; great herds of elephants seek their food amid the young herbage of the woods; while animals of fiercer nature — the lion, the leopard, and the bear—harbour in deep caves till the evening, or lie in wait for their prey amid tangled thickets or beneath some broken bank. At length, as the day wanes and the shadows lengthen, man, the responsible lord of creation, formed in God's own image, is introduced upon the scene, and the work of creation ceases upon the earth. The night falls once more upon the prophet, and there dawns yet another morrow—the morrow of God's rest—that Divine Sabbath in which there is no more creative labour, and which, "blessed and sanctified" beyond all the days that had gone before, has as its special object the moral elevation and final redemption of man, and over *it* no evening is represented in the record as falling, for its special work is not yet complete."

His position was now fully established, and the prophecy of Miss Dunbar, years before, that there was no company in the kingdom but would be honoured by his presence, had been fulfilled. But Miller was too shy and reserved to allow himself to be lionised by the great. He had no ambition to be a star to shine in fashionable society.

CHAPTER X.

"The love that cheers life's latest stage,
Proof against sickness and old age,
Preserved by virtue from declension,
Becomes not weary of attention;
But lives when that exterior grace
Which first inspired the flame decays.
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,
And will, with sympathy, endure
Those evils it would gladly cure."

IT is with no little pleasure we get glimpses, throughout his career, of the happy home-life of Mr Miller. His love for his wife and children continued strong and pure to the last. We saw what he was as a lover, and now, years after, we have him writing to Mrs Miller thus—"Went careering along the rocks at two hours' length from the shore. I saw the little rock where you first said '*Yes*' to a certain interesting question,—the said important 'yes'

bearing reference to a log-house in the backwoods. I saw the beech-trees where we were so foolish, you know, as to spend a great many hours together, and so exclusive, that the company of any third person we could not have endured." Again, "You have been my inseparable companion, dearest, since we parted. You were with me last night on the ridge of the hill, looking at all I looked at, and feeling all I felt. Do you remember the exquisite evening we passed among the pines on the upper slope of the hill, above the cultivated ground, where the hill looks down upon the town and bay? There was a bright red sunset,—the trees in front of us were relieved against the sky of flame, seemed as if drawn in black, while the trees behind seemed as if dipped in blood. It was early in our acquaintance, — friendship had passed into love, though we had not yet become aware of the fact; but rarely, I suppose, do mere friends manifest the same unwillingness to part that we did that evening. We lingered on till all that was fine in the sunset had disap-

peared, and found the grey of sea and sky, an
the blackness of field, quite as agreeable as th
many-tinted landscape we had so admired
little before. My own dear Lydia,—it *is* a
advantage to have recollections such as these t
summon up." Another time he writes—"I hav
been seeing the old Chapel of St Regulus, an
poor Liza's grave. The little mound is as wel
marked as it was four years ago, and it is nov
wrapped over with a mound of rich unbroke
turf. The little head-stone, bearing your an
my name, has whitened somewhat under th
influence of the weather, and leans slightly t
one side; but there is no other change. Th
sun was hastening to his setting, red and broad
and throwing a strong, bright gleam on th
upper foliage of the surrounding wood and o
the top of the ruin, while the tombs and grave
lay in deep shadow. Poor Liza! The littl
events of her span-long life rose all before m
from the time that I first felt that I was
father, till I flung myself down in uncontrollabl
anguish on my bed, a father no longer. Th

spring in which we lost her, was a peculiarly dark time;—but it is over, and Liza still lives, though not with us. . . . Write me, dearest, as long letters as you can without tasking yourself, and I in turn will devote to you every leisure hour my walks, my visitings, and my dinings-out will leave at my disposal. To say that my chief pleasure, in a ramble devoted to pleasure, exclusively arises from my conversations with you, is not saying too much. My heart is constantly turning to you and the two little persons at Arrochar. My home is not a locality, it is not a dwelling, it is you and the little ones."

We saw him in his early courting days seeking the home in which Lydia Fraser was born, and now we have him again writing—"I wished Mr Mackenzie to show me the house in which you were born. But he could only show me the place it once occupied. The house itself had disappeared, and a fashionable hotel rises on its site. . . . And here was I, romantically seeking my wife's birth-place in a spick-and-span, fresh-

coloured building, with bottles of spirits in the lower windows, and obsequious waiters at every door. . . . I tried to find you quite strong and ruddy, with the rounded outline of your earlier days, and quite able to climb such steep slopes as that which leads from the farther beech-tree to the pathway above. We shall have gallant walks together, and I shall be your squire and sweetheart."

