JANET HAMILTON
LONGLOAN COATBRIDGE

Memorial Volume.

POEMS,

ESSAYS, AND SKETCHES:

COMPRISING THE PRINCIPAL PIECES FROM HER COMPLETE WORKS.

BY

JANET HAMILTON.

GLASGOW:
JAMES MACLEHOSE, ST. VINCENT STREET,
Publisher to the University.
1880.

PREFATORY NOTE.

In offering a volume to the public, the general custom is to give what is considered the best pieces the first place in it. But in submitting this collection of my mother's works to the public, I have arranged it so that the pieces may appear as nearly as possible in the order in which they were given to the public by herself; and as the critics give it as their opinion that her third and last volume was the best, so the best pieces will be the last.

After the ably written biographical papers to be found in the first pages of this volume, it would be superfluous for me to say anything in the same line. Having been my mother's amanuensis, I may say that when I wrote a piece from her dictation, and afterwards read it over to her, she rarely made a correction on it. When her books were being printed, although unable from want of sight to read a line, she never would allow any one but herself to make any corrections on the proofs. I read them; she sat and listened, and an alteration of a word or a syllable from her own she would detect at once. She said if her writings possessed any merit, it would be her own; and if there were blemishes in them, they, too, would be her own.

It was a source of much gratification and pleasure to my mother to hear of the favourable reception accorded to her literary efforts by the critics and the public. I never heard her express a wish that they might be praised for their poetical genius; but I have often heard her wish from her heart that they might be blessed to at least some of her class in a social, moral, and spiritual sense. One of the

chief motives that she had in view in her writings will be found in her own words at page 130, in the last three verses of a piece entitled "The Lowly Song of a Lowly Bard," and she was not permitted to be laid beneath the "brier bush" until she knew that her writings had been made instrumental in doing some good.

When she and I would be sometimes sitting by the fire, hours after all the others had gone to rest, she would say, with a voice quivering from emotion, "James, if I thought that in any of my writings there was a single line calculated to do harm, rather than it should go forth to the public, I would pray that God would for ever blot out of existence every word that I have written."

My mother's pieces were mostly all composed amid the bustle and noise incident to the affairs of a family being conducted in a small house, or while she was engaged in conversation with her family or friends. During all her long years of severe pain and blindness, I never heard her utter a word of complaint or murmuring for herself. For her contentment with her lowly condition, I would refer the reader to the first six verses of the poem already referred to. Her feelings of sympathy and concern were all for others. I have often heard her express a regret that the want of the means many times prevented her from assisting others to the extent she desired.

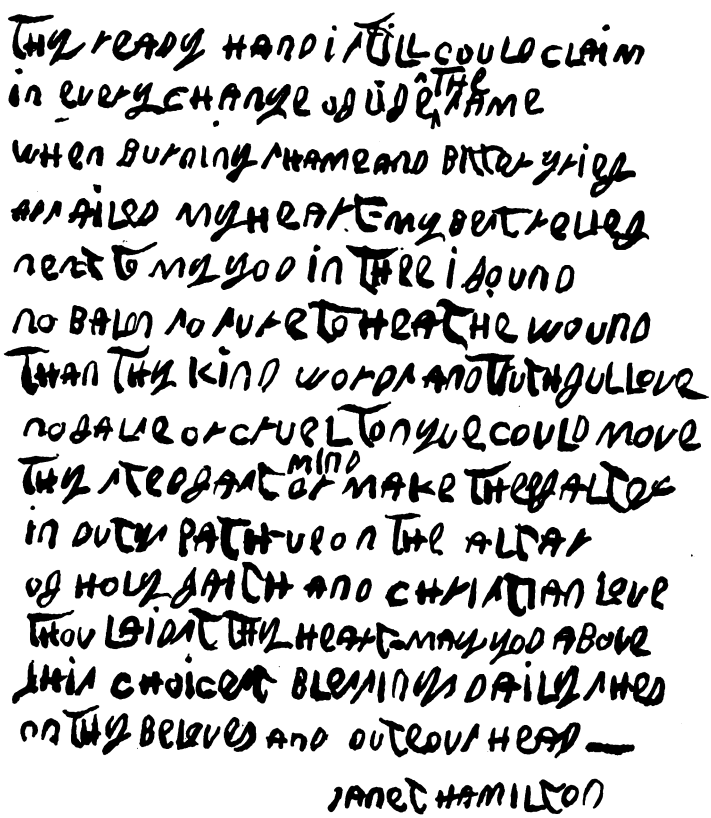
I trust that the reader will excuse the literary shortcomings of these few remarks. To poetical genius I can lay no claim. It is much the same with me as with "Peter Bell, the Potter," to whom

> "A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

JAMES HAMILTON.

LANGLOAN, *July*, 1880.

A Fac-simile of Mrs. Hamilton's Handwriting.



The following is a Copy of the foregoing Lines.

Thy ready hand I still could claim,
In every change of life the same:
When burning shame and bitter grief
Assailed my heart, my best relief,
Next to my God, in thee I found.
No balm so sure to heal the wound
Than thy kind words, and truthful love.
No false or cruel tongue could move
Thy steadfast mind, or make thee falter
In duty's path. Upon the altar
Of holy faith and Christian love
Thou laidst thy heart. May God above
His choicest blessings daily shed
On thy beloved and duteous head!

JANET HAMILTON.

JANET HAMILTON:

HER LIFE AND POETICAL CHARACTER.

By the Rev. GEORGE GILFILLAN, Dundee.

