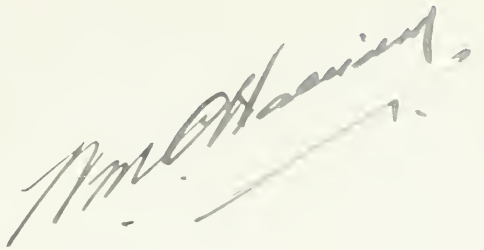
CROCKETT AND GREY GALLOWAY

M. McL. HARPER



S. R. Crockett.

CROCKETT

AND

GREY GALLOWAY

The Novelist and his Works

BY

MALCOLM McL. HARPER

AUTHOR OF RAMBLES IN GALLOWAY; EDITOR OF THE BARDS OF GALLOWAY, WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES; AND OF THE POETICAL WORKS, WITH MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM NICHOLSON AND ROBERT KERR, ETC.

With Illustrations by John Copland

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PREFACE.

WHEN it was contemplated by the Publisher of this work to issue, in pamphlet form, an account of the complimentary banquet given to Mr Crockett at Dalbeattie in the autumn of last year, many of the friends of the novelist and admirers of his works were desirous to know something of his early life, school and college days, and career as a man of letters.

As one who had known Mr Crockett from his boyhood, I was asked by the Publisher to furnish a biographical sketch of the novelist's career, and otherwise undertake the preparation of the work for publication. This I readily undertook to do. Indeed, I felt highly gratified in being privileged to associate myself by commemorating, in this way, a brother Gallovidian's successful career in the literary world. At the same time, I entered upon the work with some misgivings. I was well aware that the writing of biography, especially contemporary biography, requires great tact and delicate handling.

As my greatly esteemed literary and artistic friend, the late Sheriff Alex. Nicolson, LL.D., facetiously remarks, when treating of biography

—"The possibility of being anatomised for the benefit of society, after life's fitful fever, by some cruelly candid friend, may well be regarded as adding unspeakably to the terrors of death." At the same time, I have seen it somewhere narrated that as every sensible man is exhorted to make his will, he should also be bound to leave to his descendants some account of his experience of life.

It has been my aim in this biographical sketch to set before the public particulars of Mr Crockett's early life coming within my own knowledge, or that of his school companions. And from the writings of ubiquitous interviewers, connected with various journals and newspapers, I have gleaned information concerning Mr Crockett's travels abroad, his college days, and labours as a minister while resident at Penicuik, which will be of interest to his many friends.

It was at first intended to give only as illustrations the portraits of Sir Herbert Maxwell and Mr Crockett; but, so as to make a complete permanent record of the complimentary banquet to the novelist, my suggestion to reproduce from photographs the portraits of all the speakers, and others prominently identified with the function, was readily adopted by the Publisher.

The other illustrations associated with Mr Crockett's birthplace, his schooldays at Laurieston and Castle-Douglas, and of scenes

from the "Grey Galloway land" by Mr John Copland, artist, Dundrennan, a native of Balmaghie, and who was for some time at school with Mr Crockett at Laurieston, will give additional interest to the work.

In the compiling of the book, I have been greatly assisted by the kindness of many of the novelist's friends and admirers.

To Mr P. Adair, S.S.C., Edinburgh, Secy. Edinburgh Galloway Association; Mr W. W. Macfarlane, 10 Tipperlinn Road, Edinburgh, Secretary to the "Pen and Pencil Club," Edinburgh; Mr John C. Turner, M.A., Queensberry Place, Moffat; Mr Andrew C. Penman, Dumfries; Provost A. Wilson, Penicuik; Mr J. L. Black, reporter, and Mr Howden, jeweller, Penicuik, I would tender a special word of thanks for their generous interest in the work.

M. M'L. HARPER.

CASTLE-DOUGLAS, *October, 1907.*

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LITERARY INTRODUCTION.

THE ancient Province of Galloway, occupying the south-western extremity of Scotland, is now represented, geographically, by the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and the shire of Wigtown.

In the east and south the country is comparatively level, while the north and west are mountainous. Several of the mountain summits reach an altitude of two thousand feet, and comprehend the sublime fastnesses, and whaup-haunted solitudes, of the "Raiders' Country," around which Mr Crockett, in his powerful romance of "The Raiders" has woven Galloway "legends and traditions, new and old, that have materialised themselves with something of the concreteness and exactitude of history."

Up to comparatively recent times, Galloway was looked upon as a *terra incognita.* Tourists and others, from England and elsewhere, were often puzzled to know whether it was a county in Scotland, or in Ireland. We have thus been particular in giving its *locale* here. Though,

perhaps, seeing that Mr Crockett has now, in his writings, made the "Grey Galloway land" known all over the kingdom, and far beyond it, this was unnecessary.

Before remarking on the distinguished position to which Mr Crockett has attained in the literary world, it may be useful, more especially to natives of Galloway, and others interested in the district, if we make a brief reference to the literature of Galloway of the past. In ancient times the Province of Galloway, with other districts of Scotland, long lay in a state of ignorance and superstition, amounting almost to semi-barbarism. In the turbulent times of the Baliols, the Comyns, and the Douglases, it was almost continually involved in a state of warfare —offensive and defensive. With our forebears of those times, "the art and practice of war was almost their daily, and sole occupation."

By the "Wild Scots of Galloway"—a name which they had acquired, by their deeds of daring, in those old times, when "might was right"—literature and intellectual endowments were regarded as effeminate, and quite unworthy the attention of men seeking the glories of war and the triumphs of the chase. Intellectual improvement, and literary pursuits, were mainly confined to the seclusion of the monasteries in the district.

Under such circumstances there was little wonder that its progress in learning, and in the refinements of civilization, was slow. In

"Murray's Literary History of Galloway" it is shown how very closely connected is the ecclesiastical and literary history of a nation, and how in Galloway this was peculiarly the case. On looking through that work one is struck with the large number of those literary characters, who were connected with the sacred profession. They were nearly all of that order.

During the long and trying struggle for civil and religious liberty in the seventeenth century, in which Gallovidians played such a prominent and honourable part, Galloway produced none who, "as scholars or authors, are entitled to a high degree of celebrity." Its literature of that period was mainly composed of theological works — treatises and tractates — of a controversial nature. But since the Revolution Settlement, few districts of equal compass have been so prolific in the production of works in general literature, and of poetry and song, as that of Galloway. In the Literary History, before referred to, there are given biographical notices—several of them lengthy—of various Galloway authors—about a score of them—but with the exception of Dr Alexander Murray, the celebrated linguist; Robert Heron, the historian; John Lowe, the author of "Mary's Dream"; Rev. Dr James Muirhead, the writer of the humorous song, "Bess the Gawkie"; Lord Stair, author of "The Institutions of the Law of Scotland"; Rev. Wm. Gillespie, author of "Consolation" and other poems; and Samuel Rutherford, for some

time minister of Anwoth, the eminent Covenanting divine, whose work, "Lex Rex," was burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh by the common hangman, scarcely any of them attained to more than local fame by their literary efforts.

At the present day these old volumes, and pamphlets, are only cherished as literary curiosities—scarce and rare—and only to be found in the hands of enthusiastic collectors.

On the book shelves of the writer's library there are over two hundred volumes by Galloway authors, the gleaning of which has been one of the pleasures of his lifetime.

Since the publication of "Murray's Literary History," there are many, whose names in literature, poetry, and song, have become familiar as "household words" in Galloway.

In John Mactaggart's "Gallovidian Encyclopædia," one of the most curious and singular works ever issued from the press; "Mackenzie's History of Galloway," "Denniston's Legends of Galloway," "Barbour's Unique Traditions of the South of Scotland," and "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," Nicholson's "Traditional Tales of Galloway," the Poetical Works of William Nicholson and Robert Kerr, and numerous scarce chap-books and pamphlets, will be found all that is quaint and curious in the manners and customs, superstitions, and ways of life, of the rural population of Galloway in the nineteenth century. Many of these old books are full of the romantic elements

of tradition, and to the romance writer they are invaluable.

In several of these old Galloway books we get glimpses of certain conditions of society in the olden times, which the levelling influences of County Councils, School Boards, and other modern innovations of our progressive civilisation have now obliterated. It has been truly said that, during the last thirty or forty years, there have been hardly any of the old manners and customs of Scottish life visible at all. Within our own recollection there have been many, and great, changes in the habits, and ways of life, of the Scottish people. With the gradual passing away of the old racy Scottish tongue, "much of the originality of character, and the turn of thought, and general modes and aspects of Society, have been changed." With this decadence of the Scottish language, Scottish humour of the old flavour (the indigenous sort) is scarcely ever met with now in rural districts. So as to appreciate such, one has to go back to those books of a generation or two ago to find the most pregnant characteristics of it. And that, "with the lapse of time, many of our national and local customs, which for so long a period retained a firm and apparently lasting hold on the affections of the Scottish peasantry, have fallen into unmerited neglect."

It was fortunate, therefore, that these old authors, in times past, kept the lamp of literature —however feebly it may now appear—burning

in the Province. And that for those of the present day who are desirous of enlightenment on the subject of our ancient Scottish manners and customs, "Scotland has her students of antiquities, who, by their unwearied labours in rich fields of antiquarian research, have obtained for us most valuable information in regard to these and other curious and interesting facts connected with our past history as a people."

Sir Andrew Agnew of Lochnaw, in his "Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway," the late P. H. M'Kerlie, F.S.A. Scot., in his "Lands and their Owners in Galloway," the late Dr Alexander Trotter of Dalshangan, in his "East Galloway Sketches," Dr Robert B. Trotter, Perth, in his two volumes of "Galloway Gossip," brimful of pawky humour, local traditions, and anecdotes, and Andrew M'Cormick, in his recently published work, "The Tinkler Gypsies of Galloway," along with such books as the "Rambles in Galloway," have developed to such an extent the history and folk-lore of the province, that it has assumed new proportions, and acquired a peculiar interest for students of the past.

In the literary world of our day, Sir Herbert Eustace Maxwell, Bart., LL.D., of Monreith, has become celebrated as a man of letters; and his versatility, in this domain, is unbounded.

As a writer of romance he has produced three novels—"A Duke of Britain," an informative historical romance, which shows the antiquarian

bent of the author's mind. "Passages in the Life of Sir Lucian Elphin," and "The Art of Love," are society novels, cleverly written. As an archæologist, he is looked upon as an authority; and as a historian, biographer, naturalist, and essayist, he has produced several standard, and very readable and instructive works.

And at the present time Galloway has had a new interest added to it, by the achievements in literature, of one of its "inborn bairns," Samuel Rutherford Crockett. By his vivid imagination, graphic descriptive powers, keen insight into character, and literary genius displayed in his numerous works, he has shed a lustre over the land of his birth.

Looking back, on the course of one's life, it is strange what events the "whirligig of time" brings about, and how the ambitions and strivings of early years, if well directed, become accomplished.

Mr Crockett's bent, ever since we knew him—now over thirty years ago—was decidedly literary. He was always the student, and a born story-teller, with ambitions to excel in the literary walk. It is, therefore, gratifying to see that the goal of his aspirations has been reached, and that he now fairly takes his place as an original and powerful writer of fiction. His admirers are innumerable, and he now fills a distinguished position among the novelists of this country.

"The men of letters have usually a history of their own," writes a genial essayist; "their individuality is more pronounced than the individuality of other men. Thus a large proportion of mankind feel quite a peculiar interest in famous writers. They like to read about them, to know what they said on this or the other occasion. Of all human notabilities, men of letters are the most interesting. After they have achieved their laurels we are curious to know the vicissitudes and trials they had to endure to acquire fame and a position in the world. We are interested in the retrospect and the contrast, the juxtaposition of the old and the new, and the hopes of early years, the memories of struggles, and the contests of manhood, and the repose of victory." And to this end we give the following sketch of Mr Crockett's career.

Little Duchrae, Crockett's Birthplace.

CHAPTER I.

Boyhood at Duchrae.

Samuel Rutherford Crockett was born at the farm of Little Duchrae, on the estate of Hensol, in the parish of Balmaghie, Kirkcudbrightshire, on the 24th of September, 1859. His grandfather, William Crockett, was tenant of the farm, and the family, at that time, consisted of his grandmother, whose maiden name was Mary Dickson, his mother, and his three uncles—John, Robert, and William Crockett.

Forty years ago agricultural machinery—which has done so much to reduce the number of labourers required on the farm now-a-days—was only beginning to be introduced into Galloway by a few of the large and well-to-do farmers. Its adoption in the working of small holdings was then never dreamt of. It was, therefore, common to find small farms worked by a single family, when the husband, wife, and children all took their respective shares of the labour. Such was the case with the tenants of the Duchrae; but even in these economical circumstances, they had to work hard in order to

"scrape a livelihood from the not too grateful soil."

The rapid flooding of the River Dee, during the hay season, was "the crook in the lot" of the dwellers at the Duchrae. Their meadow hay land lay along-side the river's margin for a mile-and-a-half; and after the hay was cut, and put into *coles*, they had to be continuously on the alert, in case of a sudden over-flowing of the river. As the means to pay the rent depended, in great measure, on the securing of the hay crop, its removal to the high grounds, out of reach of the river, was the great concern of their lives.

But with all their vigilance, they were, occasionally, by some sudden, and violent outburst of thunder rains on the uplands, taken unawares, and the crop was in imminent danger of being carried away by the Dee's swollen and rushing waters. Mr Crockett, in one of his works, has given such a truthful, and graphic description of one of those disastrous occurrences during the tenancy of his folks at the Duchrae, that it is well worthy of being reproduced in these pages. It is as true a picture of what happens, frequently, at the present day, to those whose lands lie along the Dee, as it was when experienced by Mr Crockett. So, his vivid description of the scene will be of interest to many of those farmers, in Balmaghie parish especially, whose meadow lands are bounded by the Dee, and who have still to keep "watch and

guard" over the unsuspected raids of the rushing river.

Mr Crockett writes :—"But what, perhaps, most vividly impressed him, when quite a child, was the hand-to-hand fight of all the people on the farm against the Dee, which ran hard by. The Dee bridge, which is described in "The Raiders," was close behind Duchrae, and part of our farm land was a long meadow, on which our principal crop of hay was grown.

"Well, at the Lammas-tide, that is to say just as our hay was ready to be stacked, the Dee used to over-flow, and these Lammas floods were the terror of all the Deeside farmers. And though I was only a very little boy at the time, I can remember how often I was startled from my bed with a wild cry, in Scots, that the Dee was out, and about ; a wild cry to arms against disaster and ruin. How we all tumbled from our beds, and in the hastiest attire we rushed out into the night, under the light of the stars, or by the flickering torches, the old men, the women, the males, and even such children as I was, each to wrest from the waters some portion of the spoils ; for our hay meant the rent of the farm, the bread for the winter, the daily loaf for many days to come.

"And into the water we went, and snatched all the hay that could be saved, and plunged, and groaned, and struggled in our fight for our bread against the disastrous waters. I can still see my uncles, breast high in the black flood, holding

armfuls of rescued hay above the water, whilst my old grandfather, standing in the loaning of the farm-house, pointed with his stick into the night, and guarded the bestowal of the salvage in shrill Scots. And so we plunged, and struggled, and saved, till after long hours of work we withdrew, dripping and triumphant, whilst the defeated Dee rolled on placidly into Grennoch, under the pale light and the stars."

The Duchrae farmhouse is beautifully situated, nestling among green holm crofts, on the borders of the dreary wildernesses of rock and heath, and the desolate mountain fastnesses of "The Raiders' Country," which is now so closely, and so widely, identified with Mr Crockett's name. It is here, and in the Glenkens near by, where the river flows, silvery clear, through the green and flowery meadows, that the highlands and lowlands of our ancient Province seem to meet and blend harmoniously with each other. Within sight and sound of the Duchrae is the "dark rolling Dee" of the Poet, Wm. Nicholson's well-known song. Near the Boat-of-Rhone its turbulent rushing waters mingle with those of the more sluggish wide-spreading Ken, where was enacted the tragic and pathetic drama of Mr Crockett's tale, "The Cry Across the Black Water." And not far off there is the "high-backed" Crae Brig, with its charming prospect of flowery meadow, silvery birches, and winding stream. It was at this romantic spot that "Ralph Peden" met "winsome Charteris" at the blanket

Crae Brig and Mary Campbell's Cottage.

washing, and the pretty love-idyll of "The Lilac Sun-Bonnet" was gone through over the gipsy pot and the washing tub. The Duchrae bank, the favourite haunt of our novelist's boyhood, is also close at hand. It was then a charming retreat—a tangled brush of thick wood, with only the knoll, known as "Mount Pleasant," bare at the top. And the heights and hollows, where many hazels grew, were garnished with the mystical blues of the wild hyacinths, so loved by the artist. The rising grounds towards the Folds and Ullioch, and the Bennan, were also pine-clad, and thus added greatly to the picturesque beauty of the landscape.

