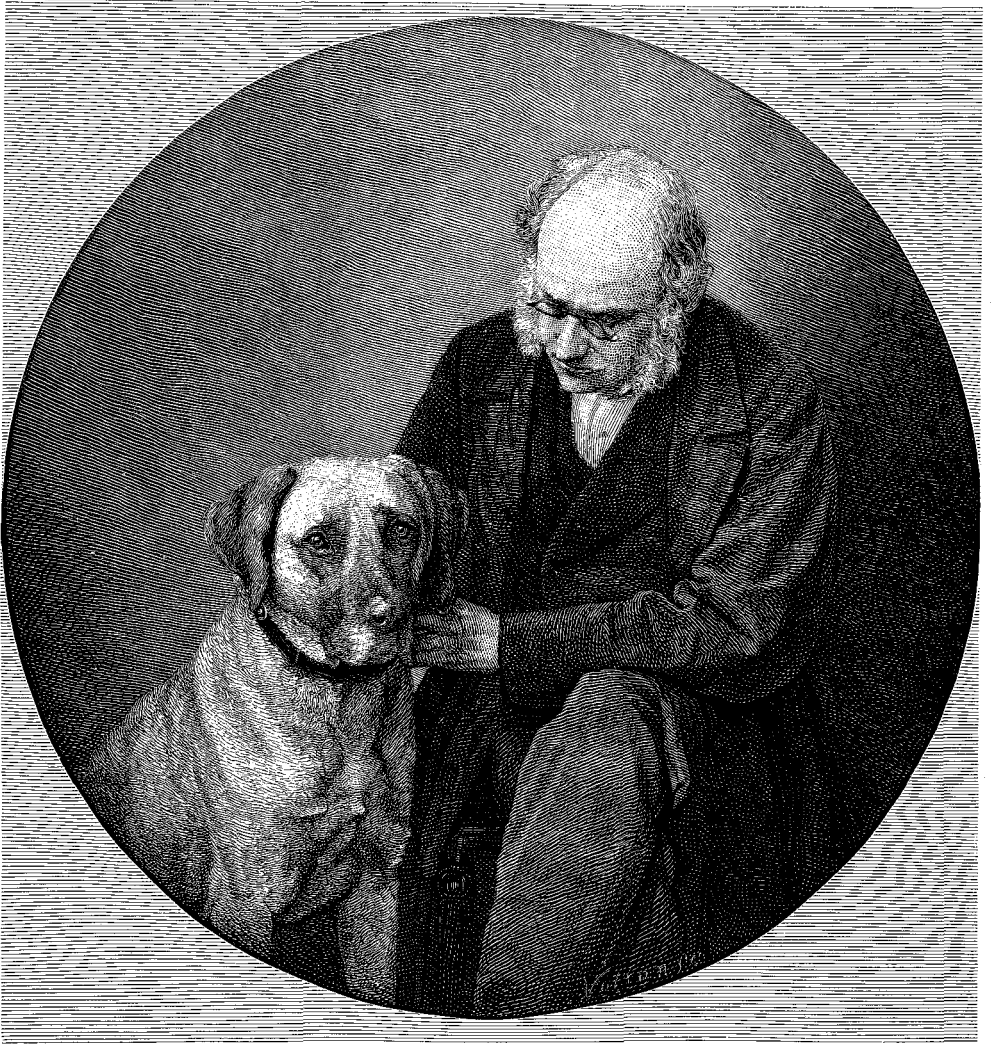


## RAB'S FRIEND.



DR. JOHN BROWN AND RAB.

TO SAY what ought to be said concerning Dr. John Brown, a man should have known him well and long, and should remember much of that old generation of Scotchmen to which the author of "Rab and his Friends" belonged. But that generation has departed. One by one these wits and scholars of the North, these *epigoni*, who were not, indeed, of the heroes, but who had seen and remembered Scott and Wilson, have passed away. Aytoun and Carlyle and Dr. Burton, and last, Dr. Brown, are gone. In her recent memoir of Dr. Burton,—the historian of Scot-

land, and author of "The Book-hunter,"—Mrs. Burton remarks that, in her husband's later days, only Dr. John Brown and Professor Blackie remained of all her husband's ancient friends and coevals, of all who remembered Lockhart, and Hogg, and their times. But many are left who knew Dr. Brown far better and more intimately than the author of this notice. I can hardly say when I first became acquainted with him; probably it was in my childhood. Ever since I was a boy, certainly, I have seen him at intervals, especially in the Christmas vacations. But he seldom moved