Mr Bayne, some years afterwards, had written of Miller's habits in these words,—"It was his custom to fix upon his subject a few days, or even longer, before the article was to appear, and nothing pleased him better than to have Mrs Miller as detractive antagonist, to maintain against him, at the supper-table, the thesis he proposed to controvert. Supper was his favourite meal. At breakfast he hardly tasted food, a cup of coffee and crumb of bread being the limit of his wants. After working at his desk in the early part of the day, he would walk out, make his way into the country, and saunter about the hills of Braid or Arthur Seat,

with his eye on the plants and land shells and geological sections, or explore, for the thousandth time, the Musselburgh shore and the Granton quarries. He never clearly admitted the canonical authority of the dinner hour. He expected something to be kept warm for him; but if the day was particularly favourable, or if a storm had strewn the coast with the treasures of the deep sea, or if some new phenomenon struck him in connection with the raised beach of Leith, and required interpreting and thinking out, or if he met with a brother naturalist and got into talk, the shades of evening would be falling before he again crossed his threshold. Even at that hour he had little appetite. It was not until his brain, obeying what his habits of night-study had made an irresistible law for him, awoke in its fervour about ten o'clock, that he shared a keen inclination for food. Porter or ale, with some kind of dried fish, or preserved meat, formed his favourite supper. On these occasions he conversed with great freedom, and found it both pleasant and profitable to hear

favours, even from those who would have been most willing to grant them. . . . I had the great man all to myself one evening, and he was under no restraint. I have observed that in large promiscuous companies he was apt to feel awkward and restrained, and to retire into himself and sit silent. But when there were only a few persons present, and these of congenial tastes, his conversation was of the most brillant description. . . . . I was struck then as I ever was, with his powerful memory, and his special acquaintance with the English literature of the last century,—I suspect it was the literature most amicable to him in his younger years. He could quote *verbatim* long passages from the poets of that epoch, illustrating points casting up in conversations. . . In common with not a few others, I looked on Hugh Miller as the greatest Scotchman left after Thomas Chalmers fell. These two men differed in many points; but they were essentially kindred spirits, they were alike in their high aims; in their lofty genius; in the moving power of their writings,

in their partiality for the study of the works of God; in their deep reverence for the Word of God; in their desire to unite peace and religion and attachment to the principles of the Church of Scotland. What Chalmers did for the older sister astronomy, Miller has done for the younger geology, in wedding her to religion. Both lived for the purpose of elevating their countrymen and their race; and, in order to effect this end, both laboured to promote the Church's independence and the freedom of its members. Each had his own field of influence; each had a class of minds on whom he exercised a burning and enduring power for good. Most appropriately, now that their day's work is done, do they sleep side by side in the same graveyard."

CHAPTER XI.

"And science bends her shining head
Above his deep, sepulchral bed,
And weeps unnumbered tears,
Still mourning that, to raise her state,
He took so largely from the date
And triumph of his years.

"Religion, with the upward look
And hand laid on the Holy Book,
Attests his godly worth,
And ranks him with the lofty ones
Whose words and deeds are benisons
To light the dim, sad earth."

IN the summer of 1855, the disease from which Miller suffered in his youth—the masons' disease—now began to reappear, and, from the effects of stone-dust in the lungs, he suffered occasional attacks of inflammation. Then the labour to which he had been subjected in the final revision of the "Testimony of the Rocks" had unhinged his intellectual power

while the tendency of those paroxysms of gloom, to which he had been the prey from childhood, seized him now when his physical energies were decaying, and drove him to despair. He talked to his family of strange dreams and visions, which haunted his couch by night; he dreaded the pistol of the midnight assassin, and was continuously disturbed by fears that his museum, in a corner of the grounds of his house in Portobello, would be broken into and robbed of its precious treasures. He had long been in the habit of carrying fire-arms. Mr Bayne tells how, upon one occasion, when convoying him up from Portobello, he pulled out a pistol, and remarked that he was prepared if any one should attack them; and upon Bayne expressing surprise, he told the story given in the "First Impressions," when he was sure two footpads meant to attack him. The origin of this custom arose when conveying the Bank's money between Cromarty and Tain, and afterwards, when he commenced a series of investigations in a Lothian coalfield, which brought him into contact with suspicious

characters. In short, as has been said, "The light that shone when Hope was born, burned low" with him. A dark cloud throughout life has been gathering over him and a predisposition to insanity had been lurking in that wonderful intellect. Mr Bayne, from whose interesting Life of him we have had so often occasion to quote, thus describes his last days.