Great and rapid as the march of the higher culture has been and is, it is gratifying to know that it has not yet been able to extinguish the race of self-taught authors, nor to eliminate those elements of simplicity and sturdy common-sense which, along with native genius, have formed the staple of their character and the inspiration of their works. It is as in nature. While cultivation has turned so many parts of the country into gardens, and gardens into Edens, and made even graveyards blossom as the rose, it has not extirpated the wild brier in the lanes, and still permits the heather to bloom, and the canna to wave upon a thousand hills. And so mental culture has not yet succeeded, nor we trust ever shall, in producing that monotonous table-land level in which all is equally lofty, and equally conventional and dull, in which there is left no room for the play of untaught power, and in which the triumph of art has deadened the "lustihood of nature." Still, ever and anon, into the full blaze of the nineteenth century, come out such

> "Birds of the wilderness,
> Blythesome and cumberless,"

as Hugh Miller, Alexander Smith, and the subject of the following sketch, that remarkable woman, Janet Hamilton.

Self-teaching is unquestionably fraught with advantages for which no amount of culture can compensate. Its source

being the soul, it is obvious that the self-educated person has the privilege of coming more directly in contact with that interior light. Far more than the highly-cultured man, he is alone with his own spirit, and realizes it almost as a divine presence within him. In this we may seem to be recording the experience of all gifted souls, whether educated or not. But, probably, in the case of Shakspeare and Bunyan, for instance, this impression may have been stronger and more palpable than in that of more refined but artificial spirits. And perhaps Gray, in his "Progress of Poesy," alludes to this direct communion with ideal truth and beauty on the part of the inspired boy of Avon, when he sings—

> "Far from the sun and summer gale,
> In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
> What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
> To him the Mighty Mother did unveil
> Her awful face: the dauntless child
> Stretched forth his little arms and smiled."

Yes! the long, long golden dream of Bunyan, and the two transcendent visions of Burns—the one in the Auld Clay Biggin', and the other by the roofless wa's of Lincluden Abbey—were never, could never, have been dreamed or imagined by scholars or Professors in College Halls. The dungeon, or the hovel, is a fitter atmosphere for the higher order of imagination, when that exists, than the library of the British Museum, or the drawing-room in Buckingham Palace, or even in Balmoral; and although Solomon tells us that the spider taketh hold with her hands in kings' palaces, the spirit of genius is more chary of its presence, and seeks rather the woodland cottage, or the shieling on the mountain side. Courts rarely rear a great thinker or poet. Often men of true original power have found, or forced, their way into them; but often, too, they have exclaimed in disgust or scorn, "Let us away, this is no place for us; since being honest we say what we believe, and since being gifted with native insight we say what others do *not* believe, because they are unable to see." A highly-cultured mind, unless singularly original, sits under the conflicting lights and shadows of a thousand authors, as

under the trees of a wide wind-swept forest. The self-taught man or woman of genius sits under the stern one light, or one stern shadow of his own purpose and ideal.

The self-taught have usually greater freshness of feeling in beholding Nature, and a keener sympathy with men, than the better instructed. Having read fewer descriptions, they look at the thing described more exactly as it is. Many see not Nature's thunderstorm, but Thomson's or Byron's; not Bruar-water itself, but Burns' picture of it; Scott's Trossachs, not the beautiful place itself; and hence, often when they try to describe such scenes, they merely dilute the descriptions of others, and produce shadows of shades. The self-taught simply record the contact between their own genius and Nature's works. Shakspeare paints the brook in "Hamlet," and the forest in "As You Like It;" and Burns the linn, in "Hallowe'en," from their own eyesight, and as if there had not been another poet in the world. James Hogg, in "Kilmeny," is thinking of no scene but that glen winding up between the dark hills of Abruchil and the fairy environs of Duniera, where lay the path of his heroine,

"To meet the visions of celestial day."

Hugh Miller, looking at Ben Wyvis, is not dreaming of Alpine raptures in Byron, or Grampian raptures in Christopher North, but simply of the huge hoary mountain of his own native strath. Janet Hamilton does not sing of hills she has never seen unless in picture or poem, but of what has met her own eye—

"A lanely loch, a muirland broon,
A warl o' whins and heather;
Whaur aft whan life was young I strayed
The berries blae to gather.

"Sae bonnie bloomed the gowden broom,
Sae green the feathery bracken,
An' rosy brier, dear to my een,
Ere licht had them forsaken."

And thus all self-taught genius retains more than the

other the freshness of the feelings with which the child sees and returns in vivid photograph the glories of the universe; and so, in reference to humanity, the self-taught have not only

"Gazed at Nature's naked loveliness,"

but have seen man, too, stripped of all the dress of conventionalism, in his original strength and weakness, in his merits and faults, and have profited by the sight, and found it, through familiarity, not so disenchanting as is sometimes supposed. No one can be so thoroughly up to the middle or higher classes as a self-taught genius is to the lower, for the simple reason that the lower classes have far less disguise, especially from one of themselves, and he sees what Lear calls "unaccommodated man"—man almost savage indeed, but with a strange aboriginal light, as if from pre-Adamite days, glimmering around him. Hence Burns, conversant as he was with the sins and miseries of his own rank, could, in his walk with Dugald Stewart alongst the summit of the Braid hills, when he beheld a hundred smoking cottages, think only of the worth, honesty, and happiness which he knew such humble roofs concealed. And so, although Janet Hamilton is a stern limner of the evils of intemperance, as she has seen it destroying the virtues and withering the manhood of so many of the poor, yet she does full and heaped-up justice to the manhood and the excellence which are so recklessly ruined thereby. Few self-taught authors have been misanthropes—and this because, first, the near and habitual sight of man, even in his lowest degradation, generates a calm, contemplative spirit in the wise observer, rather than scorn—sorrow more than anger; because, again, he remarks the great proportion of good which mingles with the evil; and because, thirdly, he sees among the humble less of that deceit and falsehood which constitutes, so to speak, the Devil department in the race, and which culture and civilization, in themselves, serve rather to foster than to extirpate.