from Edinburgh, except in summer, which he frequently passed in the country house of certain friends of his, whose affection made much of the happiness of his latest years, and whose unflinching kindness attended him in his dying hours. Living always in Scotland, Dr. Brown was seen but rarely by his friends who resided in England. Thus, though Dr. Brown's sweetness of disposition and charm of manner, his humor, and his unflinching sympathy and encouragement, made one feel toward him as to a familiar friend, yet, of his actual life I saw but little, and have few reminiscences to contribute. One can only speak of that singular geniality of his, that temper of goodness and natural tolerance and affection, which, as Scotchmen best know, is so rare among the Scotch. Our race does not need to pray, like the mechanic in the story, that Providence will give us "a good conceit of ourselves." But we must acknowledge that the Scotch temper is critical if not captious, argumentative, inclined to look at the seamy side of men and of their performances, and to dwell on imperfections rather than on merits and virtues. An example of these blemishes of the Scotch disposition, carried to an extreme degree in the nature of a man of genius, is offered to the world in the writings and "Reminiscences" of Mr. Carlyle. Now, Dr. John Brown was at the opposite pole of feeling. He had no mawkish toleration of things and people intolerable, but he preferred not to turn his mind that way. His thoughts were with the good, the wise, the modest, the learned, the brave of times past, and he was eager to catch a reflection of their qualities in the characters of the living, of all with whom he came into contact. He was, for example, almost optimistic in his estimate of the work of young people in art or literature. From everything that was beautiful or good, from a summer day by the Tweed, or from the eyes of a child, or from the humorous saying of a friend, or from treasured memories of old Scotch worthies, from recollections of his own childhood, from experience of the stoical heroism of the poor, he seemed to extract matter for pleasant thoughts of men and the world, and nourishment for his own great and gentle nature. I have never known any man to whom other men seemed so dear,—men dead, and men living. He gave his genius to knowing them, and to making them better known, and his unselfishness thus became not only a great personal virtue, but a great literary charm. When you met him, he had some "good story" or some story of goodness to tell,—for both came alike to him, and his humor was as unflinching as his kindness. There was in his face a singular charm,

VOL. XXV.—24.

blended, as it were, of the expressions of mirth and of patience. Being most sensitive to pain, as well as to pleasure, he was an exception to that rule of Rochefoucauld's,—"*nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d'autrui.*"\* He did not bear easily the misfortunes of others, and the evils of his own lot were heavy enough. They saddened him; but neither illness, nor his poignant anxiety for others, could sour a nature so unselfish. He appeared not to have lost that anodyne and consolation of religious hope, which had been the strength of his forefathers, and was his best inheritance from a remarkable race of Scotchmen. Wherever he came, he was welcome; people felt glad when they had encountered him in the streets,—the streets of Edinburgh, where almost every one knows every one by sight,—and he was at least as joyously received by the children and the dogs as by the grown-up people of every family. A friend has kindly shown me a letter in which it is told how Dr. Brown's love of dogs, his interest in a half blind old Dandy which was attached to him, was evinced in the very last hours of his life. But enough has been said, in general terms, about the character of "the beloved physician," as Dr. Brown was called in Edinburgh, and a brief account may be given, in some detail, of his life and ways.

Dr. John Brown was born in Biggar, one of the gray, slaty-looking little towns in the pastoral moorlands of southern Scotland. These towns have no great beauty that they should be admired by strangers, but the natives, as Scott said to Washington Irving, are attached to their "gray hills," and to the Tweed, so beautiful where man's greed does not pollute it, that the Border people are all in love with it, as Tyro, in Homer, loved the divine Enipeus. We hold it "far the fairest of the floods that run upon the earth." How dear this border scenery was to Dr. John Brown, and how well he knew and could express its legendary magic, its charm woven of countless ancient spells, the music of old ballads, the sorcery of old stories, may be understood by readers of his essay on "Minchmoor."† The father of Dr. Brown was the third in a lineage of ministers of the sect called Seceders. To explain who the Seceders were, it would be necessary to explore the sinking morasses of Scotch ecclesiastical history. The minister was proud of being not only a "Seceder" but a "Burgher." He inherited, to be brief, the traditions of a most spiritually minded and most spirited set of

\* It is easy to bear the misfortunes of others.

† In the third volume of his essays.

men, too much bent, it may appear to us, on establishing delicate distinctions of opinions, but certainly most true to themselves and to their own ideals of liberty and of faith. Dr. Brown's great-grandfather had been a shepherd boy, who taught himself Greek that he might read the New Testament; who walked twenty-four miles—leaving his folded sheep in the night—to buy the precious volume in St. Andrews, and who, finally, became a teacher of much repute among his own people. Of Dr. Brown's father, he himself wrote a most touching and beautiful account in his "Letter to John Cairns, D. D." This essay contains, perhaps, the very finest passages that the author ever penned. His sayings about his own childhood remind one of the manner of Lamb, without that curious fantastic touch which is of the essence of Lamb's style. The following lines, for example, are a revelation of childish psychology, and probably may be applied, with almost as much truth, to the childhood of our race :

"Children are long of seeing, or at least of looking at what is above them; they like the ground, and its flowers and stones, its 'red sodgers' and lady birds, and all its queer things; *their world is about three feet high*, and they are more often stooping than gazing up. I know I was past ten before I saw, or cared to see, the ceilings of the rooms in the manse at Biggar."