On the Saturday before his death—"he repeated, with deep feeling, to a friend, a prayer of John Knox's, which, he said, 'it had been his frequent custom to repeat privately during the days of the Disruption.' There was no name which represented more for Hugh Miller than John Knox. The Scotland of Knox and the Puritans was the Scotland which he loved; the Church of Knox was the church for which he had toiled when his strength was in its meridian, and when his dawning fame first thrilled him with rapture. The faith of Knox was the faith to which, after Hume and Voltaire and Lamarck had done their work, he still anchored his soul. This is the prayer which was passing through

the mind of Hugh Miller on that Saturday—'O Lord God Almighty, and Father most merciful! there is none like Thee in heaven nor in earth, which workest all things for the glory of Thy name and the comfort of Thine elect. Thou didst once make man ruler over all Thy creatures, and placed him in the garden of all pleasures; but how soon, alas! did he in Thy felicity forget Thy goodness; Thy people Israel, also, in their wealth did evermore run astray, abusing Thy manifold mercies; like as all flesh continually rageth when it hath gotten liberty and external prosperity. But such is Thy wisdom adjoined to Thy mercies, dear Father, that Thou seekest all means possible to bring Thy children to the sure sense and lively feeling of Thy fatherly favour; and therefore, when prosperity will not save, then sendest Thou adversity, graciously correcting all Thy children whom Thou receivest into Thy household. Wherefore we, wretched and miserable sinners, render unto Thee most humble and hearty thanks, that it hath pleased Thee to call us home to Thy fold

by fatherly correction at this present, whereas in our prosperity and liberty, we did neglect Thy graces offered unto us. For the which negligence, and many other grievous sins, whereof we now accuse ourselves before Thee, Thou mightest most justly have given us up to reprobate minds and induration of our hearts, as Thou hast done others. But such is Thy goodness, O Lord, that Thou seemest to forget all our offences, and hast called us, of Thy good pleasure, from all idolatries into this city most Christianly reformed, to profess Thy name and to suffer some cross amongst Thy people for Thy truth and gospel's sake, and to be Thy witnesses with Thy prophets and apostles,—yea, with Thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ our Head, to whom Thou dost begin here to fashion us like, that, in His glory, we may also be like Him when He shall appear. O, Lord God! what are we upon whom Thou shouldest bestow this great mercy? O, most loving Lord! forgive us our unthankfulness, and all our sins, for Jesus Christ's sake. O, heavenly Father! increase Thy Holy Spirit in

us, to teach our hearts to cry 'Abba dear Father;' to assure us of our eternal election in Christ; to reveal Thy will more and more towards us; to confirm us so in Thy truth that we may live and die therein; and that, by the power of the same Spirit, we may boldly give an account of our faith to all men with humbleness and meekness, that whereas they backbite and slander us as evil-doers, they may be ashamed and at once stop their mouths, seeing our good conversation in Christ Jesus, for whose sake we beseech Thee, O Lord God, to guide, govern, and prosper this enterprise in assembling our brethren to praise Thy holy name. And not only to be here present with us Thy children, according to thy promise, but also mercifully to assist Thy like persecuted people, our brethren gathered in all other places, that they and we, consenting together in one spirit and truth, may (all worldly respects set apart) seek Thy honour and glory in all their and our assemblies. So be it!'"

He and Mrs Miller went to church in the forenoon of Sabbath, and on their return, an expres-

sion of pain passed over his face, when she proposed inquiring for a poor woman who had recently met with an accident, as if he disliked the momentary separation. Mr Bayne then goes on to say—

"The time of the afternoon service, the rest of the household being in church, was passed by Hugh Miller and his wife in solemn, thoughtful converse. The reader knows what she was to him. She had been his friend, respected for her intellect, honoured for her character before he loved her; and when he did love her, it was with the intense and passionate devotion of a strong man, who never loved woman but one. Had he never loved her, he might never have laid down the mallet and the chisel, or quitted Cromarty. They had known fair and foul weather in their wedded life, but on the whole it had been a fitting sequel to those old days when his 'gentle blue eyes' would 'melt with benevolence and a chastened tenderness' looking into hers, while the green leaves softened the sunlight above, and the summer wave threw its

shattering crystal at their feet. His trust and pride in her had never changed, and she held to the last the throne of his affections, supreme and apart from any other human being. On this Sunday afternoon he was in his most tender and confidential, which was always his most religious mood. No secular matters were spoken of, but in what he said on spiritual things, Mrs Miller observed what she had recently noticed in his prayers at family worship, 'an increasing earnestness, a child-like humility, a more entire reliance upon the merits of the Saviour to blot out all sin, a more awful sense of God's immediate presence.' His affection was so ardent that Mrs Miller regarded it with something of surprise. He suddenly seized her hand and kissed it with a manner she had never seen before. 'There was in it a great deal more than affection,—an air of *courtliness*, so to speak, indescribable.' In pondering on this action, Mrs Miller has asked whether it could possibly have had the meaning of a farewell."