From the rugged cliffs, and scraggy knolls in the neighbourhood, may be seen a most varied and extensive panoramic view of the gleaming lochs, the far-stretching heath-clad moorlands and mountain solitudes of "Grey Galloway."

Everywhere around the eye rests on scenes redolent with historical associations, romance, poetry, and song. Looking towards the Bennan hill and Slogarie moorlands, we, in imagination, picture Burns on his "grey Highland shelty," crossing the hill to Lochenbreck, and in a storm of thunder, lightning, and drifting rain, "rapt in admiration," composing his sublime ode of "Scots wha hae!"

And to be seen by the spectator, at no great distance, there are, on rising hill and lonely level moor, monuments recalling memories of the martyrs of the persecuting times in Gallo-

way. Looking towards the valley of the Ken, there is before us the sylvan promontory of Airds, associated with Lowe's sweet song of "Mary's Dream." And the historic pile of Kenmure Castle, where dwelt "many generations of the brave and the generous" Gordons, looms high on a knoll in the distance. In these later times Mr Crockett, by his vivid imagination and graphic descriptive powers, has in his popular stories of "The Raiders," "The Lilac Sun-Bonnet," "Lochinvar," and the "Men of the Moss Hags" rendered these scenes still more interesting and attractive.

The farmhouse of Duchrae, during Mr Crockett's boyhood, was typical of not a few Galloway homes of that day. It was a low one-storied house, and stood at "one angle of the white fortalice of buildings" which surrounded the farmyard. The interior consisted of a kitchen and a room, commonly called the "ben the hoose." Over these was the "laft," which formed a sleeping apartment for his uncles. The roof of the "laft" was unceiled, with the result that many a time the drifting snow filtered through the crevices of the slates, and fell upon the sleepers. Many a morning, we are told, ere the elder son, William, rose from his bed, in the black dark, to go and look to the sheep, he had to brush from the coverlet a full arm-sweep of powdery snow. Here, too, many a time, in after years, had our future novelist to climb up the ladder to this

Duchrae Bank, Hollan Isle, on the Grenoch

inhospitable chamber to undergo its discomforts. This seemingly unpleasant incident in his life was the first rude awakening, which the boy experienced, of the stern realities and trials of life. So that the rough scenes of Scottish life and manners, which he has so faithfully pourtrayed in his writings, were not seen by him "in any Arcadian illusion, but in rude contradiction, and in the smoke and toil of a harsh reality." Therefore, he has been able to describe, from actual sight and experience, all the phases of the rustic commonplace life, amidst which he himself lived, and laboured, during his early years.

Mr Crockett's grandfather, for whom he had always a great reverence, was a strict Cameronian, and, as became the members of that persuasion, he was austere in his character, so far as religious beliefs, and discipline, were concerned. He was silent and thoughtful in his moods, thoroughly acquainted with his Bible, and an enthusiast with respect to all that appertained to the creed of such Covenanters, as Richard Cameron and Alexander Peden. And yet, to quote Mr Crockett, "he was kindly to little boys. Many an hour did I spend with him, as he stood leaning upon the top of his staff, like Jacob rapt in silent worship, sometimes merely regarding the hills, and always talking of the martyrs. It was from him I learnt that sympathy for the men of the 'Moss Hags' that has never been out of my blood. He was the sole person I had to speak to all day, until the evening,

when my grandmother took me in hand. And he hardly ever spoke to anyone else except the minister—an occurrence which, owing to the long distance from Castle-Douglas, happened at rare intervals."

Through an accident caused by a fall from a horse, Mr Crockett's grandfather was lame, and thus incapacitated from taking an active part in the more laborious work of the farm. Nevertheless, he was the recognised "head," whilst his children were the "hands," as it were. He generally gave the orders, and advised or supervised the work.

Mr Crockett's grandmother was a real old-fashioned type of a Galloway woman—shrewd sensible, thrifty, and most economical. She had more of a worldly disposition than her husband. But in saying this, it is not to be inferred that she was less sincere, or attentive to her religious duties than her gudeman. What we mean is, that she was more practical, and keener in her business-like methods. She believed in the good old adage that "the Lord helps those who help themselves," or in other words, "that unless we sow the seed we cannot reap"; and further, that, however sincere and regular the household might be in their devotional exercises, such would be of little avail to the landlord, or the factor, unless they had, in addition, the *siller* wherewith to pay the rent when the term came round. We have been told, by those who knew her well, that she was most active in the manage-

ment of all her household affairs. Like the great majority of energetic women, she possessed a clear, sharp, cutting Scotch tongue, and would take no "back talk" from any person. Very few, therefore, cared to incur her displeasure, or engage in an encounter with her in the Scotch vernacular.

We are told that a travelling packman, Geordie Breerie by name, and a well-known character in his day, was wont to visit the Duchrae very often. Geordie, as his calling required, was "glib o' the tongue," and much given to banter, but he was often heard to declare that, in such accomplishments, he "couldna haud a candle to the gude wife o' the Duchrae." As usual, he generally displayed his numerous wares in the kitchen, and on these occasions Mistress Crockett always did the "prigging" and buying, much to the discomfiture of Geordie, as the bargaining generally ended in a grievous lessening of his profits. Mr Crockett himself says, "it was a treat to hear her *dress* down Geordie about his high prices." Under it all she was so kind-hearted that the many "randy gangrel buddies," who came about the house, were sure to receive her sympathy and hospitality in a "gude dish o' sowens," or "warm parritch"; but at the same time she never failed to administer a wholesome rebuke or a sound moral lecture. Mr Crockett says, "I can see her yet giving it 'hot' to Sally and Willy, two privileged vagrants at the Duchrae,

while they were cowering among their sacks and coverings in the barn, and eating up the sowens and warm parritch she had brought them." Sally was a little given to drink, and woe betide her if she came to the Duchrae for a night's lodgings when smelling of liquor. That failing of erring humanity, "mair especially wi' the women folk," was with Mistress Crockett such an unpardonable sin, that when Sally appeared any way "doitered" before her, the very tiger seemed to be aroused in her nature.

Mr Crockett tells a very good story of Sally and her drinking habits. One evening she had been among the huts occupied by the navvies in the Bennan Raw, when the railway line to Stranraer was in formation. The storekeeper had then a license to sell spirituous liquors, and had been much tormented with Sally hanging about, and pleading for "juist ae sook." In a hasty temper he drew a glass of paraffin and handed it to Sally, who gulped it over before she was aware of the contents. She managed to get the length of the Duchrae, but became very ill afterwards. "Granny" was so incensed at the cruel trick which the storekeeper had practised on poor Sally, that she put on her Sabbath bonnet and walked over to the huts to tell the storekeeper what she thought of his conduct. And, as she herself said afterwards, "when she had dune wi' him, he felt a verra sma' sma' man, indeed." A fact which we can well believe, as the "dressing down" took place in presence of a crowd of

Jerusalem.

navvies and occupants of the rural cottages at the Bennan. And "Granny's" epithets were long remembered as "far afore swearin'."

Mistress Crockett had a full command of the old Galloway dialect in all its original purity; and it was from her that our novelist picked up that brand of Scotch, which he has so ably and so extensively used in his numerous works.

Notwithstanding her somewhat *brusque* manners, Mr Crockett was fond of his grandmother, and even to this day he loves to picture her "as a little, active, bustling woman, fair of skin, with the rose of a yet beautiful beauty on her cheek, a mutch on her head, with a black silk band round it, just showing a child-like face."

She would tolerate no idleness or laziness about the place; and even at the tender age of seven years she insisted that her grandson (Mr Crockett) was "brawnie and bainie eneuch to tak' a share o' the wark on the farm." Thus, at such an immature age, the young romancer, always hankering after novels, was to be found hoeing turnips in the summer, cutting them in the winter for the sheep, or making "bands" for the sheaves which his mother lifted in the harvest field.

This severe work-a-day life, with its hardy upbringing, was just such as many another boy, born in similar circumstances, has had to undergo. Like many more who have acquired fame, and honour in the world, he was not born with the proverbial "silver spoon in his mouth."

The daily bread must be won by the sweat of the brow, and many a morning he had to turn out to help to cut turnips for the sheep before he left home for the school. Still, even under all the toil and hardships he had to endure, he tells us that it was a happy, innocent, joyous life he led at the Duchrae.

Under these disadvantages of his early upbringing, Mr Crockett's success, in after years, is easily explicable. In his career, as in that of many of the eminent men of our country, it has been exemplified that the humble dwelling with "honest poverty" is no hindrance to learning and advancement in the world—rather is it a nursery in which to receive the best tuition for fighting life's stern battles.

At the Duchrae farm the indwellers ran no risk of suffering from "luxury's contagion weak and vile," as Burns expresses it. Plain and homely fare was the rule of the house. The "halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food," abundance of milk, souple scones, and crumpy oatmeal cakes, with a "weel-hained kebbuck," formed the ordinary, and staple diet.

As members of the Cameronian Church, they were equally frugal in the matter of their mental and spiritual food. Their books were select and few; and such as were in the *bole*, close to the gudeman's arm chair, were mainly of a religious kind, and associated with covenanting times — *e.g.*, *Simpson's Gleanings among the Mountains*, *Rutherford's Letters*, *The Scots*

Worthies, *Boston's Sermons*, *Wellwood on Glory*, *The Pilgrims' Progress*, and the *Big Ha' Bible.*

All books of a frivolous, and worldly nature were forbidden to enter the house by the strict Cameronians. Even the works of Shakespeare and Burns were considered unworthy to be placed beside the pious, and saintly, champions of their faith. All novels were *banned* as severely as the pack of cards — then debarred from every God-fearing house as the "devil's books" that led to ruin.

There were also few amusements to beguile a leisure hour at the Duchrae. But of these our novelist, as a boy, was independent. He had within himself, by nature, what compensated for the lack of the amusements, recreations, and sports of ordinary boys. Nature had given him a powerful imagination, and a poetic temperament, with keen powers of observation. He was an omniverous reader, and when the work of the day was over in the fields, he read in the evenings with avidity any book within his reach. He had also few companions at the Duchrae. At times he tells us "a friend used to come and play with him. He joined in my comedies. He was an ambitious lad, and when we played at 'Pilgrims' Progress'—another favourite book of my early days—he always wanted the principal part—the part of Christian. I used to play Apollyon, and stood on a crag and shot darts at Christian and defeated him usually, so that he ran away crying."

The only indoor amusements at the Duchrae, engaged in by the "grown-up men folk," was the fascinating game of draughts. Occasionally in the winter fore-nichts there would gather in the kitchen the M'Quhirrs from Crae Cottage, Alec and Bob—Bob always primed with racy stories —and Davie M'Quhae from Laurieston. The *dam-brod* was brought down from the press-head, and while a book was being read aloud by one of the uncles, the game was going on in a retired corner—the grandfather, with newspaper beside him, intently watching the game, while the grandmother was eydent with needle, making "auld claes look as weel as new." And above all was heard the *whoo-whoo* of the big spinning-wheel, as Mr Crockett's mother deftly spun the long "rowans" into yarn.

With the cheery glowing fire of peats and the wholesome smell of peat-reek, the *bassnyt* collie stretched on the hearth, and the kettle singing on the hub, there was a homely scene of unalloyed happiness and contentment, such as is pictured in "The Farmer's Ingle" of Robert Fergusson.

The Crocketts had for generations been attached to the small sect, which took their name from Richard Cameron, the Covenanter—the remnant of *pure* Presbyterians, who, after 1689, continued to protest against the errors of an Erastian Church and "an unconverted state."

The family at the Duchrae followed in the footsteps of their forefathers, and were also


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staunch Cameronians. The grandfather of the subject of this sketch was a great admirer of the Covenanting worthies, the memories of whose heroic struggles, in the cause of civil and religious liberty, still lingered among the moors and mosses of Galloway. He was, therefore, firm and unwavering in his adherence to the Church of his fathers; and, along with members of his family, journeyed every Sunday, a distance of nine miles, to the Cameronian Kirk at Castle-Douglas.

Mr Crockett, in his novels of "Kit Kennedy," and "Bog Myrtle and Peat," has given in autobiographical detail the story of his youth, school boy, and college days. Through these works are interspersed very many piquant incidents in his career, more especially in "Kit Kennedy," which, at the time of its publication, was described as Mr Crockett's "David Copperfield." From one of these works we quote his description of the journey to the kirk:—

Family worship, or the "taking of the book," having been solemnly engaged in and concluded at the house, the red farm-cart rattled to the door to convey such of the church-goers as were not able to walk all these weary miles. The cart had no springs. At that time there was a tax on such luxuries, and rather than pay the impost, they endured, like martyrs, the discomforts attendant on this primitive mode of conveyance.

On the return journey from the church, Mr Crockett writes, "I used to go on foot, roaming

about, taking short cuts to meet the cart. It was a characteristic scene—the red cart, and in it my old grandfather, solemnly severe, wrapt in meditation over the sermon which he had heard, and behind him my grandmother in her silk apron and cap.

Now, as I roamed about, I used to pick wild flowers, but this was against my grandfather's principles, for he held it wrong to pick flowers on a Sunday; and so grandmother and I were made accomplices in the evasion of the law. I used to steal behind the cart and secretly hand up the flowers which I had picked, and the old lady would swiftly hide them behind her apron."

At that time, or perhaps a little before it, the Rev. William Symington was minister of the Cameronian Kirk. He was a tall, refined, stately-looking gentleman—a scholar, and a famous preacher in his time, and was much beloved by his people.

In "Bog Myrtle and Peat," Mr Crockett has given graphic and true pen portraits of Mr Symington; and his successor, the Rev. John Kay. Of the former, he writes:—"Tall, erect, with flowing black hair that swept his shoulders, and the exquisitely chiselled face of some marble Apollo, he was an ideal minister of the hill folk. His splendid eyes glowed with still and chastened fire, as he walked with his hands behind him, and his head thrown back, up the long aisle from the vestry."

Mr Kay "was a much smaller man, well set

and dapper, who wore black gloves when preaching, and who seemed to dance a minuet under his spectacles as he walked."

We remember these ministers of the Cameronian Kirk well. These portraits of them are true to the very life—perfect in every lineament and gesture, as if limned by the pencil of a Wilkie.

Thus, in the straightest sect of the Reformed Church, the future novelist was reared and brought up in the Cameronian faith.

Such a mental and social environment tended, no doubt, to impress the boy with loyalty and veneration for the Church of his fathers, and imbued his mind with those chivalrous feelings towards the Covenanters, which he has so eloquently expressed in his novel of "The Men of the Moss Hags."

Indeed, he tells us that on reading, in his early boyhood, "Simpson's Traditions of the Covenanters," the cruel tyranny of the persecutors so heavily weighed on his spirit that he would hide himself amongst the hills as a hunted Covenanter listening with a tremulously mingled joy and fear to the crackling of leaves under the imagined horse-hoofs of Claverhouse."

Mr Crockett all his life has remained faithful and true in his admiration for the disinterested sons of the Covenant, whom he was taught to revere in his youth.

And as a reviewer in the *Bookman* truly writes:—"All the chances and changes of Mr Crockett's literary life cannot obscure the fame

he has won as the rightful heir and true interpreter of the Covenanters, from whose stock he has sprung. However far he may travel, he comes back at night-fall to the old Duchrae farmhouse, to the moorland over which the sun and the rain are flying, to the heathery braes and the Black Water of Dee. The Men of the Moss Hags still people the haunts of his childhood, and his old companions, Richard Cameron, Samuel Rutherford, and Alexander Peden, have not yet quitted his society and gone on before."


J. Coplans.

CHAPTER II.

Schooldays at Laurieston.