I have often thought that the earliest fathers of our race, child-like in so many ways, were child-like in this, and worshiped, not the phenomena of the heavens, but objects more on a level with their eyes,—the "queer things" of their low-lying world. In this essay on his father, Dr. Brown has written lines about a child's first knowledge of death, which seem as noteworthy as Steele's famous passage about his father's death and his own half-conscious grief and anger. Dr. Brown describes a Scottish funeral—the funeral of his own mother—as he saw it with the eyes of a boy of five years old, while his younger brother, a baby of a few months,

"leaped up and crowed with joy at the strange sight,—the crowding horsemen, the coaches, and the nodding plumes of the hearse. \* \* \* Then, to my surprise and alarm, the coffin, resting on its bearers, was placed over the dark hole, and I watched with curious eye the unrolling of those neat black bunches of cords, which I have often enough seen since. My father took the one at the head, and also another much smaller, springing from the same point as his, which he had caused to be placed there, and unrolling it, put it into my hand. I twisted it firmly round my fingers, and awaited the result; the burial men with their real ropes lowered the coffin, and when it rested at the bottom it was too far down for me to see it. The grave was made very deep, as he used afterward to tell us, that it might hold us all. My father first and

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

The man who wrote this, and many another passage as true and tender, might surely have been famous in fiction, if he had turned his powers that way. He had imagination, humor, pathos; he was always studying and observing life; his last volume, especially, is like a collection of fragments that might have gone toward making a work, in some ways not inferior to the romances of Scott. When the third volume of *Essays* was published, in the spring of this year, a reviewer, who apparently had no personal knowledge of Dr. Brown, asked why he did not write a novel. He was by that time over seventy years of age, and, though none guessed it, within a few weeks of his death. What he might have done, had he given himself to literature only, it is impossible to guess. But he caused so much happiness, and did so much good, in that gentle profession of healing which he chose, and which brought him near to many who needed consolation more than physic, that we need not regret his deliberate choice. Literature had only his *horæ Subsecivæ*, as he said: *Subsecivæ quedam tempora quæ ego perire non patior*, as Cicero writes, "shreds and waste ends of time, which I suffer not to be lost."

The kind of life which Dr. Brown's father and his people lived at Biggar, the austere life of work, and of thought intensely bent on the real aim of existence, on God, on the destiny of the soul, is perhaps rare now, even in rural Scotland. From what one reads in American books, this earnest and always present interest in spiritual things is more common among the rural people of the United States, who are described as obedient to the motto of that ring found on Magus Moor, where Archbishop Shairp was murdered, *Remember upon Delthe*. If any reader has not yet made the acquaintance of Dr. Brown's works, one might counsel him to begin with the "Letter to John Cairns, D. D.," the fragment of biography and autobiography; the description of the fountain-heads from which the genius of the author flowed. In his early boyhood,

\* "I remember I went into the room where my father's body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin and calling 'Papa,' for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there."—Steele, "The Tatler," June 6, 1710.



John Brown was educated by his father, a man who, from his son's affectionate description, seems to have confined a fiery and romantic genius within the channels of Seceder and Burgher theology. When the father received a call to the "Rose Street Secession Church," in Edinburgh, the son became a pupil of that ancient Scotch seminary, the High School,—the school where Scott was taught not much Latin and no Greek worth mentioning. Scott was still alive and strong in those days, and Dr. Brown describes how he and his school companions would take off their hats to the Shirra as he passed in the streets. "Though lame, he was nimble, and all rough and alive with power; had you met him anywhere else, you would say he was a Liddesdale store farmer, come of gentle blood,—'a stout, blunt carle,' as he says of himself, with the swing and stride and the eye of a man of the hills,—a large, sunny, out-of-door air all about him. On his broad and stooping shoulders was set that head which, with Shakspeare's and Bonaparte's, is the best known in all the world." Scott was then living in 39 Castle street. I do not know whether the American pilgrims, whom one meets moving constantly in the direction of Melrose and Abbotsford, have thought of making pilgrimage to Castle street, and to the grave, there, of Scott's "dear old friend,"—his dog Camp. Of Dr. Brown's school-boy days, one knows little,—days when "Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary street from the High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwined, as only lovers and boys know how or why." Concerning the doctor's character, he has left it on record that he liked a dog-fight. "'A dog-fight,' shouted Bob and was off, and so was I, both of us all hot, praying that it might not be over before we were up. \* \* \* Dogs like fighting; old Isaac [Watts, not Walton] says they 'delight' in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. This is a very different thing from a love of making dogs fight." And this was the most famous of all dog-fights,—since the old Irish Brehons settled the laws of that sport, and gravely decided what was to be done if a child interfered, or an idiot, or a woman, or a one-eyed man,—for this was the dog-fight in which Rab first was introduced to his historian. Six years passed after this battle, and Dr. Brown was a medical student and a clerk at Minto Hospital. How he renewed his acquaintance there, and in what sad circumstances, with Rab and his friends, it is superfluous to tell, for every one who reads at all has read that story, and