At this time Mrs Miller, having been almost

deprived of the use of her limbs by a severe illness, could only go upstairs, to their usual sleeping apartment, with the greatest difficulty. She therefore occupied one alone on the ground floor. One morning, when her husband and she met at breakfast, he complained greatly of strange sensations in his brain, and of a fearful night, saying,—"My brain is giving way. I cannot put two thoughts together to-day. I have had a dreadful night of it. I cannot face another such. I was impressed with the idea that my museum was attacked by robbers, and that I had got up, put on my clothes, and gone out with a loaded pistol to shoot them. Immediately after that I became unconscious."

Professor Miller and Dr Balfour were called in, and ordered rest. He had been over-worked, they said, but the labour which had done this had been congenial to him, and the fits that came on in paroxysms were not constant, though often he said he felt as if a very fine poniard had suddenly passed through his head, and this was followed by confusion and giddiness.

It was the evening of Tuesday, and Hugh Miller and his family were assembled round the tea-table. His eldest daughter consulted him upon some verses she had to write for her class, and he took an interest in her work, and delivered an amusing lecture on poetry, taking down Cowper from the shelf, and reading something to her from his favourite poet, to illustrate his meaning. Mrs Miller's little volume of "Cats and Dogs" was then passing through the press, and her husband read it with great appreciation. He then repeated Cowper's "Castaway," finishing off with his "Lines to Mary," and at certain of the verses "she could perceive half-stolen glances at her over the page."

"Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

"For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

"Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign,
But gently pressed, press gently mine,
My Mary!

"Such feebleness of limb thou prov'st,
That now, at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two; yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

"And still to love, though pressed with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!"

Early in the evening Mrs Miller began to feel weary, and reported that she would be forced to leave him sooner than usual. The good-night and kiss followed, and she retired.

"At what hour," says his biographer, "can never be ascertained, but either in the dead of night or in the grey dawn of morning, he arose from the bed and half dressed himself. Then the trance of paroxysmal horror came over him, and the maniacal persuasion which had for days been haunting him, drove him mad. He rushed to the table and, on a folio sheet of paper, on the centre of the page, traced the following lines,—

'DEAREST LYDIA,

'My brain burns. I *must* have walked, and a fearful dream rises upon me. I cannot bear the horrible thought. God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me. Dearest Lydia, dear children, farewell. My brain burns as the recollection grows.

'My dear, dear wife, farewell.

'HUGH MILLER.'

"It is a melancholy satisfaction to reflect that, in no case of suicide which ever took place, can the evidence of insanity have been more express, or conclusive. Had no trace of disease been found in the brain (the four medical men who examined the head after death found it so)—had no word written by Hugh Miller himself attested madness—the overwork to which he had subjected himself, the excitement to which he had been a prey, would have afforded adequate grounds for believing him insane. But the actual mania which was gaining the mastery over him, had been defined by himself some

days before his death; and this mania, that he was driven by witches or demons in the darkness, is speaking beyond possibility of mistake or doubt, in the thrilling words, 'I *must* have *walked*.' That even when he was the victim of mania, the tenderness of his nature survived, that he could still discriminate the supremacy for the wife of his youth; that the cry of his heart, when reason was eclipsed in madness and the shadow of death fell on his reeling brain, rose clear to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, will be dwelt on with sad interest by those whom Hugh Miller taught to love him with inexpressible love."

"The body," writes Dr Hanna, who was one of the first to see it, "was lifted and laid upon the bed. We saw it there a few hours afterwards. The head lay back, side-way on the pillow. There was the massive brow, the firm-set, manly features we had so often looked upon admiringly, just as we had lately seen them,—no touch nor trace upon them of disease,—nothing but that overspread pallor of death to

distinguish them from what they had been. But the expression of that countenance in death will live in our memory for ever. Death by gun-shot is said to leave no trace of suffering behind; and never was there a face of the dead freer from all shadow of pain, or grief, or conflict, than that of our dear departed friend. And as we bent over it, and remembered the troubled look it sometimes had in life, and thought what must have been the sublimely-terrific expression that it wore at the moment when the fatal deed was done; we could not help thinking that it lay there to tell us, in that expression of unruffled, majestic repose that sat upon every feature, what we so assuredly believe, that the spirit had passed through a terrible tornado, in which reason had been broken down; but that it had made the great passage in safety, and stood looking back to us in humble, grateful triumph, from the other side."