At the early age of five years Crockett was sent to the school at Laurieston village, distant about three and a-half miles from the Duchrae. It was a long and lonely walk for such a small boy to travel, morning and afternoon—his only companion being his faithful dog, "Royal." Prior to this, however, he had not only mastered the alphabet, but was able to read a little. These acquirements were mainly due to the zeal of his mother. The method she adopted to teach her son was not only most original, but most effective. Oftentimes, when baking the oatcake for the household, she used to draw the A.B.C.'s in the mealy dust of the bake-board, and then ask her lively little son to name them. When successful he was rewarded by an "order of merit" in the shape of one of the choicest and crispest pieces of the warm oatcake. The only parallel to such an unusual method of teaching that we know of is to be found in the biography of the late Dr Alexander Murray, who rose from the humble calling of a herd-boy

on the banks of the Palnure, in the parish of Minnigaff, to the chair of Professor of European languages in the University of Edinburgh. It is there narrated that his father used to mark the letters with a *birn* (a sprig of heather half-burnt) on the back of a wool-card, and then teach his son to name them.

The result of such primitive teaching was that young Crockett was at once passed into "M'Culloch's Series of Lessons," or the *Tenpenny*, as the book was then called. In our village schools, before the passing of the School Board Act, the various classes were always graded according to the price of the books, such as the *Twopenny*, the *Fourpenny*, the *Sixpenny*, and so on. The school to which Crockett was sent was under the management and supervision of the Free Church. Duncan Robertson was the teacher. He was a Highlandman by birth; but, so far as physique was concerned, he was anything but typical of a North countryman. He was of slender build, pale complexion, with long Dundreary side whiskers. He was considered by some dour and self-opinionated; but, on the whole, a good man, and, as far as his talents went, a fair teacher. Generally he showed a kindly disposition; but, at times, it was observable that the keen edge of his sympathies had been somehow blunted, either by family cares, or the density and perversity of his motley array of pupils. Like many of our old-time worthies, he was an inveterate snuffer, and

conveyed the pinch to his nose by means of a small ivory spoon, or *pen* as it was called. After young Crockett was duly installed as a "new boy," his first lesson was to learn from memory certain cruel hard Latin roots, which could have conveyed few, if any, intelligent ideas to a boy, whose only previous knowledge of a root consisted in the appearance of a Swedish turnip.

During the few years he was at this school he did not gain much in the way of education. It was purely elementary in its character, and always embraced a very liberal proportion of the Shorter Catechism and Bible reading. The singing of several hymns was also practised to a large extent. The ministerial visitations to the school, by way of inspections, were often more a source of real humour than practical benefit. He, as a rule, gave small book prizes to the boy or girl who could best recite or sing a song. This inducement to the scholars brought out many original attempts at elocution and singing.

We are afraid that Crockett, while at this school, learned more mischievous habits than useful knowledge. He was a boy of such natural ability that the ordinary lessons of the school were no trouble to him. From the first he advanced so rapidly in general knowledge, and in his classes, that on one occasion, it is said, in a question of geography "he trappit the maister." This display of superior knowledge, however, was the cause of irritation amongst the scholars

less gifted. Feelings of jealousy were aroused against him, and as a "new boy" he had to endure the usual "ragging" from the larger boys of the school. Crockett, being a boy of some spirit, resented this; and, as was the custom at most schools, the inevitable fight for supremacy ensued. Within two or three days after his entry to the school he was challenged to a fight. Crockett was tall, lean, and lanky for his age, but he knew nothing of the art of "fisticuffs." He could not realise what was meant by the challenge. He had never seen a fight in his life. The nearest approach to anything of the kind had been a "collieshangie" among the dogs at the sheep *rees* on the hills. Still, he felt that his honour was at stake; and after preliminaries had been gone through, the combat proceeded. But a description of the terrific hubbub that arose amongst the excited, youthful spectators, must be left to the imagination of the reader. Suffice it to say that, somehow or another, more by good luck than good fighting, the rough-spun-looking boy, from the Duchrae moors, came out of the *melee* the victor, and from that day he established himself a first favourite with the scholars.

At the head of the village, on the road leading to Lochenbreck, there was another school, commonly called "M'Vitie's Schule," after the name of the schoolmaster. This school was looked upon as more of a "Parish School," and representative of the Established Church.


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The result was that there was a strong rivalry between the two schools, and free fights or *scrymmages* were of common occurrence. In nearly all these young Crockett was invariably found in the van. There were more pupils at M'Vitie's School, and in the summer Dominie Robertson's scholars generally came off second best. But in the winter months Robertson had more of the big fellows, who were unemployed at farm-work. So, during the winter term, retaliatory fights were the order of the day; and at times the Lochenbreck Road presented the appearance of a miniature Donnybrook—sticks, stones, snowballs, and clubs were flying in every direction, not only to the personal injury of the boys, but also to the danger of the villagers and their windows.

In these days, as now, Laurieston, with the exception of these school-boy capers, was a very quiet and unobtrusive place. Like many of our country villages its glory had departed. In olden days, under the good old-fashioned name of "Cullenoch," it was a place of considerable historical importance. It was here that the first and many subsequent meetings, of the War Committee were held, to levy a troop of horse in the Stewartry for the service of the public, in the stirring times of the latter part of the 17th century. During Crockett's school days, however, the only guardian of the peace was a solitary policeman, a very harmless and inoffensive individual, who, for a trifle, would allow

mischevious boys to try on his coat with the silver buttons; hook the handcuffs about their wrists, or even to gratify their boyish ambition to be imaginary desperadoes, would lock them up for a short time in the little back room of his house, which served as the "brief penitentiary for the heid end o' Ba'maghie."

Old Mary M'Haffie, with her "cuddie an' cairt," was the boys' friend and chief providence in those days. For over fifty years she (with her famous cuddie) acted as a country carrier between Castle-Douglas and Laurieston. She was a sterling, honest "auld buddie," and much respected among the shopkeepers and her customers in the country. Her only "thorns in the flesh" were the perversity of her cuddie, and the importunities of the schoolboys. To this day the familiar phrase "Ye're as stubborn as Mary Haffie's cuddie whan it wouldna gie by the Relief Kirk" (United Presbyterian) is often applied to persons of a *dour* disposition.

Mary, and her two sisters, Jennie and Jean—"three brave old maids, distinguished by their sturdy independence"—were, like the Crocketts, strict Cameronians, and walked every Sabbath day from Laurieston to the Cameronian Kirk at Castle-Douglas, a distance of seven miles. Mr Crockett, in his works, has written in such a tender and attractive way of these Ba'maghie worthies, that their names, along with Mary's donkey, "Billy," will be long held in remembrance in the district.


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Mary, in the course of her business, visited the Duchrae twice a week; and Crockett, when a schoolboy, was one of her pests—also something of a "pet," owing to the admiration she had for her fellow Cameronians—"the Duchrae folk." He was continually on the lookout for her, because he knew she always carried nice toothsome dainties in the form of sweeties, snaps, cookies, and Jews rolls. His pennies and ha'pennies, however, were very scarce in those days; and, notwithstanding all his blandishments for "tick," Mary insisted on seeing "a sicht o' the siller first," not, as she explained, "that I had onie doots that he wad pay, but because his grannie wud never let me near to the farm toon if I encouraged him to run intil debt."

Mr Crockett frequently refers in his writings to the serene and joyous days that he, as a boy, spent at the Duchrae. There he had the freedom, during leisure hours, to follow the bent of his inclination—the pleasure of roaming, at will, over the heights of the Craigs, and rolling heathery wildernesses around his home.

On the whole his rather irregular school life at Laurieston was a happy one. Day after day he trudged over the lonely moor, and along the beautiful birch and hazel studded shores of loch Grennoch, on his way to the school. It was not wonderful, therefore, that the boy, to whom nature had given a powerful imagination and the sensibility of the poet, should,

at times, be tempted to play truant; and, in company of his famous dog, "Royal," spend the day at the romantic loch-side, in preference to being confined in the "hot and breathless school-room" at Laurieston.

Although, as we have seen, Crockett learned but little at Robertson's school, there is no doubt that "his heaven of success in fiction lay about him in his infancy." He had been born with the gift to discern in the rustic habits and simple manners of Scottish life, in which he was a participator, and in the superstitions and romantic elements of tradition associated with the mountains and glens of his Galloway homeland, the ideal subjects which he has so very successfully woven into his popular stories.

Saturday Afternoon at the Cross, Castle-Douglas.

CHAPTER III.

Schooldays at Castle-Douglas.

In May, 1867, the Crocketts left the Little Duchrae and went to reside at a small cottage in Cotton Street, Castle-Douglas. At that time Castle-Douglas had more the appearance of an overgrown village than a town. In its lower part, known as "Wee Dublin," there were many thatched houses, while, in the upper portion of King Street, nearly all the houses were of one storey. The principal business part of the town was in the vicinity of the "Cross" in King Street. In those days the "Cross" was the centre to which, on Saturday nights, the artizan and labourer, clean shaven and in holiday dress, gravitated after the labours of the week, to gossip and discuss the town's affairs, as well as those of the nation. It was the great "mental victualling place" of the burgh, and there "monie a starving intellect got nourishment," as an old residenter naively remarked.

All the inhabitants in those days were known by name and acquaintance to one another. There was a fine feeling of neighbourliness,

sympathy, and helpfulness among the indwellers, and very soon the Crockett family, who, when at the Duchrae had been "weel kenned as folk o' their word," became known and respected as part of the little community, in which they had settled, in Cotton Street.

There were then few houses in Cotton Street compared with what there are now. It had all the appearance of a street in a rural village. At "Tweedie's smiddy," a short distance from the Crocketts' house, there was an open burn, at the side of the street, which served the purpose of a watering place for horses and cattle. And almost next door to the Crocketts', where the Roman Catholic Chapel now stands, there was a little cottage occupied by Andrew Graham, a fine type of an honest, kindly hearted, condiciuble old Scotchman, who faithfully plied the shuttle, and was the last remaining representative of that time-honoured industry which gave the name to this street.

The Free Church school, of which Mr John Cowper was the master, was situated a short distance up the street from the Crocketts' house. It, as will be seen from the illustration given, was a very unpretentious looking building compared with the large, roomy, and airy erections now built to meet the requirements of the Education Department.

"The Cockhill" was situated immediately behind the Crocketts' house. It was a little green knoll, in a locality so secluded, that, within


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the writer's early recollection, the "sporting gentry" of the town resorted there with their birds to engage in the barbarous sport of cock-fighting, as a safe retreat from the ever-watchful eye of Willie Graham, the Burgh-Officer. It had been the arena of many a sanguinary conflict. From these practices the knoll probably derived its name; but in Mr Crockett's time, with the humanity of more enlightened days, such cruel pastimes no longer lingered in the district. "All the years of our residence there," Mr Crockett writes, "before houses with the burgh's extension began to grow up at the back, the "Cockhill" was a delightful resort. On Saturdays, when free from school, the knoll, its burn, and surrounding belt of trees, were our favourite play grounds. Here we raked about with a train of other boys, all ready primed for fun, frolic, and mischief."

Many of the habits, customs, and manners of the olden times still lingered with the older inhabitants of the burgh. The festival of Hogmanay, known of old as the "child's benefit-night," the New-year with its merrymaking, and Hallowe'en, with its rollicking superstitious observances, were all rigidly celebrated. Sunday observance was so strict that even a walk in the country was prohibited. The only walking exercise allowable on the Lord's day was to and from the Church. We can remember the time when it was a common practice to pull down the blinds on a Sunday, in order that the eyes of the

inmates might be hindered "from viewing vanity." No ordinary week-day work was permitted ; and to cut a twig from the hedge, or to cull a flower by the wayside, was considered worthy of all the pains and penalties which the shorter Catechism declares every sin deserves. Mr Crockett has given us an instance of the rigorous manner in which his grandfather carried out Sunday observance. His two sons, William and Robert, were fond of flowers, and had some old-fashioned favourites growing in the garden at the back of the house in Cotton Street. At the "heid o' the yaird" there was a little white Ayrshire rose; but, though Sunday was their *one* free day from labour, they never dared to pluck a rose from the bush and bring it into the house.

And up till within recent years the Fast-day celebrations, in preparation for the Communion, were almost as exacting as those of the Sunday. Everyone put on his black clothes, just as on a Sunday, and any levity in demeanour, such as whistling, was considered as great an offence against the law if practised on this day as it was on the Sunday. The amusing anecdote of the Fife shepherd and his dog, on the Kirkcaldy Fast-day, is quite as applicable to the sacredness with which the Fast-days in Galloway were held in the writer's early recollection.* A Fife shepherd, who was in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh on a week-day, found that his dog had strayed to some distance and was making off in

* "Scottish Reminiscences"—By Sir Archibald Geikie.

a wrong direction. He begged an acquaintance whom he had met to whistle for the animal—"Whistle on your ain dowg" was the indignant reply. "Na, na, man, said the perturbed drover —"I canna dae that, for you see it's our Fast-day in Kirkcaldy."

The Fast-days have now been pretty generally abolished throughout Scotland, and a general holiday substituted in their stead.

Within the last forty years there has been as great a revolution in the religious sentiment of the people, as we have shown there has been in the educational and social customs.

In regard to Sunday observance there has been a welcome relaxation of the Church discipline, so vigorously enforced in old times. The Sabbath look of funereal sadness, and the gloomy intolerance at one time so prevalent have now happily passed away. There is at present, however, "a tendency for the pendulum to swing perhaps too far on the other side." And conferences are being held to impress upon the people the necessity of avoiding all needless Sabbath work, and to discourage everything having a tendency to diminish or do away with the sacredness of the Sabbath.

During Crockett's early school-days in Castle-Douglas there were no officious Sanitary Inspectors, with the exacting orders of the Local Government Board, to disturb the equanimity of the quiet and easy going feuars of the burgh; therefore the system of sanitation practised by

their ancestors for generations was tenaciously adhered to. The pumps and wells in the gardens gave the water supply for domestic uses. The cows, kept by a few of the inhabitants in rickety unwholesome byres, furnished the milk supply of the town. There were no dairies in the neighbourhood then. And the indispensable pig, reared in a stye close behind the dwelling-house, not only supplied the pork, but was also a means of assisting to pay the rent. The town's "Common," at the north-end of Carlinwark loch, was in those times utilised for the purpose of blanket washing—in older times known, facetiously, as the "blanket fair." In the spring, when the cleaning fever was prevalent, the *douce* gude-wives and comely maidens of the town, of long ago, repaired to the loch-side to erect their gipsy-pots and have their tubs placed in order for the carrying through of this very necessary house-wifely duty. Washing machines, and other ingenious devices for the saving of labour, were in those days unknown. In such circumstances, therefore, strapping lasses considered it no breach of modesty to go through the blanket *tramping* process necessary to produce the clean and spotless fabric. In Mr Crockett's school-days in Castle-Douglas this custom was practised to a small extent, and he tells us that he can remember quite well, he and other frolicsome youths, taking blankets from the dyke on which they were laid out to dry and tying them to the trees

in the Isle wood opposite, as "banners of a strange device."

Shortly before our future novelist arrived and adopted Castle-Douglas as his "ain toon"; of which, and its people and surroundings, he has since written so feelingly and lovingly, there was about the place a flavour of the picturesque and social old coaching days, as well as of those of the homely and slow going carriers' carts. Such means of conveyance had not long been put off the road, as a thing of the past, by the new carrier—the steam engine—and many very pleasant memories of those times were still cherished by the older inhabitants. Oftentimes the carriers had romantic tales to tell of encounters with high-way robbers when travelling through the wild Galloway fastnesses between Dalmellington and Carsphairn—how that, on one particular occasion, they were held up so tightly that it was only by the ferocious onslaught of their trusty bull-dog that the *Caterans* had been over-come. They had also many stories—imaginary, some of them no doubt—of having heard strange, eerie, and wailing cries by the Dee water; and of experiencing visions of unearthly beings, lighting up with their cantrips the dark and lonely recesses of the woods of Parton and Danevale. Thus, the safe arrival of the carriers' carts, heavily laden with merchandise from Glasgow, was a source of great interest and satisfaction to old and young of the community. By the youths, and idlers of the town, the drivers

were greeted with as much admiration and enthusiasm, as if they had crossed some unexplored desert in South Africa with caravans.