most readers not without tears. As a medical student in Edinburgh, Dr. Brown made the friendship of Mr. Syme, the famous surgeon,—a friendship only closed by death. I only saw them once together, a very long time ago, and then from the point of view of a patient. These occasions are not agreeable, and patients, like the old cock which did not crow when plucked, are apt to be "very much absorbed"; but Dr. Brown's attitude toward the man whom he regarded with the reverence of a disciple, as well as with the affection of a friend, was very remarkable. When his studies were over, Dr. Brown practised for a year as assistant to a surgeon in Chatham. It must have been when he was at Chatham that a curious event occurred. Many years later, Charles Dickens was in Edinburgh, reading his stories in public, and was dining with some Edinburgh people. Dickens began to speak about the panic which the cholera had caused in England: how ill some people had behaved. As a contrast, he mentioned that, at Chatham, one poor woman had died, deserted by every one except a young physician. Some one, however, ventured to open the door, and found the woman dead, and the young doctor asleep, overcome with the fatigue that mastered him on his patient's death, but quite untouched by the general panic. "Why that was Dr. John Brown," one of the guests observed; and it seems that, thus early in his career, the doctor had been setting an example of the courage and charity of his profession. After a year spent in Chatham, he returned to Edinburgh, where he spent the rest of his life, busy partly with his art of healing, partly with literature. He lived in Rutland street, near the railway station, by which Edinburgh is approached from the west, and close to Prince's street, the chief street of the town, separated by a green valley, once a loch, from the high Castle Rock. A view of the drawing-room in the house in Rutland street accompanies this paper. It was the room in which his friends were accustomed to see Dr. Brown, and a room full of interest it was. In his long life, the doctor had gathered round him many curious relics of artists and men of letters; a drawing of a dog by Turner I remember particularly, and a copy of "Don Juan," in the first edition, with Byron's manuscript notes. Dr. Brown had a great love and knowledge of art and of artists, from Turner to Leech; and he had very many friends among men of letters, such as Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Thackeray. Dr. Brown himself was a clever designer of rapid little grotesques, rough sketches of dogs and men. One or



DR. JOHN BROWN'S DRAWING-ROOM.\*

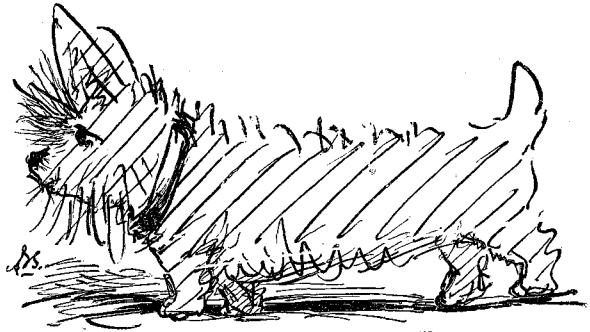
two of them are engraved in the little paper-covered booklets in which some of his essays were separately published,—booklets which he was used to present to people who came to see him and who were interested in all that he did [see next page]. I remember some vivacious grotesques which he drew for one of my brothers when we were school-boys. These little things were carefully treasured by boys who knew Dr. Brown, and found him friendly, and capable of sustaining a conversation on the points of a Dandy Dinmont terrier and other mysteries important to youth. He was a bibliophile,—a taste which he inherited from his father, who “began collecting books

when he was twelve, and was collecting up to his last hours.” The last time I ever saw Dr. Brown, about a year ago, he was kind enough to lend me one of the rarest of his treasures, “Poems,” by Mr. Ruskin. Probably Mr. Ruskin had presented the book to his old friend; in no other way were it easy to procure writings which the author has withdrawn from publication, if, indeed, they ever were, properly speaking, published. Thus Dr. Brown was all things to all men, and to all boys. He “had a word for every one,” as poor people say, and a word to the point, for he was as much at home with the shepherd on the hills, or with the