The self-taught strugglers with narrow circumstances learn usually a certain hardihood of spirit, a contempt for petty

difficulties and for puling sentimentalisms. They are often of an iron mould, not used to the melting mood, and sometimes a little impatient of the sensitive and the weak among whom they mingle. They have often a hatred at the fantastic, the lackadaisical, and the mystical. This they contract by dealing with hard, harsh, practical results. We see not a little of this in the writings, as well as in the history of Janet Hamilton. Belonging, though she does, to the softer sex, she displays a man-like purpose, a rugged independence of spirit, and a contempt for all "mealy-mouthedness" and gilded humbug, which make her seem almost an incarnation of the better nature of Burns. It is with real sorrows, the sufferings of Italian prisoners, the miseries of the drunkard's family, the baffled aspirations of the hero and the patriot, Mazzini and the Garibaldi, that honest Janet sympathises; not with the sentimental pangs of love-sick young ladies, or the pathetic yearnings of fame-seeking and moustache-sporting young men. She never forgets that there was a time when, newly married, all her and her husband's fortune was a single Spanish dollar! She has wrestled with the real evils, the serpents of poverty and want, and strangled them almost in her cradle, and cares little for the dust blown by the wings of butterflies, or the stings inflicted by the mouths of gadflies. She feels for real calamities, but laughs at small annoyances, and those who parade them. And now, under the privation of total blindness, she is discovering a "silent magnanimity" which shows a noble nature; and when she speaks out her sorrow, it is in language as patient and dignified as it is musical and powerful.

The self-taught are emphatically men of one book. Hall said of Dr. Kippis, "that though he was naturally a clever man, he laid so many books upon his brains that they could not move"—like a little emmet burdened with a piece of plaster ten times its own size! Few self-taught men lay such loads upon their minds. To them, having few books, but being intimately acquainted with what they have, no book is a burden, but each book rather (as in that clever paper of Washington Irving, entitled the "Art of Book-making") may be compared to a garment, or piece of

armour put on, fitted to the size and shape of the wearer, and forwarding, instead of retarding, his movements. One man of this class masters his Bible, as Bunyan did, and the book becomes to him a coat of mail; another Shakspeare, and he who has mastered the world's master walks gowned and swelling in a magnificent and flowing style of speech; a third Euclid, and it, as with James Fergusson and other self-taught men of science, is transformed into a pair of iron-spiked shoes to convey them up the steep and rugged paths of natural philosophy; a fourth, the ballad poetry of Scotland, and, lo! it becomes the guid braid bonnet on the swarthy brow of a Burns; and a fifth, like Cobbett, the "Tale of a Tub," and it becomes a sharp scimitar glittering with poison, and helping him to clear his wild Ishmaelitish way and do his destructive work. "Beware the man of one book," is a true as well as an old saying. Hugh Miller, for instance, had made Cowper, Shenstone, Young, and other classics his own in boyhood, and they gave a masculine tinge to his thought and style ever afterwards. Alexander Smith was quite steeped in Chaucer, Spenser, Shelley, and Keats; and Janet Hamilton owns her early obligations to Milton, Burns, Ramsay, Fergusson, the *Spectator*, and the *Rambler*, books which she did not glance at hurriedly or dawdle over like girls of the present day, but at once devoured rapidly at first, and often recurred to, and long and thoroughly digested.

In Janet's poems, as well as prose writings, we see evidences of the advantage she has derived from her want of early opportunities, although, of course, she displays, too, some of the drawbacks of the self-taught—the want of width and variety of view, that polish and correctness which only a classical education can bestow, and exhibits a little of that opinionativeness and dogmatism which spring partly from the clearness and strength of their mental vision, and partly from their mingling so much with their inferiors. Sometimes she resembles her class in this—that seeing a subject so intensely themselves, they have little patience with those who cannot, though they would, behold it at the same angle—just as we have known lynx-eyed persons get-

ting excessively wroth with their short-sighted brethren for not observing certain minute or distant points in a landscape. But, after making all deductions, the works of this remarkable woman are productions of uncommon excellence, discovering grasp of intellect, vividness of fancy, a "carl-stalk" of common-sense, intelligent decisiveness of view, power, facility—on the whole, correctness, and sometimes even elevation of language.

We have called her a remarkable woman; and she is so, because she combines many of the characteristics of a heroine and an author in humble life—the energy of will and strength of character marking the one, with the freshness, originality, and simple sinewy vigour of the other. A glance at her life may fitly precede a brief estimate of her works.

She was born in the parish of Shotts, Lanarkshire, in October, 1795. October, her native, has always continued her favourite month, and some of the sweetest verses in the present volume are devoted to the mild glories, the drooping honours, the mellow calm, the rich colours, and the pensive charm of that last month of the most delightful season of the year. Carshill was the name of the clachan where she was born. Her maiden name was Janet Thomson, and through her maternal ancestors she was connected with the children of the Covenant. She is the fifth in descent from John Whitelaw, Stand, Monkland, who was executed at the Old Tolbooth, Edinburgh, 1683, four years after the battle at Bothwell Bridge, in which he had taken a part, and was otherwise well known as a determined supporter of Covenanting principles. Her mother's name was Mary Brownlee, and her grandfather was a very remarkable person in his day. Our readers, by turning to her volume, entitled "Poems and Sketches," p. 170, will find a lengthened and very interesting account of Old Brownlee, who seems to have been in reality very nearly what David Deans was in fiction, or the "Cottar of the Saturday Night" in poetry. The whole chapter, entitled "Scottish Life and Character," might almost have appeared in Wilson's "Lights and Shadows," and shows a kindred

keenness of eye in hitting off the peculiarities and the stalwart virtues of the old types of Scottish character.