"The Wallets," in those days, were a race of carriers—the business having descended from father to son. Robert's yard and place of business was situated in Back King Street, and we can still, after these long years, picture as it were of yesterday the procession of lumbering carts slowly passing down King Street, after the long and hazardous journey, guarded by a fierce looking brindled bull-dog, and drawn by powerful steady-going horses, led by stoutly built, weather-beaten drivers in moleskin-sleeved waistcoats, with plush fronts, and ivory buttons as large as half-crown pieces. Such were the memories that lingered with the people during Crockett's young days in Castle-Douglas.

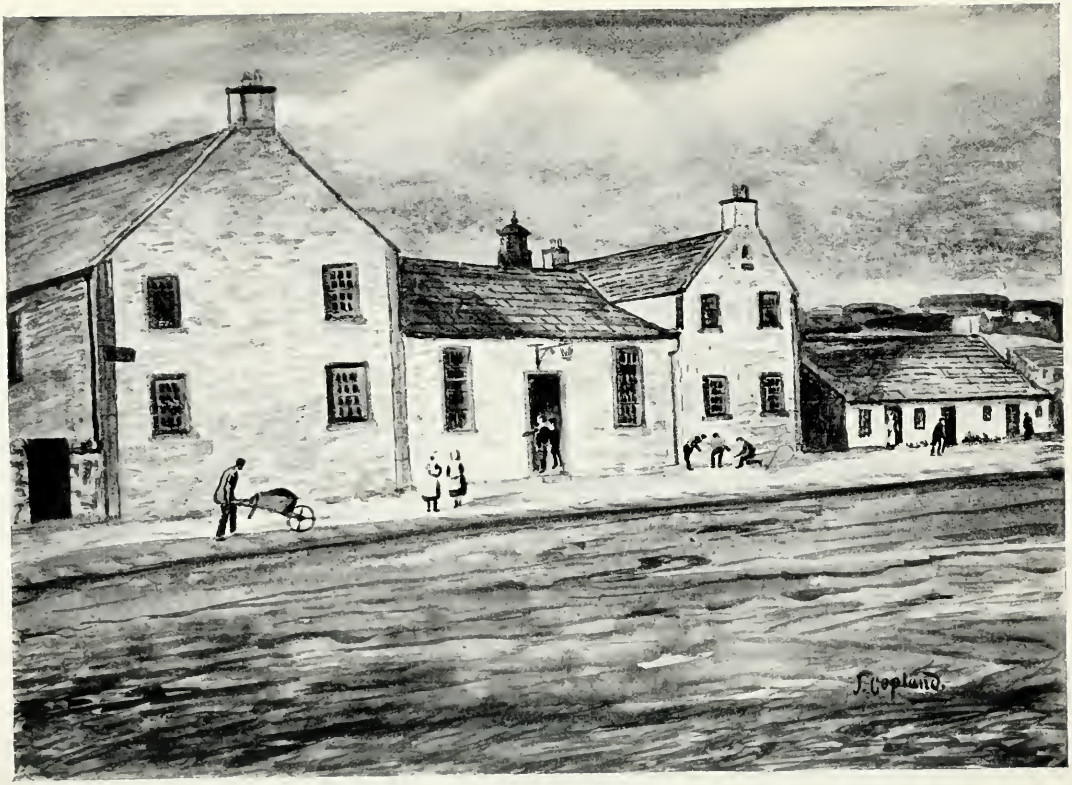
In those times, these incidents, trivial as they may now appear to us in this age of enlightenment in all things, gave great pleasure to our forefathers in their quiet unaffected ways of living. Then, they really led the simple life which is so much desiderated now-a-days as a means of prolonging existence. Their sports and recreative games were engaged in with moderation, and were all the more enjoyed. There were no rushing, worrying, and feverish excitement over their pastimes such as there are in these days of "high pressure railroad, and motor car, civilization." In their business habits and domestic affairs they were equally sedate and unhurried.

The shops and places of business in King Street were much fewer then than now, and with two or three exceptions, were of a very unpretentious kind—some of them still showing the old-fashioned bow-windows. Competition in all trades and professions was not so keen and cutting as it is now-a-days. The struggle for life was not so strenuous as it is now; when, with the great majority, it is merely a scramble for existence. There was room and to spare for all, and a chance to earn a livelihood. In many instances old-established merchants were so fortunate that they were able to retire with a competency. Such was the state of the town, and the habits and ways of the people of Castle-Douglas, when Mr Crockett was resident in it. There have been great changes in the town, and in the ways of "men and things" in it since then. The little town, "once built at the foot of a hill, and ever since running a race up it," that Mr Crockett knew as a school-boy forty years ago has undergone such a change, in the extent of its boundaries and character of its buildings, that, in a great measure, a new town has taken the place of the old. Still Mr Crockett delights to revert to "the toon, my town"—the town to which he came as a boy, and that, in spite of all, he loves the village that was—even more than the prosperity that is.

Since the latter part of the seventies and beginning of the eighties, when the town entered on a great boom of prosperity, it has steadily

progressed. Its population has now been more than doubled, and in the upper part of the town, towards the Railway Station, the diminutive old buildings have almost entirely disappeared and been replaced by new erections, consisting of dwelling houses, shops, and business premises, many of them having a very imposing appearance. The streets are spacious and clean, and generally flanked by neat concrete footpaths. The gravitation water supply and drainage systems leave little to be desired, whilst the educational institutions have all been brought into line with the progress of the age.

Young Crockett was now sent to "Cowper's School," in Cotton Street, as it was then called. We cannot pay a higher tribute to John Cowper, the teacher, than to quote Mr Crockett's own words, "John Cowper was a model teacher of boys, thoroughly able, competent, an admirable classical scholar, good at Mathematics, and of a high unbending character, which was yet full of a great kindliness—what I owe him can never be repaid." Crockett continued at this school from 1867 till 1876, and so far as education goes this period was his best and most informative years. To Cowper he owes all his knowledge of the Classics. Indeed he frankly admits that, except experience, he never learned much after he left John Cowper's. At this period his physical growth was phenomenal, and his appearance at that time is described in an original



Cowper's School, Castle-Douglas.

manner by one of his school mates—Andrew Penman. Mr Penman, who is now resident in Dumfries, says "the first time I ever saw Crockett was one summer morning about forty years ago, when a long thin lad, with a cherub face, and a Glengarry bonnet came sauntering up to where we were playing, as usual, in the open space in front of "Tweedie's Smiddy" in Cotton Street. We all wore clogs in those days, but his had double brass clasps. No doubt the trousers originally covered both clasps, but after a Sunday or two one of the clasps began to appear, and by the time they came to be worn for every-day wear at school, the second clasp was showing, and long before they were worn out, a lengthening expanse of greenish stocking stretched between the clog and the trousers." Although Crockett was now resident in Castle-Douglas the town had little or no attractions for him, so he went up to Balmaghie, nearly every Saturday, to visit his relations at Drumbreck and Glenlochar. His second cousin, Robert of Drumbreck, was a widely read man, and moreover a precentor in the Free Church at Laurieston. This cousin was the prototype of the "Stickit Minister." He introduced our novelist to such books as Shakespeare, Dante in "Cary's Translation," Burns, Macaulay, and the little brown volumes of Carlyle, who was his (Robert's) prophet.

Crockett was always an omniverous reader. He used to get books at the Mechanics' Institute, he tells us, and was always careful to

take two books at a time. One was a biography, or a history, and that was to show at home; the other was a novel, and that was smuggled into the house under his waistcoat. It was mostly Marryat at that time, though he never stopped reading Scott. A cheap edition of Scott was appearing at the time, and he used to buy all the parts and hide them under his bed. His mother knew of it but said nothing.

Crockett made few friends at Cowper's school, being too much of a retired and thoughtful disposition. Andrew Penman, his nearest neighbour, and W. S. Macgeorge, now A.R.S.A., Edinburgh, as we have before mentioned, were his most intimate companions, and the following extracts from some reminiscences, which we have received from Mr Penman, are not only interesting, but give a good idea of Crockett's life at Cowper's school, and his boyhood in Castle-Douglas.

Mr Penman says:—"Being his nearest neighbour I became his most intimate companion, and soon found that although he looked soft he had a marvellous long reach and a style of fighting, like an infuriated wind-mill, which was most disconcerting. This, and the fact that he had wonderful stores of information about such interesting subjects as 'Knights Errant' and 'Red Indians,' and that he was a perfect genius at devising new games for wet days, soon enslaved me as his follower and admirer."

"We read 'Penny dreadfuls' in those days, and three of us clubbed together to buy the 'Boys of England,' but bye and bye Crockett discovered the 'Waverley Novels,' and by his command the 'Penny dreadfuls' were collected into a bon-fire and burned. He was always a propagandist, and a little bit of a tyrant in matters of literary opinion. If we did not admire his latest hero, and would not be amenable to reason, we got punched till we rendered a lip service at least."

"Our holidays were spent roaming the country side, and if any 'dare devil work' was on hand he was the ringleader, for he was absolutely fearless. I have seen him go up the chimney of Threave Castle (not 'the black lum,' but the upper chimney), right up to the top of the walls, walk round them and get down straddle-legged on the hanging stone, while we stood below and held our breath. Once, I remember, Mr Cowper, our teacher, had been lecturing on the laws of motion and the velocity of falling bodies, so we decided to put his teaching to some practical use and measure the height of the Castle. Crockett stood on the 'hanging stone' with his watch in one hand and a stone in the other, while I stood at the foot of the tower to shout when the stone touched the ground. 'One, two, three,' he shouted, and down came, not the stone, but the watch. Luckily it fell soft, and only a mainspring was broken. The great day at Threave Castle was the Saturday, when we could gather fifteen or twenty

boys for a battle royal. We pooled our pocket money to buy biscuits and gingerbread (this was a species of black Gingerbread with a white crust, of which you get a marvellous amount for a penny). Those who had no pocket money made raids on their mothers' pantries, and we prepared to make a whole day of it. We chose sides, one side holding the castle, while the other side besieged it, and we captured and recaptured the old castle with perhaps not so much bloodshed, but with certainly far more noise than was ever made by the 'Black Douglasses.' Mr Crockett has told all this in a slightly glorified form in "Sir Toady Lyon." Every boy in the story was at either 'Cowper's' or 'Johnstone's' school, and to contemporaries the names are only a thin disguise."

"Many of the incidents of those Saturday fights have been used up in his various novels. One, which I had forgotten for years, I found the other day in the 'Grey Man,' and the real incident may be interesting. The wag of 'Cowper's school' in these days—Davie Veitch—was on the attacking side that day, and while the rest of his party were apparently trying to storm one of the windows facing the river, he kept continually popping out of the flanking tower and annoying the small guard left at the main doorway with various missiles. Davie had just ducked to avoid the return volley, when there was a crash of falling masonery from


J. Copland.
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the tower where he had disappeared, and then heartrending groans and cries for help. Our duty was to guard the door, but duty was forgotten when Davie was hurt, perhaps fatally, and we ran to his assistance. We found him lying on the ground apparently pinned beneath two big stones, where a corner of the tower had rushed down, and his groans were redoubled when we tried to help him. Just as we were freeing him from the stones we heard a clatter of flying feet, and looking up too late at the unguarded door of the castle we saw the enemy trooping in. Davie had rushed the wall himself and arranged two of the big stones to topple gently over him when he lay down, rightly guessing that his ruse would decoy us from our post, and allow his friends to win the main door. We took it out of Davie for this trick, but Crockett took it out of us for deserting our post. In the 'Grey Man' the scene is laid on Ailsa Craig, but it is easy to recognise Davie Veitch's ruse."

"A little later Crockett took a step over all our heads and became a pupil teacher. I can remember him stalking up and down the back bench during the writing lesson, calling out periodically, 'Another line,' the signal for us to begin a fresh copy of the head line. Sometimes in a brown study he forgot all about the 'other line' till he was suddenly recalled from his day dreams by the entrance of Mr Cowper, or by some trick of one of the scholars.

Some of the boys who had known him well before his promotion gave him trouble. Knowing that he had not the power of 'tawse or cane,' and calculating that he would not risk opprobrium by complaining to Mr Cowper, they presumed on his good nature."

"One day a boy had been particularly aggravating and we waited with growing interest the denouement which was imminent, for Mr Cowper was in the room. Suddenly, a resounding smack and a simultaneous howl startled the school. The boy was ostentatiously caressing his glowing cheek as Mr Cowper came forward demanding explanations in that voice we all respected, 'What is the meaning of this, Samuel? —if a boy deserves punishment you must report him to me.' 'Yes Sir,' said Samuel, drawing himself up to his 6 ft. 3 inches, and speaking his very best English, 'but I reserve the right to punish for private insult.' Mr Cowper tried hard to conceal a smile, and wisely found something demanding immediate attention in another part of the School."

"It was during these school days that we spent a fortnight's holiday at Colvend, nominally under the charge of old Mrs Hamilton of Roughfirth, but in reality running as wild as the boys on 'Rathan Isle' (Heston). The most of the material for the early chapters of 'The Raiders' came from this holiday—the flounder tramping, the visit of the mothers, the pie, etc. had all a solid foundation in fact. We had one wet Sun-

day at Roughfirth, and I remember Crockett wrote a lecture, and read it to us. We admired it greatly for it only lasted for about five minutes, and it was probably the first he ever read in public."

"After he went to College, I noticed that in our frequent long walks in the country round Edinburgh or in Galloway during the holidays, Crockett was always scribbling and writing. He never went a walk without his notebook, and often paused to write, biting the end of his pencil, and gazing up to the heavens as if for inspiration. If the inspiration came I heard the result, if it did'nt a dash of the pencil declared his failure."

"Walking up from Colvend to Dalbeattie one day, he paused in the middle of the Beech Avenue at Barnbarroch. A moment afterwards he read out to me the line 'The Beechen bower o'er-reaching the red road, with upright bars of bole.' The words and the picture have stuck in my memory for a quarter of a century, so surely there must be some merit in them, though I do not think they have been used in his published works. That early drilling in the art of describing whatever he saw, may partly account for his prolific output of novels."

"He was bent on being a poet in those days. I have the original manuscript of blood-curdling verses, entitled 'Battle of Plevna,' and a fragment of an Epic Poem, called 'The last of Lancelot of the Lake,' which may some day prove interesting as unpublished poems."

"He was an omniverous reader, but poetry appealed to him most, and he was for ever quoting his favourite passages."

"Once only, I think, did Crockett intervene in public matters in Castle-Douglas. After the removal of our worthy old schoolmaster—Mr John Cowper—educational matters were much before the public. There were two separate schools in the town and a small section of the School Board advocated the unity and grading of the schools, but the majority opposed. One Saturday a very able letter, a column long in leaded type appeared in a Dumfries paper advocating the grading of the schools. No one knew the writer, but every one wondered, and looked at his neighbour askance. Many had the local information, but who had this gift of style. One timid reply was ventured by the opposition only to call forth another long letter, packed with local information and annihilating the reply. Crockett at the time was lying in his house in Cotton Street, nursing a broken leg and writing 'Dulce Cor,' but few knew he was in the district, and none suspected him of the authorship of the letters. But then, as now, I was the 'Jackal' who gathered the material and he was the 'Lion' who roared."

The Lovers' Walk, by the side of Carlinwark loch, was another cherished haunt of Crockett's boyhood, when at school in Castle-Douglas. In those days the walk was much more secluded than it is now. It was thickly shaded

The Lovers' Walk, Castle-Douglas.

with trees on both sides, all the way to the rustic "Cuckoo bridge." Some of the ash and birch trees made fine studies for the artist, and they were often sketched as subjects for pictures. The writer, recalling his youthful days, can still remember a beautiful birch that grew near the lake shore, opposite the Fir island. The graceful form of this "Fairy of the Woodland," in the quiet seclusion of the "Lovers' Walk," seldom failed to elicit the admiration of the artist and to inspire the youthful poet. Mr Crockett, in one of his works, has written that the beauty of this silver birch, "Our Lady of the Woods," made such an impression on his youthful mind that it led to his first serious attempt to court the muses—what he would now call his first youthful indiscretion.

As a boy, Crockett was a close and intelligent observer of the beauties of nature, and had pictured this silver birch as "the loveliest thing about the loch." So, when it was blown down in the great wind storm of 1883, and went to such "base uses" as those of being cut up into pieces for clog bottoms, he was inspired to write an ode deploring the fate of the fallen "Lady of the Wood." He even went the length of having this ode printed.