\* “The room is crowded with pictures, engravings, books, and pretty things of all kinds,—nothing, perhaps, very valuable, but nearly all of them with a history—nearly all given to him, in one way or another, by some one who admired or loved him. The frame in the middle line, on the extreme right of the fireside, contains five of Leech’s little original drawings; and there is a famous larger one on the same line, beyond the head of Tennyson, while beneath is the grand Goldsmith, ‘in his new suit,’ from Thackeray’s ‘Humorists.’ The black picture diagonally to the right, above him, contains the original sketch by George Harvey, of the girl’s head (including his daughter and Dr. Brown’s) made for his picture of ‘Leaving the Manse,’ and afterward utilized as ‘Rab’s Friends’ in the illustrated edition. Above the bust, to the left, is the best of the heads of ‘Rab,’ by the very clever young animal painter, Edwin Douglass. The white frame to the left of the gas-globe shows, by a slight penciled profile likeness, the beautiful head of Mrs. Brown in her prime; that partially concealed by the other glass globe is her likeness as a young girl, and immediately below it is her bust, the other bust on the mantelpiece being that of Dr. John Scott, the Edinburgh physician, while the portrait behind is that of John Scott of the ‘London Magazine,’ who was an uncle or cousin of Mrs. Brown. The engraving in middle line, immediately to the left of the mantelpiece, is Turner’s ‘Devil’s Bridge,’ over the Reuss in the Altdorf Valley; and the bull-dog’s head to the left of it,—a fine engraving,—bears the inscription: ‘Not an approach to the great Rab, but—Yours truly, E. Landseer.’ The pictures to the left of young John’s bust are, first, a very beautiful and characteristic landscape of Harvey’s,—much akin in character to that engraved in the illustrated Rab,—for ‘Rab’s Grave’; and, next, a small, but very good likeness of old Dr. Brown, Dr. Brown’s father. There is also a wonderfully clever spaniel dog drawn by Turner, and a drawing by Ruskin, both being, I think, presented by Ruskin. Of the books on the table, may be noticed two volumes of O. W. Holmes’s poetical works, the gift of the ‘Autocrat,’ with a letter which gave Dr. Brown as much pleasure as anything that had come to him for years.”—*From a letter from a friend of Dr. Brown.*

angler between Hollylea and Clonfert, as with the dusty book-hunter, or the doggy young Border yeoman, or the child who asked him to "draw her a picture," or the friend of genius famous through all the world, Thackeray, when he "spoke, as he seldom did, of divine things."

Three volumes of essays are all that Dr. Brown has left in the way of compositions: a light, but imperishable literary baggage. His studies are usually derived from personal experience, which he reproduced with singular geniality and simplicity, or they are drawn from the tradition of the elders, the reminiscences of long-lived Scotch people, who, themselves, had listened attentively to those who went before them. Since Scott, these ancient ladies with wonderful memories have had no such attentive listener or appreciative reporter as Dr. Brown. His paper called "Mystifications," a narrative of the pranks of Miss Stirling Graham, is a brief, vivid record of the clever and quaint society of Scotland sixty years ago. Scotland, or at least Scottish society, is now only English society,—a little narrower, a little prouder, sometimes even a little duller. But old people of position spoke the old Scotch tongue sixty years ago, and were full of wonderful genealogies, full of reminiscences of "the '45," and the adventures of the Jacobites. The very last echoes of that ancient world are dying now from memory, like the wide reverberations of that gun which Miss Nelly MacWilliam heard on the day when Prince Charles landed, and which resounded strangely all through Scotland. The children of this generation, one fears, will hardly hear of these old raids and duels, risings and rebellions, by oral tradition handed down, unbroken, through aunts and grandmothers. Scott reaped a full, late harvest of the mem-



THE DUCHESS. [FROM "OUR DOGS."]

ories of clannish and feudal Scotland; Dr. Brown came as a later gleaner, and gathered these stirring tales of "A Jacobite Family" which are published in the last volume of his essays. When he was an observer, not a hearer only, Dr. Brown chiefly studied and best wrote of the following topics: passages and characters of humor and pathos which he encountered in his life and profession; children, dogs, Border scenery, and fellow-workers in life and science. Under one or other of these categories all his best compositions might be arranged. The most famous and most exquisite of all his works in the first class is the unrivaled "Rab and his Friends"—



ORAT, FLORAT, ET ADORAT. [FROM "OUR DOGS."]