"Both in science and literature," says H. A. Page, in his "Golden Lives," "Hugh Miller has

made a mark that will remain, and Edinburgh will long cherish in respectful sympathy, the picture of the tall, big-boned, sandy-haired man, with the frank, grey, pensive eyes, and the strong, broad forehead and bushy eyebrows, who used to pace her streets with thoughtful, stooping gait, and in most careless of garb; and who was regarded by the ingenuous youth to whom he was often pointed out, with a strange mixture of curiosity and reverence."

Hugh Miller himself said of Burns, that he taught the Scottish people to stand erect, so that now they have lost the habitual stoop; Hugh Miller taught the lesson even more effectually, for it was consistently backed up by the uninterrupted practice of a life which was in every way manly, and dutiful, and sympathetic, and kindly, and yet, very pure and self-respecting, and free from the "thoughtless follies" that in the case of the other,—

> "Laid him low,
> And stained his name."

Here, indeed, we have the secret of his success. He owes nearly everything to the purity and singleness of his character, and the depth and force of his attachments. It was his strong devotion that saved him from a terrible temptation to drinking, during those first years of his apprenticeship, when the growing lad was painfully racked by the strain upon his physical strength.

Hugh Miller was a man of the people, even when courted and flattered by the most eminent and learned of his age seeking his acquaintance; he did not forget John Wilson of the hewing-shed of Niddry, and offered him a little money in a time of difficulty; of this incident he writes, "I have some thoughts of getting up a descriptive article of my residence at *Niddry*, in which I might introduce John, and contrast his blameless life with the dissipation of the other workmen." Ah, it is only the really great and noble who are not ashamed of their origin, however lowly it be. It is the men, not their birth, who are most to be esteemed—

"Convince the world that you're devout and true,
Be just in all you say, in all you do;
Whatever be your birth, you're sure to be
A peer of the first quality to me."

And the poor loved Hugh Miller in return; they felt that he was their friend and one who sought to elevate them in every way, and was not ashamed to own them as brethren. Indeed, to Hugh Miller may fitly be applied the words of the poet—

"Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life, in low estate began,
And on a simple village green;

"Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And brunts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

"Who makes, by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

. . . . . .

"Yet feels, as in a passive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

"The limit of his narrower fate;
While, yet beside its vocal springs,
He played at councillors and kings
With one that was his earliest mate.

"Who ploughs with pain his native lea,
And reaps the labour of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
"Does my old friend remember me?'

We have seen how he remembered John Wilson, of his youthful days, and the following anecdote will show how much he was esteemed by the poor in return. A poor lame girl was residing with some friends, a few years ago, in Edinburgh; she was lost for nearly a day, and her friends were getting very anxious, being afraid, that she had, in her helplessness, met with some accident. As the night drew on, the girl appeared, at last, carrying a tuft of grass, and when asked where she had been, replied, "I knew that my father (a shepherd) would prize nothing so much from Edinburgh as a tuft of grass from Hugh Miller's grave, so I have been to the Grange Cemetery for it." The labour was

so great she had taken the whole day to complete the task of filial kindness.

We cannot do better than close this short account of the great man than by quoting a poem written some time after his death, by one of Scotland's true, and, though unknown, gifted sons, the Rev. James Proudfoot, Free Church, Culter—

" Born in a cottage, schooled in cottage lore,
'Midst toilsome labour plodding day by day,
He shamed the pride of colleges, and bore
The palm from academic halls away.

" And ne'er did strong-built Scottish frame enclose
A heart to Scotland more intensely true.
Bruce, Wallace, Burns, let Miller now repose
In patriotic fellowship with you !

" A Bible-champion bold, what sceptic dared
To meet the sweep of his resistless rod,
As down into the earth he dug, and bared
The mighty footsteps of the Christian's God ?

" He feared not the astronomer whose flight
Soared high enough into the blue recess ;
He feared not the geologist whose sight
Dived deep enough into the dark abyss.

" The path of that abyss he downward trod,
Till reason's lamp no more his guide would be;
And when he stumbled in the dark, O God!
Thou knowest he fell in seeking after Thee.

" Go build his monument, and build it one
Like his own genius—broad, and deep, and high,
And build it not of marble but of stone—
The red sandstone of his loved Cromarty.

" Yet build it not, for monuments must fall,
And columns rich with hieroglyphic lore;
Be his enduring monument the wall
Of giant rock that guards his native shore."

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