About this time Crockett's most intimate schoolmates were Andrew Penman, Willie Maxwell, and W. S. Macgeorge; but the latter was his chief companion in all his solitary musings. It was when taking a stroll in the

Lovers' Walk that the writer first met the future novelist in Macgeorge's company. At that time the two boys were so inseparable that almost in meeting one of them you would look about expecting to see the other. Macgeorge was a born artist. The sketch book and pencil were always in his hands, and the Lovers' Walk and the Isle Wood were his favourite sketching grounds. Crockett, under the influence of Macgeorge, had also developed artistic tastes and made such progress in drawing and painting that one of his early water colour studies of "Crichope Linn," near Thornhill, which we have seen in the house of his uncle at Castle-Daffin, near Auchencairn, shows faithful drawing and very carefully painted details of ferns and rocks.

Crockett, as a boy, had a good deal of the "Bohemian" in his nature, and natural history had for him always a great attraction. At all times, and in all seasons, he was ready to join other boys in botanizing, bird nesting, nutting and sloe gathering excursions to the woods of Gelston, and the scraggy thorn and rowan-tree clad knowes of Barsoles. Sometimes they even extended their rambles, weary and hungry, as far as the nut woods on the marches of Buittle and Dalbeattie. Many memories of these happy days of his youthful years Mr Crockett fondly recalls in his works, and some of the scenes associated with them he has invested with the charms of sentimental interest and romantic association.

The Buchan Raw, Castle-Douglas

Ever since he was a schoolboy in Castle-Douglas he has had a loving regard for the Lovers' Walk and the Carlinwark loch. "The loch, indeed," he writes "can never have the charm for others it has for me. For I left it in time. I had no need to grow weary of the quiet glades of the Lovers' Walk, and the firry solitudes of the Isle wood. The 'Fair Isle' (my "Belle-Ile-en-mer") remains fair as ever for me. Still woodland glades, peeps of the little town across the glassy stretches of water, a haunting murmur of birds, and the most perfect solitude to dream and work in—that was the Lovers' Walk."

"Carlinwark is hardly a loch—I have heard it called a duck pond. Well, if so, blessed be the ducks that swim in that pearl of ponds. I have crossed Ladoga, and seen less of beauty than you may see by walking open-eyed from the foot of the Lovers' Walk to the Clachan of Buchan—open-eyed, I say—for all depends on that."

During the six years young Crockett spent at Cowper's school he was a diligent scholar, and a great reader of general literature. Among his schoolfellows he was regarded as a boy of more than ordinary ability, eager to excel. He had, as we have seen, a natural talent for learning, and soon took a foremost place in his classes. Mr Cowper, like the "dominie of Drumtochty," had "an unerring scent for pairts in his laddies," and singled out Crockett as a pupil worthy of

his special attention. He supervised the boy's studies, and found his progress so rapid and satisfactory that he appointed him a pupil teacher in the school. In the Free Church schools, of those days, there were few incentives in the way of prizes to scholars to exert themselves. But the "Edinburgh Galloway Association," actuated by the laudable desire to assist struggling Galloway lads in prosecuting their studies at the University, offered a bursary for competition in the schools of Galloway. The examination, on this occasion, was held at Castle-Douglas, on the 21st and 22nd days of September, 1876. The examiner was the late John Gordon, LL.D., Edinburgh, sometime one of Her late Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, who was also a member of the Association. The members present at the examination were Bailie Thos. Rowat, Messrs Alexander Aitken, merchant; John Bell, W.S., J. Gordon Maitland, advocate—all of Edinburgh, and Wellwood H. Maxwell of Munches. Bailie Rowat was chairman, and Messrs Aitken, Bell, Maxwell, and Maitland, members of the acting committee. These were anxious and strenuous days in the life of young Crockett, and in his novel of "Kit Kennedy," which, as we have before mentioned, is, in great part, autobiographical, he has given an amusing and racy account of the examination, with humorous character sketches of some of the actors in it.

"Cairn Edward" of the novel, where the

"great trial of scholarship" took place, is Castle-Douglas. The examination was held on a Monday; and, what with the arrival of the examiners, the candidates, and the bustling airs which the town had assumed on this, the market day, the boy was quite interested and amused. "He slowly took in the vision of the little whitewashed town with its smiling shops, broad streets, and comfortable merchants, all a-bustle behind their well-polished counters. Red carts stood tilted here and there with their shafts pointed to the sky, to the obstruction of the thoroughfare. A ceaseless tide of grey-coated, irregularly bearded farmers, and their more gaily attired women folk, poured up and down the one main long street. There was quite a concourse at the Cross, and one could hardly elbow a way athwart the Market Hill (where the Auction Marts were) for men and dog fights."

It was also as Kit says "no common Monday either, but the great day of the bursary examination, and when the Union of Galloway Societies met in the town and held its great dinner in the evening." While engaged in the examination, which Kit humorously terms the "Flodden Field of brains, pen stumps, and paper," he kept steadily before him, in arranging his dispositions for the fray, the sage directions which the classical master of 'Cairn Edward' had given him—'To keep cool, never give your classics a thought, read your paper through

before you begin, take the easy questions first, keep a still tongue in your head, and, above all, think you are going to win!'"

Thus, young Crockett courageously engaged in the encounter for the bursary, and owing to Mr Cowper's careful coaching, succeeded in carrying off the prize. Dr Gordon, in his report of the examination, afterwards, gave it as his opinion that "the papers were on the whole creditable to the candidates, as well as to the schools from which the pupils came." At the close of the examination, Bailie Rowat, in calling attention to the efforts of the Association, and the state of higher education in the province, said "it was a system for promoting a connection between the elementary school and the university; and a means of helping youths, of good parts, to pass from the one to the other in a fit state to profit by the classes of the university."

Mr W. H. Maxwell of Munches, in referring to the examination also said, "he hoped that the papers given in would prove these young men to be of superior abilities, and that they had been well grounded in the higher branches" —a hope which, in after years, has been fully realised, for two of the candidates have made their mark—Crockett, as a famous novelist, and Robert Blair, one of Mr Crockett's most intimate and valued friends when at the university, as Fine Art Examiner to the Education Department for Secondary Schools.

CHAPTER IV.

Leaves Castle-Douglas for Edinburgh University.

The bursary consisted of £20 a year for four years, and with the first instalment of this "well-earned fee" in his pocket, and "full of wonder and expectation," Sam Crockett, as he was then familiarly known to his schoolmates, left his native Galloway to enter as a student of Edinburgh University.

This bursary, we are told, constituted almost the entire amount of his resources from the outside. So, at the outset of his college career he was confronted with the stern fact that he must earn a livelihood—and that in such regard, "poets and cobblers" are on a level. During his attendance at college he had to support himself, in a great measure by private teaching, contributions to the newspapers, and journalistic work. Before Mr Crockett's fame as a writer of fiction had been established he was often very poorly requited for his literary contributions; still, in the arena of the periodicals, he was able to test his strength as a writer, and also to

supplement, to a small extent, his financial resources. In those days, there were no millionaires dealing out with lavish hands benefactions to smooth the way of poor and struggling students in their college course, as there are now. Mr Crockett had, at this time, to endure some of the privations which genius, in the rugged paths of life, generally has to encounter.

But he was resolute towards success in the literary walk, and now that the vague longings and aspirations of his youth for literary distinction have been accomplished, the successful novelist looks back with pride and satisfaction on the honest independence of his University Course. When at College, Mr Crockett tells us, "he did not work very assiduously at his studies, but he read vastly." He was at that time a diligent student of English literature—both in prose and poetry. The literary aspiration was growing with his growth, and as an able and ready writer he was a welcome contributor to the newspapers and magazines.

During his leisure hours at College he wrote little, except verse of all sorts, much of which appeared in various journals and periodicals without remuneration, except on one occasion when a kindly editor sent half-a-sovereign, with the added request not to send any more verses. "Poetry was no more popular in the market thirty years ago," Mr Crockett says, "than it is now—at least as a serial in journals and

Glenhead of Trool.

magazines." The columns of the local press, however, were havens of refuge, and a great deal of his early verse appeared in the Dumfries and Castle-Douglas weekly papers, and at a later date in the magazine published by Messrs Cassell & Co., and other popular publications.

Mr Crockett's summer vacations, when at College, were usually spent in wandering, with an observant eye and a reflective mind, amongst the fields and mossy flows of Drumbreck, extending his rambles occasionally to the splendid scenery of the upland wilds of Galloway, and the Solway coast-lands—"His own countryside, his little fatherland," which he still so dearly loves. He tells us that "as a dreamy, long-legged callant, he, with staff in hand, and a *whang* of soda scone in his pocket, left few of its farms and few of its fastnesses unexplored in his unhaltered youth."

When on these wanderings among the Galloway uplands Mr Crockett's holiday home was the *bien* farm house of Glenhead, with his hospitable, and "dear and worthy friends," Mr John M'Millan and Marion, his wife. Glenhead is situated at the head of Loch Trool, in the heart of "The Raiders" country, and Mr Crockett tells us that he has always a peculiar pleasure in looking back on the truly joyous, invigorating, and health-giving days he spent in this wilderness of Grey Galloway—what he calls "one of the loneliest places in Scotland."

Before Mr Crockett's accession to fame as

a novelist, he contributed an article to the pages of "The Leisure Hour" on the Galloway fastnesses. Over thirty years ago the present writer had also traversed, with knapsack and stout *kent*, the sublime solitudes of Buchan's Dungeon, and can well appreciate the truthfulness of Mr Crockett's graphic and powerful descriptions of the terrible grandeur of the scenery of these rock and boulder strewn wilds of Galloway; a district which, after all that has been written, is still, we believe, among the least known in Scotland. We have the kind permission of the proprietors of "The Leisure Hour" to reproduce here what we require of this article which, as being amongst the first blossomings of the tree that has borne since then such abundant fruit in Mr Crockett's literary career, we are sure will be read with interest by our readers.

"Glenhead," Mr Crockett wrote, "I saw for the first time in the broad glare of a noonday sun—all the valley swam in a hazy blue mist, and the heat smote down from the white lift as through the glass of a hothouse"—and he then describes in "The Leisure Hour" a ramble, with the gudeman of Glenhead as his guide, among The Galloway Fastnesses :—

"Then after a while, out of the coolness of the narrow latticed sitting room at Glenhead, we step, lightly following, with many expectations, the slow, calm, steady shepherd stride of our friend—the master of all these fastnesses —as he paces upward to guide us over his own beloved hills.

The Dungeon of Buchan.

"It is hard work as we climb. The sun is yet in his strength, and he does not spare us. Like 'Falstaff,' a fatter but not better tempered man, we lard the lean earth as we walk along. But the worst is already overpast, when we have breasted the long incline and find beneath us the still blue circles of the twin lochs of Glenhead. Before we reach the first crest we pass beneath a great granite boulder, concerning which we are told a remarkable story. One day in Autumn, some years ago, a herd boy came running into the farm-house crying that the day of judgment had come, or words to that effect. He had heard a great rush of rocks down from the overhanging brow of the crag-embattled precipice above. One great grey stone, like a cot-house, has been started by the heavy rains, and is coming crashing downwards, bringing others along with it in a noise like a live avalanche. The master sees it come, and, doubtless, a thought for the security of his little homestead crossed his mind. At the least he expects the rock to crash downward to the great dyke which protects his corn-fields in the hollow. But the mass sinks three or four feet in the soft turf of a brow, and there to this day it remains embedded. A manifest Providence! and they acknowledged Providence among the hills. As we mount we leave behind us to the South the green, sheep-studded, sun-flecked side of Curly-wee. The name is surely one which is given to its whaup-haunted solitudes, because

of that most characteristic of moorland sounds —the wailing pipe of the Curlew—"Curleywee, curleywee, curleywee"—that is exactly what the whaups say in their airy moorland diminuendo, as with a curve like their own Roman noses they sink downward into the bogs. Waterfalls are gleaming in the clefts—"jaws of water," as the hill folk call them—the distant sound coming to us pleasant and cool, for we begin to desire great water draughts, climbing upwards in the fervent heat. But our guide knows every spring of water on the hill-side, as well as every rock that has sheltered fox or eagle. Behind us, as we rise upwards into the realms of the blue, are the heights of Lamachan and Benanbrack. Past the side of Curleywee it is possible to look into the great chasm of air in which, unseen far beneath us, lies Loch Dee. We gain the top of the high boulder-strewn ridge. Fantastic shapes, carved out of the gleaming grey granite, all are about. Those on the ridges against the sky look, for all the world, like polar bears hunting with their long lean noses thrust forward to scent the seals on the floes, or the salmon running up the Arctic rapids to spawn. Loch Valley, and Loch Neldricken form, with the twin lochs of Glenhead, a water system of their own, connected with Glen Trool by the rapid torrential burn called Gairlin, which flashes downwards through the narrow ravine which we leave behind us to our left as we go upward. At the beginning

Loch Dee.

of the burn, where it escapes from Loch Valley, is to be seen the remains of a weir which was erected in order to raise artificially the level of the loch, submerging in the process most of the shining beaches of silver granite sand. But the loch was too strong for the puny works of man. One fine day, warm and sunny, our guide was working with his sheep high up on the hill, when the roar and rattle of great stones carried along by the water brought him down the "screes" at a run. Loch Valley had broken loose. The weir was no more, and the Gairlin burn was coming down in a six-foot breast, creamy foam cresting it like an ocean wave. Down the Glen it went like a miniature 'Johnstown disaster,' and the boulders crushed and ground together with the rush of the water. When Loch Valley was again seen it had resumed its pristine aspect—that which it had worn since the viscous granite had finished oozing out in sheets from the great cracks in the Silurian rocks, and the glaciers had done grinding down its spurs and outliers. It takes a moorland 'Napoleon' of engineers to fool with Loch Valley.

"But our eyes are upwards. Loch Enoch is the goal of our desire. For nights past we have dreamed of its lonely fastnesses. Now they are before us. Enoch is literally a lake in cloudlands. Overhead frowns what might be the mural fortifications of some 'Valerien' or 'Ehrenbreitstein.' The solemn battlemented

lines rise above us so high that they are only dominated by the great mass of the Merrick. It is hard to believe that a cliff so abrupt and stately has a lake upon its summit. Yet it is so. The fortress-like breastwork falls away in a Titanic embrasure on either side, and it is into that which lies nearest the Merrick that we direct our steps. As we go we fall talking of the strange sights seen on the hills. Our guide, striding before, stalwart and strong, flings pearls of information over his shoulder as he goes, and to the steady stream of talk the foot moves lighter over the heather. Beneath us we have now a strange sight—in a manner the most wonderful thing we have yet seen. On the edge of Loch Neldricken lies a mass of green and matted reeds—brilliantly emerald, with the deceitful brilliancy of a 'quakin' qua' or shaking bog, of bottomless black shaking mud. In the centre of this green bed is a perfectly defined circle of intensely black water, as exact as though cut with a compass. It is the 'Murder Hole' of gloomy memory. It is, said the man of hill, a very strong spring which does not freeze in the hardest winters, and is avoided by man and beast. It is certain that if this gloomy 'Avernus' gate were given the gift of narration it would tell of lost men on the hills, far wandered and drowned in its dark depths.

"Across a wilderness of tangled ridge, boulder, and morass is the Long Hill of the 'Dungeon,' depressed to the South into the 'Wolf's Slock.'

The Wolf's Slock, Wilds of Galloway.

Now our Loch Enoch fortress is almost stormed. Step by step we are rising above the rugged desolations of the spurs of the Merrick.

"'Bide a wee,' says our guide, 'and I will show you a new world.' He strides on a very sturdy 'Columbus.' The new world comes to us, and one of great marvel it is. At first the haze somewhat hides it—so high are we that we seem to be on the roof of the Southern creation —riding on the rigging of all things, as indeed we are. Half-a-dozen steps and,

"'There's Loch Enoch!' says 'Columbus,' with a very pretty taste in climax."