a study of the stoicism and tenderness of the Lowland character worthy of Scott. In a minor way the little paper on "Jeems," the doorkeeper in a Dissenting house of the Lord, is interesting to Scotch people, though it must seem a rather curious revelation to all others. "Her Last Half Crown" is another study of the honesty that survived in a starving and outcast Scotch girl, when all other virtues, as we commonly reckon virtue, had gone before her character to some place where, let us hope, they may rejoin her; for if we are to suffer for the vices which have abandoned us, may we not get some credit for the virtues that we have abandoned, but that once were ours, in some heaven paved with bad resolutions unfulfilled? "The Black Dwarf's Bones" is a sketch of the misshapen creature from whom Scott borrowed the character that gives a name to one of his minor Border stories. The real Black Dwarf (David Ritchie he was called among men) was fond of poetry, but hated Burns. He was polite to the fair, but classed mankind at large with his favorite aversions: ghosts, fairies, and robbers. There



WULL OO RIPP 'ER UP NOO? [FROM "JEEMS, THE DOORKEEPER."]



was this of human about the Black Dwarf, that "he hated folk that are aye gaun to dee, and never do't." The village beauties were wont to come to him for a Judgment of Paris on their charms, and he presented each with a flower, which was of a fixed value in his standard of things beautiful. One kind of rose, the prize of the most fair, he only gave thrice. Paris could not have done his dooms more courteously, and, if he had but made judicious use of rose, lily, and lotus, as prizes, he might have pleased all the three Goddesses; Troy still might be standing, and the lofty house of King Priam.

Among Dr. Brown's papers on children, that called "Pet Marjorie" holds the highest place. Perhaps certain passages are "wrote too sentimentally," as Marjorie Fleming herself remarked about the practice of many authors. But it was difficult to be perfectly composed when speaking of this wonderful fairy-like little girl, whose affection was as warm as her humor and genius were precocious. "Infant phenomena" are seldom agreeable, but Marjorie was so humorous, so quick-tempered, so kind, that we cease to regard her as an intellectual "phenomenon." Her memory remains sweet and blossoming in its dust, like that of little Penelope Boothby, the child in the mob cap whom Sir Joshua painted, and who died very soon after she was thus made immortal. It is superfluous to quote from the essay on Marjorie Fleming; every one knows about her and her studies: "Isabella is teaching me to make simme collings, nots of interrigations, peorids, commoes, etc." Here is a Shaksperian criticism, of which few but Mr. Burnand (who thinks Shakspeare tedious to a nineteenth century audience) will deny the correctness: "*Macbeth* is a pretty composition, but awful one." Again, "I never read sermons of any kind, but I read novelettes and my Bible." "Tom Jones and Gray's Elegey in a country churchyard are both excellent, and much spoke of by both sex, particularly by the men." Her Calvinistic belief in "*unquestionable* fire and brimston" is unhesitating, but the young theologian appears to have substituted "*unquestionable*" for "*unquenchable*." There is something humorous in the alteration, as if Marjorie refused to be put off with an "excellent family substitute" for fire and brimstone, and demanded the "*unquestionable*" article, no other being genuine, please observe trade-mark.

Among Dr. Brown's contributions to the humorous study of dogs, "Rab," of course, holds the same place as Marjorie among his sketches of children. But as his "Queen Mary's Child Garden," the description of the

little garden which Mary Stuart played in when a child, is second to "Marjorie," so "Our Dogs" is a good second to "Rab." Perhaps Dr. Brown never wrote anything more mirthful than his description of the sudden birth of the virtue of courage in Toby, a comic but cowardly mongrel, a cur of low degree.

"Toby was in the way of hiding his culinary bones in the small gardens before his own and the neighboring doors. Mr. Scrymgeour, two doors off, a bulky, choleric, red-haired, red-faced man—*torvo vultu*—was, by law of contrast, a great cultivator of flowers, and he had often scowled Toby into all but non-existence by a stamp of his foot and a glare of his eye. One day, his gate being open, in walks Toby with a huge bone, and making a hole where Scrymgeour had two minutes before been planting some precious slip, the name of which on paper and on a stick Toby made very light of, substituted his bone, and was engaged covering it, or thinking he was covering it up with his shovelling nose, when S. spied him through the inner glass door, and was out upon him, like the Assyrian, with a terrific *growl*. I watched them. Instantly Toby made at him with a roar, too, and an eye more torve than Scrymgeour's, who, retreating without reserve, fell prostrate, there is reason to believe, in his own lobby. Toby contented himself with proclaiming his victory at the door, and, returning, finished his bone-planting at his leisure; the enemy, who had scuttled behind the glass-door, glaring at him. From this moment Toby was an altered dog. Pluck at first sight was lord of all. \* \* \* That very evening he paid a visit to Leo, next door's dog, a big tyrannical bully and coward. \* \* \* To him Toby paid a visit that very evening, down into his den, and walked about, as much as to say, 'Come on, Macduff'; but Macduff did not come on."