We give, in her own words, a portion of her early reminiscences:—"My father, being bred a shoemaker, found it convenient to remove to the town of Hamilton with his wife and child (myself). I would then be between two and three years of age. There we resided till I was about seven years old, when my parents, having suffered severely in their health by the close confinement, removed to the small village of Langloan, parish of Old Monkland, where they both worked as field labourers on the home farm of the estate of Drumpellier for about two years, while I kept house at home; and being early taught by my mother to spin, my daily task, in her absence, was to produce two hanks of sale yarn, in which I seldom failed. When my mother left the out-door labour I was taught to work at the tambour-frame, which was then a very remunerative employment for women and girls. My father also left the out-door labour a short time after, and commenced working at his trade on his own account. He engaged a very respectable young man to assist him in his work. This young man became my husband in 1809. I had ten children by him, seven of whom, with their father, still survive. We have lived together in the married state for 59 years. My husband will be eighty years of age in August, 1868, and I seventy-three in October of the same year."

She says again—"Two little incidents I will relate here. The one refers to the marriage of my parents. They were proclaimed in the Kirk of Shotts, and from thence went on foot to Glasgow, and were married by a Dr. Pirie, of what denomination I do not know." [He was a Burgher, and predecessor of Dr. Dick, Professor of Theology in the Secession Hall.] "The other includes some little incidents of my own marriage. We started on foot early for Glasgow, on a cold February morning, in the year 1809. We went to the house of an acquaintance of my husband, and told him we had come to be married. He sent his porter to the Rev. Dr. Lockhart, of College Church, the late county M.P.'s father, who asked if we had any one to witness the marriage.

Our answer was in the negative. The porter and Betty, the housemaid, were called in to witness—the knot was tied, which has never yet been loosed. I never saw the Doctor's face, and I can pass my word he never saw mine. We then returned to the friend's house, got some refreshment, took the road home again on foot, arrived after dark, got in unperceived by any of my girlish companions, had a cup of tea with a few of the old neighbours, and at the breakfast table next morning we took stock of our worldly gear. Our humble household plenishing was all paid, and my husband had a Spanish dollar, and on that and our two pair of hands we started, and though many battles and bustles have had to be encountered, with the help of a good and kind God, we have always been able to keep the wolf from the door."

In company with our excellent friend, William Logan, of Glasgow, we visited the interesting old couple in December, 1866, and were greatly delighted on the one hand with the appearance of the husband, so hale and strong for his years—his cheek ruddy, his nerve firm, and his reverence and love for his wife unbounded; and, on the other, with Janet's calm, commanding aspect—her clear and correct enunciation—as if (to use Scott's expression) "she spoke from a prent book"—the generous and noble sentiments she uttered on many subjects introduced—the fluency and emphasis with which she repeated a poem of her own, some one hundred lines long—and the dignity with which she was evidently bearing the great calamity of blindness. We thought involuntarily of that striking character in the Bride of Lammermoor—blind old Alice—whose sense, shrewdness, and majesty of bearing were such, that people who did not know her could hardly believe she was blind, and almost trembled in her presence, as if her sightless orbs and lofty forehead were full of essential and inevitable vision. We shall never forget the glowing enthusiasm with which Janet spoke of our hero Garibaldi, and of the cause of Italian freedom in general. Her blindness and her genius combined suggested many a memory—of worthy Dr. Blacklock, the kind-hearted patron of Burns; of Frances Brown, the blind Irish poetess; of Milton himself, and of those great ancient bards of whom

he sings (although Janet would be the last in her true modesty to wish to be compared for power to such Titans of the race):—

> "Nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equalled with me in fate,
> So were I equalled with them in renown—
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
> And Tiresias and Phineas, prophets old."

We left altogether with very peculiar emotions, and the memory of our visit to Langloan shall not soon be forgotten.

In the preface to the second edition of her Poems and Essays, Mrs. Hamilton has given a brief but pleasing sketch of her young studies; her early mastery of the alphabet; her reading of Bible stories and children's halfpenny books ere she was five years of age; her finding, when eight, upon the loom of an intellectual weaver, a copy of Paradise Lost and Allan Ramsay's poems; her becoming a reader in the village library, where she had access to many good and solid books, in history, geography, biography, travels, and voyages; her devouring, instead of novels, of which she met few, Rollin, Plutarch's Lives, Ancient Universal History, Raynal's India, and Pitscottie's Scotland, besides the *Spectator*, *Rambler*, Fergusson, Burns, and Macneill, as tidbits, while all the time she had a daily task assigned her—never neglected—first at the spinning wheel, and afterwards at the tambouring frame. Her mother, who was a very pious woman, made her read a chapter from the Bible every morning, and this practice, she says, was never omitted for a single day till she married and left the house; and "during all the years of childhood, every night when I laid my head on my pillow my mother's mouth was close at my ear praying for me, and teaching me to pray for myself."

After her marriage, when engaged in rearing a young family on small means, her reading hours were taken from her sleep, and many an hour she spent in this way, holding the book in one hand and nursing an infant on her lap with the other. In a MS. which lies before us, she gives an interesting account of the manner in which she taught her own children to read. She began to teach every one of

them to read and spell when they attained the age of five years. They were taught the alphabet and small words from the beginning of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. That was the only spelling book she ever used. The first lesson in reading she gave them was the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, with the beginning of the Book of Genesis. She describes very picturesquely her appearance while engaged in teaching her children. "The whole of the lessons were given by me when busy at the tambour frame, and the little urchin standing with book in hand beside me, and oftentimes his clothes had many patches and some rents in them, and perhaps not over clean a face, being recently employed in doing some of the duties of the housemaid, for the boys as well as the girls had to perform these duties as they grew up, till they were old enough to commence to learn trades." In this way she made them good scholars, and what was better, obedient children, and on the whole, useful and respectable members of society.