"Strangest sight in all this South Galloway of strange sights is Loch Enoch—so truly another world that we cannot wonder that the trouts of this strange water, high among the hills, decline to wear their tails in the ordinary fashion of common and undistinguished trouts in lowland lakes. This still evening Enoch glows like a glittering silver-rimmed pearl looking out of the tangled grey and purple of its surrounding with the strength, tenderness, and meaning of the human eye. The Merrick soars away above in two great precipices, and Loch Enoch spreads out beneath us in a tangle of bays and promontories. As we sit above the loch the large island, with the small loch within it, is very prominent. The 'Loch-in-loch' is of a deeper and more distinct blue than the general surface of Loch Enoch, perhaps owing to its green and white

setting on the grassy, boulder strewn island. Another island to the east also breaks the surface of the loch, and the bold jutting granite piers, deeply embayed, the gleaming silver sands, the far reaching capes, so bewilder the eye that it becomes difficult to distinguish island from mainland. It increases our pleasure when the guide says of the stray sheep which look over the boulders with a shy and startled expression, 'These sheep do not often get sight of a man.' Probably no part of the Highlands is so free from the presence of man as these Southern wildernesses of Galloway, where was the very fastness and fortress of the Westland Whigs in the fierce days of the killing. On the East side of Loch Enoch the Dungeon Hill rises grandly, a thunder-splintered ridge of boulders and pinnacles, on whose slopes we see strewn the very bones of creation. Nature has got down here to her pristine elements, and so old is the country that we seem to see the whole turmoil of 'taps and tourocks' very much as they were when the last of the Galloway glaciers melted slowly away and left the long ice-vexed land at rest under the blow of the winds and the open heaven."

"Right in front of us the Star Hill, called also Mulwharchar, lifts itself up into the clear depths of the evening sky—a great rounded cone like an old-fashioned hay-rick. Beyond the levels of desolate, granite-bound, silver-sanded Loch Enoch, lies a tumbled wilderness of hills. To

the left of the Star is the plateau of the Rig of Millmore, a wide and weary waste, gleaning everywhere with grey tarns and shining 'Lochans.' Beyond it are the Kirreoch hills and the pale blue ridges of Shalloch on Minnoch. Every name is interesting here; every local appellation has some reason annexed to it, so that the study of the ordnance map—even though the official nomenclature has many mistakes—is weighted with much suggestion. But no name or description can give an idea of Loch Enoch itself, lifted up high as it were close against the sky, nearly 1700 feet above the sea, with the giant Merrick on one side, the weird 'Dungeon' on the other, and the grey wilderness stretching away mysteriously out into the twilight of the North.

"It is with feelings of regret we take leave of Loch Enoch, and skirting its edge, make our way eastward to the Dungeon Hill, in order that we may peer down for a moment into the misty depths of the Dungeon of Buchan. A scramble among the trees, a climb among the boulders, and we are on the edge of the Wolf's Slock—the appropriately named wide throat, up which so many marauding expeditions have come and gone. We crouch behind a rock and look downward, glad to get for a moment into shelter, for even in the clear warm August night the wind has a shrewd edge on it at these altitudes. Buchan's Dungeon swims beneath, blue with misty vapour. We can see two of

the three lochs of the Dungeon. It seems as if we could almost dive into the abyss and swim gently downwards to that level plain, across which the Cooran Lane, the Sauch Burn, and the Shiel Burn are winding through 'fozy' mosses and dangerous sands. It is not for a man to go lightly at nightfall, or even in broad daylight, among the links of the Cooran as it saunters its way through the silver flow of Buchan. The old 'fastness' keeps its secret well."

"Far across in the distance we can see the lonely steading of the Back Hill o' the Bush, and, still farther, the great green whalebacks of Corscrine and others of the long featureless Kells range, deepening into grey purple, with a bloom upon them, where the heather grows thickest, like that on a dusky peach.

"Now at last the sun is dipping beyond the Merrick, and all the valley to the South, or rather the maze of valleys, are dim in the shadow. Loch Enoch has turned from gleaming pearl to dusky lead—or more accurately still, to the dull shimmer that one may see on so unpoetical a thing as cooling gravy; so great are the straits of comparison to which the conscientious artist in words is driven in the description of scenery. But we must turn homeward. The Merrick is dusking. Enoch falls behind the hummocks of iceworn rocks. We descend rapidly into the valley which leads to Loch Neldricken, threading our way till we

The Scree, Wilds of Galloway.

come to the grave of the wanderer Cameron, who lost his way and perished in a storm, alone upon the waste. The form of the body is still plainly to be seen upon the emerald turf, and the boulders around give good evidence of the power of the storm, when winter sends the spin-drift of the snow hurtling across the mountains. The storms are rarely fatal to many sheep, partly because it is the office of the shepherd to keep an eye on the places where the sheep are collected, but chiefly because of a very wonderful piece of apparent special adaptation. It is not upon these great rough hills of boulder and heather that many sheep are lost—smoother hills are more dangerous. The overlapping rocks, tossed and set in fantastic congeries of crags, seem to suck in the snow. The granite blocks, lying all around, give shelter and provide a thousand dust-bins, into which the wind, careful and untiring housemaid, sweeps the snow almost as it falls. At least, since the great 'close cover' of the famous 'sixteen drifty days,' there has been no great or wide-spread loss of the blackfaced sheep—the current tender of the hills. We are presently skirting the 'silver sand' of Loch Neldricken, which, as our guide says, would be good scythe sand, were it not that so much better can be got at Loch Enoch. For from these uplands the 'straikes' of the lowland scythes are supplied with the pure flinty granite sand which puts an edge upon the blades that cut the hay and

win the golden corn. Emery straikes are used for easy corn by some new-fangled people who are ill to satisfy with the good gifts by nature provided, but the stalwart men who mow in the water meadows know that nothing can put the strident gripping edge upon their blade like the true Loch Enoch granite sand. It is dusking into dark as we master the last slope, and to the barking of dogs and the cheerful voices of kindly folk, we overpass the last hill dyke and enter the sheltering homestead of Glenhead, which looks so charmingly out over its little crofts down to the precipice-circled depths of Loch Trool."

"Ere we came over the hill we entered the sheep 'buchts,' a very fortress of immense granite blocks set upon a still more adamantine foundation of solid rock—a monument of stern and determined workmanship. Indeed, something more than sheep bars are needed to restrain the breed of sheep that is to be found here—animals that by no means conduct themselves like slow-going and respectable Southdowns or 'Aldermanic' Cheviots, but fight like Turks, climb like goats, and run like hares. We remember taking an Englishman over a Galloway hill. We were climbing in the heat, when suddenly, with a rush, a fearsome animal with twisted horns half a yard long and a black threatening face, rose behind us, leapt a wide water-course and disappeared up the precipice, amid a rattle of stones springing downward from its hoofs."

"'What wild beast is that?' asked our companion in some trepidation.

"'A Galloway tip,' we replied.

"'And what might a 'tip' be when he's at home?'

"'Only a sheep,' we replied calmly.

"The Englishman, accustomed to the breed of 'Leicester,' looked at us with a curious expression in his eyes.

"'Don't try to take in an orphan—and one far from home,' he said—'I may be verdant, but at least I do know a sheep when I see one.'

"And to this day he does not believe that it was 'only a sheep' that he saw on the slopes of granite and heather."

From the year 1880 and onwards Crockett was laboriously engaged in writing prose and poetry. Under the *nom de plume* of Ford Berêton he became known to a select circle of friends as a clever versifier—and a short poem he published, when at the University, called "Valete Frates," is now so very scarce, that, when it appears, at rare intervals, in catalogues of second-hand books, it is quoted generally at about £8.

CHAPTER V.

ADOPTS THE MINISTRY AS A PROFESSION.

Mr Crockett remained a student at the University until he was nineteen years of age, going through the regular Arts Course, and passing all the examinations for a degree. In the summer of the year 1878 he paid a visit to London with a journalistic career in view. For six months he stayed in Portland Street, Strand, and managed to keep himself by his pen. Having completed his University Course he went for a short time to Oxford, and when there, through the kindly influence of Dr Jowell of Balliol and Vice-Chancellor Bacon, he obtained a travelling tutorship, and from that time "his occasional financial difficulties disappeared." With one young pupil, an American, he travelled all over Europe; and tramped, with knapsack on back, long distances in Northern Italy. All the time he kept elaborate descriptive notes of the scenery, habits, and ways of living of the people, which he afterwards used extensively in his books.

On returning to England he obtained another tutorship, went to Switzerland and afterwards

to Heidelberg. He was abroad for about a year, and during that time wrote many verses. Perhaps a third, he tells us, of the poems of "Ford Berêton," which is reminiscent of his boyish days at the Duchrae farm, was written at the foot of the Matterhorn. In connection with these wanderings on the Continent with his pupil, Mr Crockett relates the following incident. "Perhaps the most interesting thing was our meeting with Bismarck, Chancellor then. My pupil and I were mountaineering in the Tyrol, and had climbed the Gross Glöckner. When we came down we learned that Bismarck was staying in the little village where we put up. Everyone was talking about the "mad Englanders" who climbed hills in winter, and Bismarck sent for us just as we were, ice axes and all. He was extremely civil, and gave us a letter of introduction to all the officials of the German Empire, asking them to do all they could for us. What most impressed me was the enormous strength and power of the man. I shall never forget the enormous square build of his head, and the way he had of setting his eyes on you as though he were going to drive gimlets through you."

After Crockett had travelled, and visited the famous picture galleries of the Continent, the present writer used to meet him, occasionally, in W. S. Macgeorge's Studio in St. Andrew Street, Castle-Douglas. He had then become learned in all the terms and technicalities of

Art, and viewed, with a critical eye, the paintings which Macgeorge was sending to the Royal Scottish Academy's Exhibition. Sometimes he gave suggestions as to improvements in the *pose* of a figure, or the general balance of the picture. But, usually, with a genial smile, he closed his critical review with the homely remark—"Weel Mac, after a' I hae said, 'am gie sure ye ken best yersel hoo the picture should come." And so there were peace and satisfaction all round. Crockett had then grown into a stalwart young man—standing over six feet, erect and broad shouldered, with a bluff and ruddy face, and cliff-like brow, over which hung a tangle of sandy hair. The writer was then interested in Art; and, as a daily visitor to Macgeorge's Studio, watched with peculiar interest, the artist working out in sepia, the drawings to illustrate Crockett's book of poems, "Dulce Cor." And ever since these long bygone, pleasurable, and instructive times, the writer has followed with interest, and much satisfaction, Crockett's successful career.

On his return to Edinburgh, Crockett attended science classes, studying chiefly geology, but he did not prosecute these studies with much ardour. From the theological atmosphere, which surrounded his early upbringing in the Cameronian faith, his views, at this time, were definitely directed towards the Church, and he followed the Course of study necessary for the sacred profession.

Craigencalzie and Mossraploch

It was a common expression, in old times, that a Scotch farmer was ready to starve himself and his family, in order to make one of his sons a minister. The Crocketts, from the great love they had for the Church, were, no doubt, cheered in their hearts by the thought that the lad, when he left home for the University, was on the fair way to dedicate his talents to "The Great Master." By these old people, who lived in a time when elevation of character was the result of their steadfast faith in the workings of the Unseen; to know of their favourite "laddie wagging his heid in a pu'pit o' the Marrow Kirk" would be the fulfilment of all their earnest prayers, fervent hopes, and aspirations. And consideration for such feelings, perhaps more than his own inclinations, would have had, it is reasonable to suppose, some influence in directing the youth's thoughts towards the ministry. So, at the age of twenty-three years, he entered as a student, the New Theological College in Edinburgh, with a view to becoming a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. At this time his religious impressions were also so strong that he, for some time, wrought as a Missionary among the slums of Edinburgh. His evenings were generally spent in this way, and there he made the acquaintance of the irrepressible waif, "Cleg Kelly," who was the subject of a short tale in "The Stickit Minister." Mr Robert Louis Stevenson was so impressed

and pleased with the story that Crockett was induced to extend it and give "Cleg" a book all to himself, which was published in 1896. In the year 1885 his term at the New College ended, and he was licensed as a Minister of the Free Church—the Cameronian body having united with it in 1876. On leaving the College he was for two months Assistant to the Rev. Mr Siach, of the Free Abbey Church, Dunfermline, and in November, 1886, he was called directly to Penicuik, as Minister of the Free Church.

The town of Penicuik is distant about ten miles from Edinburgh. It is pleasantly situated on the left bank of the North Esk, on the main road from Edinburgh to London. The principal industries of the district are coal mines, and the extensive and celebrated paper mills, which line the bank of the river. The huge factories, workmen's cottages, and tall chimneys, connected with these industries, detract somewhat from the picturesque beauty of the landscape; but, the scenery of the Esk valley, with the river flowing cheerily in its course, is, in many places, quite enchanting. And the historical and literary associations of the district render it, at all times, interesting to the visitor. A few miles to the south west of the town, on the property of New Hall, are the scenes identified with Alan Ramsay's pastoral drama of "The Gentle Shepherd." In the romantic vale of the North Esk there are also many scenes of wild

Bank House, Penicuik.

and bewildering beauty—chief of which, is the romantic glen, in which rises from a lofty precipitous rock overhanging the bed of the river, the ancient house of Hawthornden. This house, the "classic Hathornden," is famous as having been the residence of the Scottish Poet and Historian, William Drummond, the friend of Shakespeare and Ben Johnson. The latter of whom travelled hither on foot from London, and passed some weeks with the poet Drummond. In the neighbourhood there is the site of the battle of Rullion Green, where the Covenanters were defeated by Gen. Dalzell in November, 1666. The spot is marked by a monument with an inscription. And in later times Robert Louis Stevenson frequently refers in his works to the attractions, which the Pentland Hills, and the "howes and romantic scenes" in the parish of Glencorse had for him in his youth. "The daintiest place in a' Scotland" he feelingly wrote of the parish.

For the last nineteen years Crockett's name has been very closely associated with Penicuik as a minister, and an author. At Bank House on Penicuik Estate where he resided for seventeen years, the greater number of his romances were composed and wrought out, and there is no doubt that the town, so long celebrated for its paper mills, has, through his fame as an author, acquired a publicity which it never otherwise would have had.

Bank House was situated on a gentle slope overlooking the Esk on the one side, and on the other having Carnethy, the highest peak of the Pentlands, a prominent object in the distance. One of the entrances to Penicuik estate also served as the gateway to Bank House. In the grounds of the estate, to which Crockett had free access at all times, there were many fascinating snatches of rural scenery. The quiet sequestered walks of the estate were the favourite resort of the novelist, and to these he repaired almost daily for walking exercise. When on "solitary musings bent" he sometimes went thither alone, though frequently our novelist sought the merry companionship of the juvenile members of his family, in picnics among the recesses of the woodland glades.

Within six months after Mr Crockett's appointment, on 10th March, 1887, as minister of the Free Church, Penicuik, he was married to Miss Ruth Mary Milner, daughter of George Milner of Moston House, Lancashire—a poet and man of letters—as well as belonging to a well-known Yorkshire family. Mrs Crockett, we are informed by one to whom she was well-known while resident in Penicuik, showed great interest in Church work. She was also greatly interested in the musical education of the young, and, by her kindly and sympathetic ways, gained the esteem, not only of the congregation, but of the whole community. Their family consists of two sons, Philip and

George, and two daughters, Maisie, and Margaret Douglas Crockett. Like the sons of Burns and Allan Cunningham, the boys have shown no desire to follow in the footsteps of their father, and adopt literature as a profession. They have both elected to enter His Majesty's Imperial Forces. Philip is being tutored for the army, and George has entered the Naval College at Osborne, preparatory to joining the navy.

In the same year Crockett's book of poems "Dulce Cor" appeared. It was inscribed as "his youth's dear book," to "his wife to be," and was published by Kegan, Paul, Trench, & Co., London, whose premises, sometime thereafter, were almost totally destroyed by a fire, and the unsold copies of "*Dulce Cor*" were consumed. When the volume appeared it was favourably received by the press, and through it arose a friendship and correspondence between Crockett and the late Robert Louis Stevenson.

Some of the poems in the book were highly commended by Lord Tennyson, and the *Christian Leader* wrote in reviewing the *Bards of Galloway* in the year 1889:—"But few, if any, of the Galloway bards, either clerical or lay, rise to the level of the present Free Church minister of Penicuik. Mr Crockett's pieces are justly praised by the editor for their 'scholarly refinement and delicacy of feeling,' not less mark-worthy is there pure spontaneity, their truth to nature, and especially the presence in

them of the genuine lyrical note. Mr Crockett's 'Idyll of the Hayfield' is one of the happiest pictures of rural life that we have received from any living poet, and Whittier might not be ashamed to own the poem entitled 'From two Windows.'" With the writer "The Idyll" has always been a favourite. In its rythm and swing it is sweet as the new mown hay, and smooth as the stroke of the scythemen. Although Mr Crockett has sometimes spoken in bantering terms of this, his first published book, we consider it a work showing many poetical pieces of sterling worth, and one of which Mr Crockett need not at all be ashamed. And we give no apology for reproducing the "Idyll of the Hayfield" here. It was written in the year 1885:—

IDYLL OF THE HAYFIELD.