This story is one of the most amazing examples of instant change of character on record, and disproves the skeptical remark that "no one was ever converted, except prize-fighters, and colonels in the army." I am sorry to say that Dr. Brown was too fond of dogs to be very much attached to cats. I never heard him say anything against cats, or, indeed, against anybody; but there are passages in his writings which tend to show that, when young and thoughtless, he was not far from regarding cats as "the higher vermin." He tells a story of a Ghazi puss, so to speak, a victorious cat, which, intrenched in a drain, defeated three dogs with severe loss, and finally escaped unharmed from her enemies. Dr. Brown's family gloried in the possession of a Dandy Dinmont named John Pym, whose cousin (Auld Pepper) belonged to one of my brothers. Dr. Brown was much interested in Pepper, a dog whose family pride was only matched by that of the mother of Candide, and, at one time, threatened to result in the extinction of this branch of the House of Pepper. Dr. Brown had remarked, and my own observations confirm it, that when a Dandy is not game, his apparent lack of courage arises "from kindness of heart."

Among Dr. Brown's landscapes, as one may call his descriptions of scenery, and of the ancient historical associations with Scotch scenery, "Minchmoor" is the most important. He had always been a great lover of the Tweed. The walk which he commemorates in "Minchmoor" was taken, if I am not mistaken, in company with Principal Shairp, Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, and author of one of the most beautiful of Tweedside songs, a modern "Bush aboon Traquair":

"And what saw ye there,  
At the bush aboon Traquair;  
Or what did ye hear that was worth your heed?  
I heard the cushie croon  
Thro' the gowden afternoon,  
And the Quair burn singing down to the vale o' Tweed."

American pilgrims to the country of Scott will find no pleasanter walk than that which Dr. Brown took in the summer afternoon. Within a few miles, many places famous in history and ballad may be visited: the road by which Montrose's men fled from Philiphaugh fight; Traquair House, with the bears on its gates, as on the portals of the Baron of Bradwardine; Williamhope, where Scott and Mungo Park, the African explorer, went their several ways. From the crest of the road you see all the Border hills, the Maiden Paps, the Eildons cloven in three, the Dunion, the Windburg, and so to the distant Cheviots, and Smailholme Tower, where Scott lay when a child, and clapped his hands at the flashes of the lightning, *haud sine Dis animosus infans*, like Horace. From the crest of the hill you follow Dr. Brown into the valley of Yarrow, and the deep black pools, now called the "dowie dens," and so, "through the pomp of cultivated nature," as Wordsworth says, to the railway at Selkirk, passing the plain where Janet won back Tamlane from the queen of the fairies. All this country was familiar to Dr. Brown, and on one of the last occasions when I met him, he was living at Hollylea, on the Tweed, just above Ashestiel, Scott's home while he was happy and prosperous, before he had the unhappy thought of building Abbotsford. At the time I speak of, Dr. Brown had long ceased to write, and his health suffered from attacks of melancholy, in which the world seemed very dark to him. I have been allowed to read some letters which he wrote in one of these intervals of depression. With his habitual unselfishness, he kept his melancholy to himself, and, though he did not care for society at such times, he said nothing of his own condition that could distress his correspondent. In the last year of his life, everything around him seemed to brighten: he was unusually well, he even re-

turned to his literary work, and saw his last volume of collected essays through the press. They were most favorably received, and the last letters which I had from him spoke of the pleasure which this success gave him. Three editions of his book ("John Leech, and Other Essays") were published in some six weeks. All seemed to go well, and one might even have hoped that, with renewed strength, he would take up his pen again. But his strength was less than we had hoped. A cold settled on his lungs, and, in spite of the most affectionate nursing, he grew rapidly weaker. He had little suffering at the end, and his mind remained unclouded. No man of letters could be more widely regretted, for he was the friend of all who read his books, as, even to people who only met him once or twice in life, he seemed to become dear and familiar.

In writing of Dr. Brown in an American periodical, one ought not to forget to say that his popularity in America was probably greater than in his own country. He was often visited by Americans whom he hospitably received. The praise which Dr. Wendell Holmes gave his work afforded him much pleasure. Mr. Clemens was also among his friends. Of Americans he said: "They are more alive than we are."

In one of his very latest writings, "On Thackeray's Death," Dr. Brown told people (what some of them needed, and still need to be told) how good, kind, and thoughtful for others was our great writer,—our greatest master of fiction, I venture to think, since Scott. Some of the lines Dr. Brown wrote of Thackeray might be applied to himself: "He looked always fresh, with that abounding silvery hair, and his young, almost infantine face"—a face very pale, and yet radiant, in his last years, and mildly lit up with eyes full of kindness, and softened by sorrow. In his last year, Mr. Swinburne wrote to Dr. Brown this sonnet, in which there seems something of the poet's prophetic gift, and a voice sounds as of a welcome home.