While thus employed in instructing her children, she persevered, amid all discouragements, with her own self-culture. She often tells how for years she got the loan of *Blackwood*, and, whilst nursing her child, she would take the magazine out from a sort of hole in the wall, and if any one unexpectedly entered the house she quickly replaced it, as if afraid of its being known. She did the same with Shakspeare and other noted authors, against whom in Scottish country circles there lingered then a prejudice which it was wiser to evade than to defy.

She began rather early to compose verses, and had, when between seventeen and nineteen years of age, produced about twenty pieces in rhyme, all of a strictly religious character; but after she had her third child, she did not indite a line till about the age of fifty-four, when she commenced writing for Cassells' "Working Man's Friend." It must be noticed that she could not write herself till about this age! *

Principal Robertson remarks that Burns' prose compositions, with all their faults, were, considering his opportunities,

* A facsimile of her very peculiar and self-invented handwriting is given elsewhere.

more remarkable than even his poems. And the same holds true of Janet Hamilton's prose writings. For sound, solid sense, discrimination of character, and language clear, fluent, strong, and generally correct, they no less, or perhaps even more than her poems, testify to her remarkable powers, and are calculated to recommend her writings to that large class who have no taste for poetry.

The volume now in the reader's hands is, of course, of various and unequal merit. It consists of occasional poems on public events, particular deaths, etc.; of descriptive pieces, of moral poems, and of tales and legends. All possess an interest of their own, and will attract each its own class of admirers. Those burning with political fervour will like her Garibaldian outpourings. Those whose passion is natural scenery will delight in her fine strains on Spring and October, now, alas! shadowed by the fact that these beauties no more

> "Revisit now her eyes, which roll in vain
> To find the day."

Those who are either teetotalers, or sympathise with Janet's intense hatred at whisky, will own that she expresses that detestation with the utmost eloquence, as well as sincerity. And those who like the action still more than the word in poetry will revel in her simple stories of Scottish life, expressing, like the songs of Wordsworth's "Highland Reaper,"

> "Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
> That has been, and may be again."

In all these departments Janet is more or less mistress, and that not so much from originality or splendour of genius, as from the simplicity and sincerity which stamp her poetry, like herself, "a true thing."

With all those who know Janet Hamilton there rests the impression not only that she has extraordinary powers, and deserves to rank with the principal self-taught poets of Scotland, but that above even this her moral nature towers distinguished. She is eminent for her high sense of honour and independence. She scorns everything mean, dastardly, false, and deceitful.

In her Christianity she is thoroughly sincere, and Catholic

in spirit, although attached from principle, as well as from old association, to the Church of Scotland. Her father was an ardent reformer even when that cause was unpopular, and Janet has ever taken a deep interest in the affairs of the nation, especially on public questions affecting the moral welfare and elevation of the people. Even still she must have her daily paper read to her, and in all foreign questions she continues to take especial interest.

The late Dr. Campbell, of the *British Standard*, knew Janet well, and used to say that "she had not only a firm and intelligent opinion of her own on most great public questions, but was, especially on Italian and Hungarian topics, better *posted-up* than most people."

One element of interest certainly attaches to the present volume. It is the author's last, or, as she calls it in the interesting MS. already more than once referred to, "the Benjamin of her pen." May that Benjamin never become the "Benoni," the child of her sorrow! May it meet with the generous reception with which her former productions were welcomed! We could take the somewhat lower ground of commending it as the production of a senior of seventy-three, never gifted with educational or conventional advantages, and now laden with the double burden of blindness and years. But we prefer to rest its claims upon its own literary merit, which is great, and upon the character of its author, which is nobler still.

DUNDEE, 1*st September*, 1868.

Miscellaneous Pieces.

THE COUSINS.

LILY.

Twa bonny young lassies, fair cousins, I ween,
Mair brichter or bonnier ever were seen—
Ane fair as the lily, ane ruddy and broun,
An' the twa were the brag an' pride o' oor toun.

But Lily, fair Lily, was counted the queen,
As sharp as a needle, an' trig as a preen;
Her hair was sae gowden, her een were sae blue,
Sae white an' sae sunny her bonny brent broo.

In a wee hoose she leev'd wi' her mither alane,
A puir widow bodie, wha but her had nane
To help her an' cheer her by nicht an' by day,
For Lily was warkrife, tho' blythesome an' gay.

And Lily had wooers. The ane she lo'ed best
Was Willie, the blacksmith, wha aften had press'd
For a promise that she wad be his evermair;
But mither she thocht him ower sweet to be fair.

"O Lily, tak' tent; it's no lang since ye saw
The chiel', an' o' him ye ken naething ava.
His een are sae pawkie, his speech is sae fine,
I'm wae since thou tauld me he sune wad be thine.

But Lily had promis'd, an' wadna withdraw
The troth she had gien; an' the puir mither saw
She wad lose her sweet bairn, for sune they were wed,
An' far to the nor' lan' fair Lily was led.

An' Willie to her was aye lovin' an' dear
Till a bairnie was born in the end o' the year,
An' sune he grew thochtfu', but no the less kind;
But Lily jaloused he was troubled in mind.

Three towmonds gaed by, an' she neer thocht them lang.
Ae day she was singin' an' workin' fu' thrang,
Her bairnie was trottin aboot on the floor,
Whan a woman cam' in an' steekit the door.

Then oot spak' the stranger, "There needna be strife
Atween us, for, ken ye, I'm Willie's true wife.
The proofs o' oor marriage I bear on my breast;
Ye'll see them, an' that will set matters to rest."

Syne oot frae her bosom some papers she drew.
"Read, lassie, an' see if my words binna true.
Oor marriage certificate's valid and fair,
Wi' the minister's name an' the witnesses' there.

"I cam frae the border; it's there I was bred;
There Willie he coorted me; there we were wed.
Seven towmonds hae gane since he made me his wife;
It's four since we pairted in anger an' strife."