Hey for the haymaking weather!
Hey for the meadows green!
Scythemen all swinging together,
Swish of the blades so keen.

There go the ranks of the mowers,
Sweeping the swathes behind,
Bending as tall meadow flowers
Bend in a westerly wind.

To the East their heads are inclining
For a last strong kiss from the sun,
And a draught of his early shining
Just once ere their life is done.

Dragon-flies hover and shiver
Over the gnat-haunted pool;

Cows are knee-deep in the river,
Flicking the flies in the cool.

Stridently down in the meadow
Stone upon steel is laid ;
Down where the grass is in shadow
Some one is sharpening his blade.

With hey for the haymaking weather!
Hey for the meadows green!
Scythemen all swinging together,
Swish of the blades so keen.

Here come the haymaking lasses,
Bonneted safe from the sun,
Merrily tossing the grasses,
Wild roses every one.

Brown are their faces haymaking,
Bright as this summer's day ;
Strong are the arms that are raking
And shaking the new-mown hay.

Rare is the haymaking weather
Strong with the strength of June ;
Lasses and lads together,
Sing to a haymaking tune.

Singing and swinging and bringing
Hay from the meadows green,
Maying and playing and haying,
All are most pleasant, I ween.

All in the haymaking weather,
Lumbering along the ways,
The wains in a row together
Creak home in the longest days.

With hey for the haymaking weather!
Hey for the meadows green!
Scythemen all swinging together,
Swish of the blades so keen.

Rattling and battering and clattering,
The hay waggons cumber the road ;
Rustling and hustling and bustling,
The hay-mow swallows the load.

But somehow the haymaking riot
Dies into silence soon,
For I am possessed with the quiet
And drowse of the afternoon.

And in the dim hay-loft, a-glimmer
With motes in the slant sunbeam,
If the world gets dimmer and dimmer
Who shall chide if I sleep and dream.

Of the lazy haymaking weather,
The drowsy meadows green,
Scythemen all swinging together,
Swish of the blades so keen?

Mr Crockett during the years of his ministry at Penicuik was a most zealous worker. In addition to his preaching and pastoral labours by means of popular Sunday evening lectures on Burns, Browning, Whittier, Carlyle, Tennyson, Ruskin, and others; and lime-light illustrated lectures on his "Tour through the Holy Land," "Through Europe with a knapsack," and "From Penicuik to London by road," he sought to interest, instruct, and enlighten the people. He also very frequently presided at social meetings, and was successful in getting up a library of 500 volumes in connection with Penicuik Free Church congregation. He also took great interest in the instruction of the young, and conducted classes weekly for the

Path through the Woods on the Esk Bank at Penicuik.

study of the Bible; and, at other times lectured to classes of young men on English literature, geology, astronomy, and British history. In this way he was instrumental in infusing new life into the various departments of congregational activity; and the Church prospered under his care.

From the experiences of his young days, he had seen deeply into the heart of the common people; and, while resident in Penicuik, he was at all times a sympathic friend, and ready helper to the poor. And many a cottager on the Esk side knew Mr Crockett, as such, long before they ever heard of him as an author. The opinion expressed by a native, in this connection, is well worth quoting:—"He's a gran' man Mr Crockett, an' he's weel liked here-aboots. He often comes into ma hoose, sits doon beside me, an' cracks awa', speerin' hoo I'm gettin' on, an' askin' if I've read a' the books he's lent me. He's no' yin o' the kind that's aye spoutin' aboot religion, but he always acts up to it, oot an' oot."

The Mauricewood pit disaster on 5th September, 1889, when 63 men and boys perished in the mine, was the saddest event of his ministry. On this occasion his unselfish and generous nature was exhibited in a marked degree.

It is recorded that, while all the ministers in the district nobly did their duty, a notable part was played by Mr Crockett, and his

helpers, associated with the "Fieldsend and Shottstown Mission," who were intimately acquainted with most of the bereaved ones. He set to work to give temporary relief, and in this way alleviated the sufferings of the distressed families, till the general relief fund had been organised. And his name, as associated with these kindly acts, is still remembered with gratitude by the miners who were saved, and by those who were left to mourn the loss of father, husband, and brother.

"The loveableness of Mr Crockett's personality, as well as his books," says a writer in the *Bookman*, "has attracted some of the greatest men of the time." J. M. Barrie, Robert Louis Stevenson, Andrew Lang, and other famous authors frequently visited at Bank House, Penicuik. John Ruskin delighted in "The Raiders," and frequently invited the author to Coniston. Almost to the last month of his life he heard each new novel read aloud as it appeared. Whittier was one of Crockett's correspondents. He had read a poem by the Edinburgh student in an American paper, and was much gratified by the founding of a Whittier Club in connection with the Edinburgh University. These letters of Whittier to Crockett have been published in America. During his ministry at Penicuik, Mr Crockett was frequently the guest of the late Sir John Cowan at Beeslack, and he has given a touching description of a talk he once had there

with the late W. E. Gladstone on a Sunday evening. Mr Crockett writes of himself as an unknown young man, for whom it was an unspeakable privilege to be admitted to the society of the aged statesman, but the graceful modesty of the narrative does not prevent us from guessing that Mr Gladstone may have felt an unusual interest in the country minister, who was already coming into prominence as a writer. Mr Gladstone had read "The Stickit Minister," and questioned Crockett closely on the conditions of clerical life in Scotland. He congratulated him on his settlement in the quiet rural charge of Penicuik, and said his own ideal would be to end his life in such a place, but circumstances, not his desire, had thrown him into politics. Mr Crockett recalled his first sight of Pio Nono in the Vatican, and thought the veteran premier was not unlike him. The young minister was questioned on the waning prospects of Disestablishment, on the Church-going of the peasantry, and on the prevalence of family worship.

During the conversation Mr Crockett happened to refer to the reverent affection with which the aged leader was regarded in the nooks and corners of the land, the personal devotion and loyalty of which a king might be proud. "I know, I know," said Mr Gladstone; "I do not deserve it, but I never come to Scotland without the love of the common people coming to me like a song or a prayer."

While faithfully performing his ministerial

duties, Mr Crockett was always busy with his pen contributing articles to the magazines and newspapers. From the year 1898 he wrote, continuously, chiefly on literary topics for religious periodicals. During the years 1890-1891, he edited, and, it may almost be said, wrote the entire contents of "The Workers Monthly."

From 1890 to 1893, his literary contributions were chiefly confined to the "Christian Leader," identifying himself so much with that periodical, that during the time the editor, William Howie Wylie, was laid aside by illness, some of the numbers were written almost entirely by Mr Crockett. With its late gifted editor, Crockett was on the most friendly terms, and he has expressed in his writings, a sense of his indebtedness to him for encouragement in his early literary efforts.

It is said that on one occasion the Editor of the "Leader" wrote to Crockett for an Editorial, which was urgently wanted. Crockett sent instead a short story, "A day in the life of the Revd. James Pitbye," which is now embodied in "The Stickit Minister." The Editor was so pleased with the homely character, and quaint humour of the piece, that he wanted more of the same nature. Crockett, therefore, continued to send other stories of a like kind ; which, by the readers of the "Christian Leader," were greatly appreciated.

Encouraged by the success of these efforts in

prose, Crockett forsook poetry for fiction, and on the advice of Dr Robertson Nicol of the "British Weekly," whose attention the sketches had attracted, Crockett collected these contributions to the "Leader," and published them in a volume, under the title of "The Stickit Minister."

It appeared in the year 1893, and immediately called attention to the new pen at work in the Midlothian Manse. It brought Mr Crockett instant fame as a prose writer, and edition after edition has been required to satisfy the constant demand for this entertaining volume of sketches of humble Scottish life. Its name so puzzling to southrons, aided to its success. A story was current to the effect that a well-known lady said, "I never can remember whether that book's called 'The Crockett Minister' by Stickit, or 'The Stickit Minister' by Crockett! And, in either case, can anyone inform me what is a 'Stickit?'" While mentioning the title, one may refer to an amusing blunder committed by a *Daily News* leader-writer, who wrote of Crockett's latest book "Ian Maclaren"! Each of the three Scottish writers has selected striking, if somewhat difficult, titles for their works. Mr Barrie's "Auld Licht Idylls" has been a stumbling block to many an English reader, and Ian Maclaren's "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" came to be called at Mudie's Library by the shorter form of B.B.B.B.

The volume was dedicated to Robert Louis

Stevenson, of Scotland and Samoa, and it was a line in the ascription which inspired Stevenson's poem "Blows the Wind To-day" which is printed in the *Edition de luxe* of "The Stickit Minister." "The whole book" as Stevenson wrote in a letter to a friend "breathes admirably of the soil. 'The Stickit Minister,' and 'The Heather Lintie' are two that come near to me particularly. They are drowned in Scotland; They have refreshed me like a visit home; 'Cleg Kelly' is a delightful fellow; I enjoyed his acquaintance particularly."

Through Crockett's dedication of the volume to Stevenson, a correspondence arose between the two writers which continued till the latter's death, and Crockett never has been prevailed on to publish more than a fragment of it. In a beautifully worded preface, to the volume, "The Stickit Minister," Crockett recalls the generosity of his brother Scot, and of the letters he says—"It goes to my heart not to quote from them, for they are in some wise my poor patent of nobility. But, perhaps with more wisdom, I keep them by me, to hearten myself withal when the days of darkness grow too many and too dark."

CHAPTER VI.

Opinions of the Press on his First Two Works—"The Stickit Minister" and "The Raiders."

Crockett was now fairly started as an original writer. He was acknowledged by the Press as a new name in literature, and that it had come to stay, one reviewer remarking that "Mr Crockett has the making of a great writer in him—fire, pathos, humour, wide sympathies, keen insight into character, a touch at once light and masterly, and a style nervous, and flexible."

The stories were so homely in their clothing of braid Scotch, and contained so many fine word pictures of rural life and manners, that they met with great appreciation in this country, and were widely copied into the papers, especially in Canada and Australia.

In the "Stickit Minister," Mr Crockett had given a strong, and sympathetic presentment of Scottish peasant life. *The Speaker* wrote of it as "a book that is full of strength and charm; humour and pathos mingle with delightful effect. No wailing pessimism mars our enjoy-

ment with its dreary disbelief in humanity; every page exhibits a robust faith in the higher possibilities of our nature; and the result is distinctly successful." These remarks of this reviewer were, certainly, very encouraging to the young author in what was, really, his first literary venture. But, at the same time, there were other critics who did not treat him with such favour. By some, Crockett, as an author, was merely welcomed, with a veiled sneer, as an accession to the ranks of the "Kail Yaird School of fiction."

In this new School, however, Mr Crockett did not make a long stay. With his romance of "The Raiders" published in 1894, he had left it within a year. This sudden departure from the position to which these critics had considerately assigned him, must have come as a surprise to them. And, of the "Kail Yaird" order of romancers, who at that time were the sport of reviewers, we now hear nothing. With the School of Poetry, which in the time of Alexander Smith, and Sydney Dobell, was nicknamed "the Spasmodic," it has gone to oblivion.

By the people, "The Raiders" was generally appreciated as a powerful tale of adventures, and stirring incidents. The strong and vigorous writing, lively development of character, and graphic descriptions of scenery, contained in the book, showed the author had talent, and versatility as well. That he was no mere mannerist, repeating himself, but, was able to

THE RAIDERS' BRIG.

picture, with as deft a hand, the clash of arms in the grim encounter of the King's men with a band of lawless smugglers, or gypsies, in the stirring times of the eighteenth century; as he had faithfully delineated the loves and hopes, the joys and sorrows of the humble toilers with the plough, the shearing hook, and the shepherds crook, who had come under his observant eye in his early years of rustic labour.

But, as a new writer, some of the critics appeared uncertain how Mr Crockett's works should be treated. In several cases the verdict was in his favour. Still there were some who viewed the book with a jealous eye, and wrote of it in terms so lukewarm, that they were even more damaging than if they had given it a *fair* slating. Critical fault-finders, in a carping manner, pointed out that Mr Crockett had transported the "Murder Hole," of tradition, from the borders of Ayrshire and Galloway to the shores of Loch Neldricken. This, no doubt, the novelist had done in his romance. No one knew better than Mr Crockett that the real Murder Hole was situated near the Rowantree Schoolhouse. There, however, it did not suit the purpose of his story; so, just as the landscape painter in the composition of his picture, readily removes a tree, from the middle distance to the immediate foreground, in order to add to the effect of the whole, Mr Crockett was quite justified in making this change to give greater effect to his romance. By some reviewers it

was remarked that Mr Crockett had taken Patrick Heron, and the Maxwell brothers, by impossible routes through Galloway in their quest for May Maxwell, who was carried off to its mountain fastnesses by the Faas, and the Marshalls, while others charged him with plagiarism. He was accused of having taken from *Nicholson's Traditional Tales of Galloway* his descriptions of some of the characters in "The Raiders," the object of the writers evidently being to deny Mr Crockett's right to a place as a constructive novelist. This accusation appears to us now, so ridiculous, that it must have been advanced by the writers without any thought, or consideration. With quite as much reason Sir Walter Scott might have been charged with plagiarism in having made use of the manuscripts of Galloway Tales and Traditions, in his romance of "Guy Mannering," which were sent to him by Mrs Thomas Scott, *nee* Elizabeth M'Culloch, Ardwall, and Joseph Train, the antiquary. Without Mr Crockett's artistic touch, and creative power, the Murder Hole of tradition would have had little, or no interest, to any one in the present day.

Mr Crockett, in replying to those who accused him of literary borrowing, stated that he had repeatedly and publicly declared that "in 'The Raiders' he had endeavoured to re-set the best known of Galloway traditions, as others had done, and are doing. His only regret was that there is so little of this splendid, rough, popular

material extant. It was pure gold to the romancer, and whenever he could lay hold on it, why, he intended to do it, and do it again."

These so-called plagiarisms, which obtained currency in a leading journal, and attracted some little attention in literary circles at the time, appear now, by the instances quoted, so very frivolous as to be almost unworthy of mention. Mr Crockett early declared the impossibility in which he found himself of learning from the enemy, and he has consistently refrained from reading any criticisms of his works for the last thirteen years. When he is sufficiently abused, he generally hears of it from some candid friend.

It was, therefore, somewhat remarkable, when critics were not, as we have seen, generally kind, or considerately *fair*, to find that Sir Herbert Maxwell highly appreciated the work of the new writer hailing from Galloway. In the pages of *The Pall Mall Gazette* he reviewed the book in the following complimentary terms:—

"Mr Crockett has scored a success, of which the best proof is that everybody is reading 'The Raiders' in spite of the hindrance to Southern understanding presented by a difficult dialect, and constant reference to the topography of a district with which very few people are familiar. The success of this, his second story, is so signal that Railway Companies and Innkeepers are already bestirring themselves to provide transit and lodging for the holiday folk who may be

tempted to explore the haunts of the Faas and Macatericks.

"Mr Crockett has broken almost virgin soil, for although the scenes of 'Redgauntlet' and 'Guy Mannering' were partly laid in Galloway, it is doubtful whether Scott himself ever travelled west of Dumfries. In describing the scenery of Galloway he relied on the letters of Train, the exciseman, but he hardly penetrated to the rich lode of tradition and local lore which is worked in 'The Raiders.'

"The story is told by Patrick Heron of Isle Rathan, a 'bonnet laird," the cadet of a good house; and, with a few exceptions, the author has succeeded to admiration in keeping himself out of sight, allowing the man to use his own homely speech without straining it to express ideas of a far later date than his own.