"Beyond the north wind lay the land of old,  
Where men dwelt blithe and blameless, clothed  
and fed  
With joy's bright raiment, and with love's sweet  
bread,—

The whitest flock of earth's maternal fold.

None there might wear about his brows enrolled

A light of lovelier fame than rings your head,

Whose lonesome love of children and the dead

All men give thanks for; I, far off, behold

A dear dead hand that links us, and a light

The blithest and benignest of the night,—

The night of death's sweet sleep, wherein may be

A star to show your spirit in present sight

Some happier isle in the Elysian sea

Where Rab may lick the hand of Marjorie."

Andrew Lang.



## THE POINT OF VIEW.

### I.

FROM MISS AURORA CHURCH,\* AT SEA, TO  
MISS WHITESIDE, IN PARIS.

\*\*\* My dear child, the bromide of sodium (if that's what you call it) proved perfectly useless. I don't mean that it did me no good, but that I never had occasion to take the bottle out of my bag. It might have done wonders for me if I had needed it; but I didn't, simply because I have been a wonder myself. Will you believe that I have spent the whole voyage on deck, in the most animated conversation and exercise? Twelve times round the deck makes a mile, I believe; and by this measurement I have been walking twenty miles a day. And down to every meal, if you please, where I have displayed the appetite of a fish-wife. Of course the weather has been lovely; so there's no great merit. The wicked old Atlantic has been as blue as the sapphire in my only ring (a rather good one), and as smooth as the slippery floor of Madame Galopin's dining-room. We have been for the last three hours in sight of land, and we are soon to enter the Bay of New York, which is said to be exquisitely beautiful. But of course you recall it, though they say that everything changes so fast over here. I find I don't remember anything, for my recollections of our voyage to Europe, so many years ago, are exceedingly dim; I only have a painful impression that Mamma shut me up for an hour every day in the state-room, and made me learn by heart some religious poem. I was only five years old, and I believe that as a child I was extremely timid; on the other hand, Mamma, as you know, was dreadfully severe. She is severe to this day; only I have become indifferent; I have been so pinched and pushed—morally speaking, *bien entendu*. It is true, however, that there are children of five on the vessel to-day who have been extremely conspicuous,—ranging all over the ship, and always under one's feet. Of course they are little compatriots, which means that they are little barbarians. I don't mean that all our compatriots are barbarous; they seem to improve, somehow, after their first communion. I don't know whether it's that ceremony that improves them,—especially as so few of them go in for

it; but the women are certainly nicer than the little girls; I mean, of course, in proportion, you know. You warned me not to generalize, and you see I have already begun, before we have arrived. But I suppose there is no harm in it so long as it is favorable. Isn't it favorable when I say that I have had the most lovely time? I have never had so much liberty in my life, and I have been out alone, as you may say, every day of the voyage. If it is a foretaste of what is to come, I shall take to that very kindly. When I say that I have been out alone, I mean that we have always been two. But we two were alone, so to speak, and it was not like always having Mamma, or Madame Galopin, or some lady in the *pension*, or the temporary cook. Mamma has been very poorly; she is so very well on land, it's a wonder to see her at all taken down. She says, however, that it isn't the being at sea; it's, on the contrary, approaching the land. She is not in a hurry to arrive; she says that great disillusion awaits us. I didn't know that she had any illusions—she's so stern, so philosophic. She is very serious; she sits for hours in perfect silence, with her eyes fixed on the horizon. I heard her say yesterday to an English gentleman—a very odd Mr. Antrobus, the only person with whom she converses—that she was afraid she shouldn't like her native land, and that she shouldn't like not liking it. But this is a mistake—she will like that immensely (I mean not liking it). If it should prove at all agreeable, Mamma will be furious, for that will go against her system. You know all about Mamma's system; I have explained that so often. It goes against her system that we should come back at all; that was *my* system—I have had at last to invent one! She consented to come only because she saw that, having no *dot*, I should never marry in Europe; and I pretended to be immensely preoccupied with this idea, in order to make her start. In reality *cela m'est parfaitement égal*. I am only afraid I shall like it too much (I don't mean marriage, of course, but one's native land). Say what you will, it's a charming thing to go out alone, and I have given notice to Mamma that I mean to be always *en course*. When I tell her that, she looks at me in the same silence; her eye dilates, and then she slowly closes it. It's as if the sea were affecting her a little, though it's so beautifully calm. I ask her if she will try my bromide, which is

\* The author takes the liberty of referring the reader to a little tale entitled "The Pension Beaurepas."