Whan Lily had read it, wi' sorrow and shame
She said in her heart, "It's mysel' I've to blame.
To mither's gude counsel I wadna gae heed,
An' noo o' her counsel I'm sairly in need.

"O, did she but ken o' this sorrowfu' day,
Fu' weel I can guess what my mither wad say,
'Come back to me, lassie, a' s'all be forgien,
Baith thee an' thy bairn s'all be welcome, I ween.'"

An' then o' her claes she made up a bit pack,
Teuk bread in her pouch, and her bairn on her back,
Set aff thro' the muirs at the tap o' her speed,
Prayin' God to forgie and help her in need.

She wadit the burnie, and speel'd ower the stile,
To wun the hie road she gaed mony a mile,
Then sairly forfochten, an' maist like to drap,
Sat doun on the grass wi' the bairn in her lap.

When she rase to her feet, and leukit aroun',
The bairnie was sleepin', the sun was gaun doun;
A lanely farm steadin' stood by the road side,
An' there for the nicht she gat welcome to bide.

She tauld them the name o' the parish and toun
Whaur dwelt her ain mither—to her she was boun'.
The wife said, "Puir lassie, it's thretty miles lang;
The road ye maun travel, if there ye wad gang.

"But God to the shorn lambie tempers the win',
The place ye are seekin' He'll help ye to fin';
But wow ye'll be weary an' unco forfairn
Wi' the bundle ye carry, forbye the bit bairn."

"A stout heart," said Lily, "befits a stey brae.
I'll carry my burden as far as I may,
An' shou'd I be weary, sair weary," quo' she,
"It's hame to my mither, it's hame I maun be."

Her feet they were blister'd, her back like to break,
The bairn on her shouthers, his arms roun' her neck;
But neist day at gloamin' she wan to the toun,
An' there at her mither's door-cheek she sat doun.

It wasna that lang till the mither cam' oot;
Whan Lily she saw she grew white as a clout.
"O, hoo got ye speerin's? an' hoo did ye win
To me, my dear lassie? fye! come awa' in."

Sae saftly she wash'd her puir Lily's sair feet.
"Say naething, my lass, till I get ye some meat,"
An' syne the wee callan' she kin'ly teuk up,
An' he sat on' her knee and drank o' her cup.

"O mither!" said Lily, an' dichtit her een,
"But you on the yirth I hae nae ither freen;
And as lang as we leeve, thegither we'll bide;—
O dool on the day when I gaed frae your side."

Then tauld she her mither a' things that befel;
But what cam' o' Willie she never heard tell.
Noo the bairn's grown a man, an' works for his mither,
Wha says, "Like her laddie there's no sic anither."

BESSIE.

An' noo I maun tell ye o' bright Bessie Broun,
Wi' her saft dimpled cheek sae rosy an' roun',
Wi' hair like the blackbird, the licht o' her een
Like the sweet dewy star o' the gloamin', I ween.

The sang o' the lintie, that bigs in the brier,
Was like the dear lassie's, sae sweet an' sae clear;
The smile was sae witching that played roun' her mou',
The chiels were aye comin' fair Bessie to woo.

Amang them was ane, whan he tirl'd the pin,
That Bessie, saft blushin', wad bid to come in;
He socht, she had gien him, her young lovin' heart,
An' ne'er had she dream'd that ere lang they maun part.

She was couthie an' mensefu' in manner; her mind,
By muckle gude readin', was bricht an' refined;
An' aye to her knee the wee bairnies wad speel,
An' a' the gude neebors they likit her weel.

The day it was set when she wad be a bride,
An' Bessie was eident the braws to provide;
But wha disna ken that there's mony a slip
Has happened atween the fu' cup an' the lip?

Ae dreepin' hairst day she was oot in the weet,
An' gat a sair cauld, an' was laid aff her feet;
An' a' thro' the winter sae sairly she dwined,
Her young hopes were blighted, but she was resign'd.

The snawdrap an' crocus peep'd oot thro' the snaw,
But Bessie, dear Bessie, the blumes never saw;
Her true lover, Geordie, an' mither sae dear,
Were a' that she wanted to see or to hear.

Sair, sair was his heart, but hoo caum were his leuks
Whan to her he was readin' the best o' a' beuks;
She leuk'd in his een whan she cudna weel speak,
For the rose o' the hectic was bricht on her cheek.

She dee'd in his arms as he knelt by her side.
He ne'er wooed anither, or socht for a bride;
"Tho' noo she's gane frae me," he said in his heart,
"Again I s'all meet her, an' nevermair part."

LINES

Written for the first Anniversary Banquet of a newly-formed Burns' Club in Manchester.

High Bard of Scotia, brightest son of song,
Who boldly swept his master hand along
The golden strings of Caledonia's lyre,
And pour'd in magic strains and words of fire
The witching songs of love; its hopes and fears
Of love in death, embalmed with burning tears,

Of blooming nature in her flow'ry prime;
Of pathos deep, and sentiment sublime,
Of humour quaint, and wit's keen lightning glance;
The midnight's orgies of the witches' dance;
The song of Saturday's sweet evening rest,
Dear to the cottar, eve of Sabbath blest.
No sweeter music poet's hand hath wrung
From Scotia's lyre—no son of genius sung
In loftier strains—no patriot's battle cry
Like his can nerve the arm when foes are nigh.
But time forbids that we should longer dwell
On themes that thrill the heart, the bosom swell—
The name, the tuneful fame of Robert Burns,
Still to the "Auld Clay Biggin'" memory turns,
Where Scotia's genius, robed in tartan screen,
In vision'd beauty, by the bard was seen,
Binding upon his brow the holy wreath
That crown'd him King of Song in life and death.
We hail with joy and pride his natal day,
Our votive offerings on his shrine we lay,
And pay with honours meet and high regard
The homage due to Scotia's deathless bard.
Deem'd not his sire, nor mother faint and worn,
That to their arms that wild and wintry morn
A child of genius, heir of song and fame,
Was given? The halo circling round his name
Still broader, brighter grows; within its light
In bonds of brotherhood we meet to-night,
And hail with glowing hearts, with song and mirth,
The day's return that saw the poet's birth,
Not now as "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"
Long laid to rest on freedom's gory bed—
Not as of yore in battle's fierce turmoil:
We meet as brothers on fair England's soil,
And here with clasping hands and hearts unite,
While mingling round the festive board to-night,
To hail the infant year, for then returns
The day we bless—the natal day of Burns.

CRINOLINE.

AULD SCOTLAN' gangs yirmin an' chanerin' alane;
She wunners whaur a' her trig lassocks ha'e gane;
She's trampit the kintra, an' socht thro' the toons,
An' fan' the fule hizzies—blawn oot like balloons!

Can they be my lassocks—ance cozie an' cosh,
Weel shapit, weel happit—sae stumpy an' tosh?
Twa coats an' a toush, or a goon, ye may ween,
Were boukie aneuch, wi' what nature had gi'en.

They're aye i' my e'e, an' they're aye i' my gate—
At the kirk I am chirtit maist oot o' my seat;
When caul', to the ingle I needna gae ben,
If Kate an' her crinoline's on the fire-en'.

Whan a lad wi' a lassie foregethers yenoo,
It's no her bricht een, or her rosie wee mou',
Her snod cockernony, waist jimpy an' fine,
That first tak's his e'e—it's the big crinoline!

To say that he likes it would juist be a lee—
But ye ken that the big thing attracts aye the wee—
An' the lass that cares nocht 'bout her heart an' her heid,
Tak's care that her crinoline's weel spread abreed.

An' say, if dame Nature wad gi'e at her birth,
To ilka wee lassie that's born on the yirth,
A bouk o' her ain, that grew bigger ilk year,
Ye'd no be sae prood o' the giftie I fear.

Whan a widow was burnt i' the Indian suttees,
To honour the dead, and the fause gods to please,
The puir heathen body I'm pincht to accuse,
Whan I read o' they crinoline deaths i' the news.

Sae aff wi' the whalebone, the cane, an' the steel!
I likena the crinoline, trouth an' atweel;
It's fule-like an' fashous, it's cheatrie an' boss—
I wad juist ha'e yer cleedin' bien, genty, an' doss.

THE MOTHER AT HOME.

A VOICE deep and solemn is sounding abroad!
O mothers of Britain! each humble abode
Should echo the burden with which it is fraught—
Our children, they must be instructed and taught.

O mothers of Scotland! I call you by name;
I bid you arise and rescue your fair fame;
Let your eyes trickle down like a fountain of tears,
For young ones neglected through crime-shrouded years.

O poor peasant mother—O working man's wife!
Your child's food and clothing, his health and his life
Should be toiled for, and cared for, as only a part
Of your duty; oh, culture his mind and his heart!

Your cares are full many, your leisure is small,
But the souls of your babes are more precious than all;
While you toil with your hands you should watch, teach, and pray,
For where there's a will there is ever a way!

O mothers! your prayers, instructions, and rules,
With the voice of the teacher, and lore of the schools,
Should ever be joined, and when faithfully given,
You may hope, you may trust, in the blessing of Heaven.

The statesman, the patriot, the Christian, have found—
Though grants, schools, and teachers increase and abound—
For juvenile ignorance and vice there must come,
Best help, truest cure, from the Mother at Home.

Social and Moral Essays.

THE USES AND PLEASURES OF POETRY FOR THE WORKING CLASSES.

I HAVE often thought and felt it to be matter of deep regret that working-men and women, in consequence of their social position, and the want of means and leisure, are to a great extent debarred from the attainment of the elegant tastes and refined perceptions acquired by those on whom the gifts of fortune, and a desire of improving and adorning their minds, have conferred the high advantages of a liberal and finished education. Still, the working-man who is a good English reader, and possessed of an intellectual cast of mind, seasoned with a dash of fancy and feeling—although he may never have offered up his personal devotions at the shrine of the Muses, nor ever essayed to "build the lofty rhyme," thanks to the facilities afforded by cheap literature! may yet indulge a taste for the sublime and beautiful, and be quite as capable of appreciating the treasures contained in the rich and varied stores of the higher walks of the best poets, as if he had ascended through all the gradations of learning from the parish school to the finale of a classical education in the patrician halls of Oxford or Cambridge. The workman may never be able to "tread the classic shores of Italy;" he may never feast his eyes on the glorious monuments of antiquity which surround the eternal city; he may never roam the sunny land of Greece,

"Land of the Muses and of mighty men;"

nor glide with oar and sail over the gorgeous waters of the Golden Horn; nor wander over

"Syria's land of roses"

and feel

"The light wings of zephyr, oppressed with perfume,"

fanning his cheek amid the roses of Sharon in the Holy Land.

No; the workman, as such, will probably never see, except in dreams, these lands of song and story, nor gaze upon the glowing scenes where all that is grand and beautiful in nature and art combine to trance the soul in admiration; but still he can, when the toils of the day are ended, retire to his home, and having performed his ablutions, and solaced himself with

"The cup which cheers but not inebriates,"

he then,

"When worldly crowds retire to revel or to rest,"

can

"Trim his little fire,"

or light his frugal taper; and while holding communion with the spirits of the mighty masters of song in their immortal pages, may feel every noble principle of his mind strengthened, every emotion of his heart warmed and purified, and every feeling refined and elevated. Does his heart beat and his pulse throb with sorrow and indignation at the wrongs and sufferings of the Magyars

"When leagued oppression poured to Northern wars
Her whisker'd pandours and her fierce hussars?"

Then will he feel the full force of the sentiment expressed by the bard when he exclaimed—

Oh! bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
Hungaria fell, unwept, without a crime!"

Or, does all the soul of man stir within him and leap out to those men who feel for, speak for, write for, nay, who spend and are spent for the cause of

"Yonder poor o'er-laboured wights,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who beg a brother of the earth
To give them leave to toil?"

Yes, to those large-hearted men who are striving to heal the sores of the beggar Lazarus, and teaching him how to obtain a nobler meal than the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table; and will not his heart respond in

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,"

to the fervid rhymes launched by the muse of Elliott at those who, like Dives, "are clothed in purple and fine linen,

and fare sumptuously every day," and yet see unmoved their poor brother laid down to perish at their gates? And when his faith is assailed, his ears pained by the cavillings of the Deist, or the sneers of the Infidel amongst the associates of his labour, let him turn to the sublime thoughts of Young, the poet of the night, where awful truths, arrayed in solemn and majestic garb, shall uncurl the lip of the scoffer and silence the cavils of the sceptic; or with Cowper he will deplore

> "The quenchless thirst of ruinous inebriety,
> The stale debauch forth issuing from the styes
> Which law has licensed. . . . .
> . . . . While ten thousand casks,
> For ever dribbling forth their base contents,
> Touched by the Midas finger of the State,
> Bleed gold for Ministers to sport withal."

And will not he at times rise on the wings of fancy and hover enraptured over the bright world of scenic creations produced by the magic pencil of him, the great poet, painter, and worshipper of nature, glorious Shakspeare? And when he hails the return of the thrice-blessed and thrice-welcome day of sacred rest—that true well in the desert, in whose cool and sparkling waters the working-man, weary and panting from the dusty ways of life, will slake his parching thirst, and lave his flushed and throbbing temples; and then,

> "If summer be the tide, and sweet the hour,"

let him wander forth to the green woodlands, or recline on the fragrant meadow, with the Bard of Paradise for his companion, and soon the Miltonic Muse shall waft him aloft on her ethereal pinions to the sanctuary of God, there to listen with rapt adoration to the eternal councils of peace between the Father and Son on the future salvation of man; or his heart may be attuned to the melodies of heaven, and in spirit he can join in the ecstatic and jubilant anthems of cherubim and seraphim, celebrating the triumphs of the Eternal Son, when by His omnipotent right hand, armed with winged and scorching lightnings, He drove forth the apostate angels, blasted and howling—

> "Down from the crystal battlements of heaven
> With sheer descent"—

to the burning gulf below; or the scene is changed, and, lo! before his visioned eye passes the sublime panorama of the Creation. He stands in the presence of the Deity; he sees the mystic Dove brooding over the chaos of dark and troubled waters which cover the void and formless earth; he hears the Almighty fiat, "Let there be light," and he sees the conflicting and struggling elements separated, arranged, and organised by the word of His power into all the forms of order, utility, and beauty, so as to be most conducive to the glory of the Divine Architect and the use and accommodation of man. And now the Divine Urania will introduce him into the presence of the first human pair, fresh from the hand of God—glorious in beauty, and sinless in soul. He may roam through the groves of Paradise, and join with them in their morning and evening orisons—he may recline with them in the bowers of Eden on a couch of amaranth, and, while holding converse with angels, partake of the ambrosial fruits culled by the hand of the mother of all living. But this is, indeed, an inexhaustible subject, and one to which my limited powers can by no means render justice; yet it is truly consoling for working-men and women to know—ay, and to feel—that on them, amidst all the toils, privations, and hardships incidental to their position in life, the gifts of God, of Nature, and of the Muses are as impartially and profusely bestowed as on that portion of the community whose highest distinctions are too often found to consist only in the accidents of birth and fortune.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,"

sings the poet; and "sweet are the uses of poetry," says the working-man of cultivated intellect and refined feeling—for to him there exists not a situation so irksome, a care so crushing, a trial so painful, a privation so severe, a suffering so intense, but he has felt in them all, that, next to the consolations of religion, those of Divine poesy are most potent in power to

"Minister to a mind diseased,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the charged bosom of that perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart."

And amidst blasted hopes and wasted aspirations he may imbibe the very spirit of courage, patience, and resignation, by appropriating the sublime sentiments expressed by Campbell in those beautiful lines:—

"Be hushed, my dark spirit, for wisdom condemns
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore.
Through the perils of chance and the scowl of disdain
May thy front be unaltered, thy courage elate!
Yea, even the name I have worshipped in vain
Shall awake not the sigh of remembrance again—
To bear is to conquer our fate!"

SOCIAL SCIENCE ESSAY ON SELF-EDUCATION.

On the all-important subjects of self-education and culture of the mind and heart, I must say that I have found my long-cherished opinion on these deeply-interesting topics fully borne out by actual experience and close observation. The opinion which has been maturing during a long period of my life is this:—If a man is a tolerable English reader, and can write a plain hand, and is justly impressed with a sense of the necessity and importance of being possessed of a cultivated and educated mind, with a view of turning such attainments to the best advantage in his future career, and if he has a due appreciation of the incalculable benefits conferred on himself and others, in a mental, moral, and physical sense, by his success, then undoubtedly he may and can, by the steady exercise of a well-regulated will, unflinching perseverance and patience, fully attain this most desirable object, no matter how scanty his means or short his intervals of leisure. Let the will to do, and the desire to have, be maintained in force, and there is no difficulty he will not overcome—no obstacle he will not surmount; for in this case, perhaps more than in any other, is the trite but true saying verified, "Where there is a will there is a way." Such a man must be possessed of an inquiring turn of mind, with a taste for reading; and if he goes with a will in the right