"There is an absence of hazy psychological suggestion, and spiritual fumbling, for which the reader in these our days has cause to be deeply grateful. The date is early in the last century, after the Stuart rising of 1715, but before the abolition of hereditary jurisdiction in Scotland. Smuggling—the 'Fair trade,' as it was benevolently called—was universal along the coast; landowners, as a rule, were more or less deeply implicated in it, and the hereditary Sheriff could look for little aid from his brother lairds to put down a traffic on which they depended—some for revenue, some for luxuries, and all for security in their homes. The hill country was the

haunt of gypsies and broken men, who acting in concert with professional smugglers like Captain Yawkins, a darkly-dyed pirate, used to swarm down on horseback to convey the contraband stuff to inland markets. The lairds were kept in good humour by a keg of brandy laid behind a dyke here, or a parcel of Valenciennes lace thrust into a 'spence' window there; and it went ill with any over-scrupulous one who fell not in with this immemorial usage. Sooner or later the 'red cock would crow' over his stack-yard, his cattle would be found hamstrung in the fey, or, worst of all, a maiden of his house would be carried off to the wilds of Loch Neldricken, to furnish a bride to the lordly Faas, or the bloody Marshalls.

"Out of this rich material Mr Crockett has woven a story which, while it sets as much delightful unreason stirring as one of Mr Stanley Weyman's cut-and-thrust tales, is as true to local character and scenery as a novel of John Galt's.

"It is remarkable how the narrative takes hold of readers who certainly must miss much of the allusion because of the unfamiliar speech. Many of the sallies of that bewitching baggage, May Maxwell (so rightly known as May Mischief) must be sadly robbed of their salt by laborious translation into English. The speech of Silver Sand (the name by which Johnnie Faa, the Gipsy King, chose to be known) is like milk and honey to those who understand the beauty of the Galloway tongue; but English as she is

spoke in that land echoes oddly in London clubs and boudoirs, let alone the names of places, of which no combination of alphabetical signs can convey the true sound. Take the following :—

'Noo, ye maun get to the dungeon o' Buchan afore the cattle ; they'll no be expectin' 'rescuers' afore that, and I maun get with speed to Eschonquhan by the loch o' Trool. Whatever yin o' us finds the lass maun hing off till the ither comes, unless a chance opens by ordinar sine.'

"The real pronunciation of Eschonquhan is not capable of transcription, being nearly all nasal, something like Skongh-h'n.

"It is indeed the greatest proof of Mr Crockett's power, as a story teller, that people enjoy his book despite these linguistic obstacles; it is the gift that some Orientals have of keeping their listeners in riveted attention, although these understand no word of what they hear ; so real are the life-pictures that they cannot turn away their eyes, though much of the dialogue falls on uninstructed ears.

"To sketch the outline of the plot would be unfair, and it is not easy to fix on the best incidents. For pathos the death of old Heron is hard to beat :—

'Ye are no feared, Paitrick ?'

'Feared, father,' I said—'What for would I be feared of you ?'

'Aweel, no,' he answered, very calm ; 'I am no a man to mak' a to do aboot deein'—I bid ye

guid nicht my son, Paitrick,' and so passed, as one might fall on sleep.

"One piece of this old gentleman's philosophy ought not to die with him—'Mind a' that ye see; but forget a' that folk say aboot ye!'

"The fight between Capt. Yawkins' brig and the King's ship in Ramsay bay is finely told; and the grisly episode of the Black sea chest and the 'Murder Hole' is the best possible rendering of a tradition well known in Galloway.

"One of the best drawn characters in the book is old Sammle Tamson. One is disposed to quarrel with the author for not letting us see a great deal more of him, for the quaint creature quickly arrives at our innermost affection.

"The verdict on 'The Raiders,' if it were rendered in Galloway language, would be—'Weel dune Crockett, lad! Stick til't!'"

And, Crockett has stuck to it to such good purpose, as to justify to the full Sir Herbert's remarks made at the complimentary dinner given to the novelist at Dalbeattie, twelve years thereafter. "Mr Crockett had by his writings," said Sir Herbert, "practically discovered Galloway for millions of the English speaking race. He had shown them the inner meaning of Galloway's common things, and had thrown over the landscape the web and glamour of romance, which would not soon die away."

The distinguished *litterateur*, critic, and poet, Mr Andrew Lang, also gave in the columns of

the *Daily News*, a very interesting, and favourable review of "The Raiders". He said:—

"The Scotch seem to be exerting themselves nobly to fiction. We have Mr Stevenson and Mr Barrie, and now Mr Crockett in "The Raiders" (Fisher Unwin) is making both of these authors look to their laurels. Mr Crockett's tale, the "Advocatus Diaboli" may say, would scarcely have been written exactly as it is written, but for Mr Stevenson's example. In his young Laird of Rathan—Patrick Heron—we are reminded of "David Balfour of Shaws," and his "Silver Sand" is not unlike a benevolent Scotch John Silver. None the less, "The Raiders" is a book difficult to lay down, a delightful book of adventure in a field untrodden by romance, in the wild wide kingdom of Galloway. There is just one other point which the Devil's Advocate may pounce upon, and we hasten to anticipate, and disoblige, the peevish proclaimers of plagiarism. In "The Raiders" (p. 203) there is a very touching and original scene between a little girl and her stepmother. 'They say that ye are my mother, noo,' and what follows. Now this pretty anecdote does not seem to be wholly an invention of Mr Crockett's. It appears to be told, traditionally, about the second wife, and the child of John Brown in Priesthill, 'The Christian Carrier' who was shot by the orders of Claverhouse as an obstinate rebel, say some; for his unobtrusive piety, say others. The story, told of Mrs

Loch Ken and Kenmure Castle.

Brown, will be found in a rather uncritical work 'Homes and Haunts of the Covenanters,' by Mr A. B. Todd (second edition, page nine). Mr Todd does not give his source, whether that be the 'Biographia Presbyteriana' of Patrick Walker, or whether it be oral tradition. In either case Mr Crockett has a perfect right to use the legend which he has set in his narrative.

"The marked originality of Mr Crockett lies partly in his choice of place and period. The Kingdom of Galloway has been waiting long for its novelist. 'Guy Mannering' deals only with part of the coast. Mr Crockett invades both coast and inland. Galloway is the least spoiled part of the lowlands. Only one line of railway runs from Dumfries to Stranraer, through the region of the Wild Scots. All beyond is traversed only by the roads, which run up to the Glenkens, and the Dee, to Carsphairn, and Dalmellington, and Moniaive. It is a region of lochs, from the long level of Loch Ken, guarded, where the river runs into the *mere*, by the ancient Castle of Kenmure, to the tarns that lie in the bases of the hills, like Loch Dungeon, or nestle in the hollows of the moors, like Lochinvar and Knockman. The upper regions are high, rolling tablelands of grass and heather, where corn never grew; they are seamed by slow deep water courses, called 'lanes,' where trout are big and shy. On every side is a tumbling sea of grass and heather, circled by mountain ranges of singular beauty, in form and colour. In the

dells and by the streams are lonely peel towers, as of Barscobe, where, we think the Covenanters murdered the laird; or hamlets like Carsphairn and Cairnsmuir, where they certainly assasinated the curate. There are lonely pools, like the Holy Linn, on the Garpel Burn, where fancy might see Naiads, and where history finds Cameronian skulkers. The rare villages or 'clachans' are historical, such as St. John's town of Dalry, where the 'Pentland rising' began, and where the slain Covenanters sleep in the shadow of the prehistoric tumulus above the river, the hill round which the mythical dragon wove its coils. There is Parton, with a similar tumulus, besides the new church and the ruins of the old. There is Balmaclellan, a favourite haunt of Old Mortality; there are lonely Clattering Shaws, and the Loch of the Lilies, and scores of scenes which lack their favourite poet, or lacked him before Mr Crockett came. The people were originally, perhaps, Picts, at all events Scots of the wildest. In the 'Killing Times' they slew and were slain, for the tablelands and hillsides were the haunts of persecuted saints. The Revolution of 1688 brought peace, if not content, to the Cameronians, but not, as Mr Crockett shows, to the region. The Devil himself was notably busy in Glenluce and Rerrick, slapping the assembled ministers, and throwing stones at lairds and farmers. The caves of the coast sheltered smugglers, like the ferocious and accomplished Captain Yawkins, a more suc-

Earlston Tower, Dalry.

cessful Dirk Hatteraick. The uplands were tenanted by gangs of armed 'cairds' or gypsies, holding, it seems, of the Royal race of Faa, the famous Gypsy Kings of the borders. Meanwhile, there was always a chance of landing by the Chevalier de St. George, and when Kenmure was 'on and awa' as Burns sings, he need not have been scant of broken men for a desperate adventure. Then there was the celebrated 'Murder Hole,' a black, bubbling pit in a waste of rushes, concerning which strange stories or myths are still remembered. Mr Crockett thus finds adventures enough for the adventurous, in an unholy alliance of smugglers and cairds, to burn a Maxwell's farm, kidnap his daughter for an exogamous Faa (they always capture their wives), and drive his cattle. No more spirited picture of cattle-lifting was ever drawn than by Mr Crockett, when the stolen nowt are driven madly across the defended Bridge of Dee.

"With all this wealth of romance centred round a young bonnet-laird, owner of a castle on a lonely isle, and attended by boys who have run away from home, Mr Crockett has all the materials for such a book as boys delight in, and wise men do not despise. It is good, now and then, to read of a hero who marries his first love and does not 'ware his heart' on other lassies To have an island of one's very own, with caves in it, to love a pretty girl, to defend her against all-comers in a cave, to chase her and them over burn and hill, to sleep in a robber's hut, to escape,

and just escape, are thrilling circumstances. A map would be useful to non-Galwegian readers, and Galwegian readers will be rather amazed by the wonderful speed of the hero's marches, where roads are unknown, to the Dungeon. The realistic reader, even, may rejoice in the admirable but unaccustomed landscapes, where the realistic reader is never likely to penetrate, for he loves a railway, and seldom trusts himself on the trackless moor, still less at midnight on the steep sides of Dungeon Cairnsmure. The people, especially the tall shepherd and his wife, are admirably drawn; the devices, however, by which Silver Sand is always round the corner with a rescue, rather staggers the faith even of the most credulous. The Scotch is good, and is usually interpreted between brackets. Old tales of the Persecution come in well, and if the Laird of Lag has any friends, they may make their moan for him. He made himself disliked, and was, perhaps, not so black as he is painted. The black is never likely to be whitewashed, and Lag must make the best of his situation. The main point is that here we have a thoroughly enjoyable novel, full of fresh, original, and accurate pictures of life long gone by. Mr Crockett may raise the price of horse-hire in Galloway, if pilgrims follow his track. They are not likely, however, to flood the Glenkens very severely. For though there is no "Murder Hole," inns are scarce, and distances are long, and the local trout are scarcely to be

caught by man's art or device; while artists have scarcely found their way into one of the most beautiful regions in Scotland. They are not like the old Covenanters, who wrote, in a book lately washed ashore in a storm on the east coast, 'The Spirit of the Lord bade me go into the Glenkens.' They might go further and fare worse."

In May, 1894, Mr Crockett, in recognition of the high position to which he had attained as an author, was entertained by the "Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club" at its monthly dinner. There was a large attendance of members on the occasion. The Menu Card contained pictures of scenes from Mr Crockett's two books, "The Stickit Minister" and "The Raiders," by W. D. M'Kay, R.S.A.; W. G. Stevenson, A.R.S.A.; and R. B. Nisbet, A.R.S.A.; a portrait of Mr Crockett; and the following poem by Alexander Anderson ("Surfaceman"):—

OUR GUEST.

THE order changes. Now no more
The raiders sweep from hill and glen;
And where was tumult once before
Peace walks, with kindly looks for men.

Gone the wild Marshalls and their kin,
The swarthy Faas have passed away,
To leave their memory within
The lone grey hills of Galloway.

The order changes—not in name,
Whatever time or chance may fall—
For in our Guest to-night we claim
The greatest "Raider" of them all.

For he has raided to the dim
And misty hills of old Romance,
Plundered, and brought along with him
The captives of his sword and lance.

And these are ours:—a bloodless fight
Hath made them captive to our wills;
And so we wish our Guest to-night
A second raid among the hills.

THE STICKIT MINISTER. BY W. D. M'KAY.
Illustration on Menu Card—Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club, May, 1894.

"This was now May, and the moon of May is the loveliest in all the year, for with its brightness comes the scent of flower-buds and of young green leaves breaking from the quick and breathing earth."—The Raiders.

Illustration on Menu Card Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club, May, 1894. By R. B. Nisbet.

EDINBURGH PEN AND PENCIL CLUB.

Guest . . REV. S. R. CROCKETT.

Chairman . . . JOHN HARRISON, ESQ.

Toast . . . . . *OUR GUEST.*

PROPOSED BY PROFESSOR MASSON.

MENU.

Soups.

Mock Turtle. Bonne Femme.

Fish.

Boiled Salmon and Cucumber.

HAGGIS.

Relevés.

Roast Lamb—Mint Sauce.
Roast Spring Chicken.
Braised Ham.

Sweets.

Apple Meringues.
Champagne Jellies. Chocolate Bavaroise.
Compote of Fruits.

Finnons on Toast.

DESSERT.

WATERLOO HOTEL,
1st May, 1894.

Professor David Masson, author of "British Novelists and their styles," and "The Life and Times of John Milton," &c., in proposing the toast of the evening, said that those who had read the "Stickit Minister" would remember it as a book of great and varied, and remarkable power. But there had been a sequel to that, in which Mr Crockett had taxed his invention, his knowledge of Scottish scenery, character, history, and humour in a more continuous way in the form of "The Raiders." (Applause). To have written two such books was a great thing for one man to have done. But what ought to interest the Pen and Pencil Club more particularly was the demonstration that was thereby given, that the capacities of their little Scotland to yield literary effect, and literary novelty, were not yet exhausted." (Applause.) In this connection, Professor Masson recalled the name of Sir Walter Scott, and later those of W. Alexander (the author of Johnnie Gibb), Mr Robert Louis Stevenson, Mr Barrie, and Mr Crockett, from the last mentioned of whom he hoped they might see further productions like what his genius had already given them. Quoting a motto in "The Raiders," "Mind a' that ye see, but forget a' that folk say aboot ye," Professor Masson expressed the hope that Mr Crockett might be true to that sentiment; that he would forget criticism for good or for bad, and give them his impressions of "a' that he sees," caring not a rap what anybody said. (Applause).

Mr Crockett, in reply, said "that he never thought to hear the well-beloved voice of his dear old Professor say the very kind things that he had said about him and his little productions. What everyone felt who had ever been a student of Professor Masson was, that he perhaps more than any man set the golden key to the door of literature for them, and opened it that they might pass in. (Applause). A superior English critic had said that Scotland was only the 'knuckle end of England.' He thought that Mr Barrie and Mr Stevenson were showing that such was not the case ; that there was a place for Scottish fiction all the world over, and that all the stories were not told yet. (Applause.) It was only a year since he (Mr Crockett) published his first little book. He thought it was far too great an honour for him to be asked there that night, because, after all, in a year, a man doing his best could not do much. Still, he felt that their asking him there would be a great encouragement for him to do something worthy of Scotland, and worthy of the kind of words that had been spoken of him. (Applause.) He should endeavour to follow the advice Professor Masson had given him. He felt that he had some stories to tell yet—(applause)—and he should try his best to tell them in an interesting manner." In a few humorous sentences, Mr Crockett gave the company some of his earlier literary experiences —how he had once been art critic for a paper in the south, and how he had published a book of poems, which nobody ever read. (Laughter.)

CHAPTER VII.

Resigns the Ministry, and adopts Literature as a Profession.

As a clergyman, Mr Crockett was much esteemed by his congregation, and deep regret was expressed when he, finding his intellectual bent, and widening sympathies and beliefs, to some extent, in conflict with that of the ministry, relinquished his charge in the year 1895.

Sir John Cowan of Beeslack, the oldest office-bearer of Mr Crockett's congregation, referring to the resignation, said — "When they remembered the wondrous labours which Mr Crockett had carried on during the eight years of his pastorate, the unwearied care and the work he had accomplished, they knew how conscientious were the convictions, which led Mr Crockett to tender his resignation."

By the members of the Presbytery it was also generally expressed that Mr Crockett would be very much missed amongst them, especially by the young, and those in need of counsel. But since Mr Crockett had determined to follow literature he would, no doubt, have a much

larger world to preach to than the Presbyterian one, for they new his works would be read.

Mr Crockett, in thanking the members of Presbytery, said—"He felt very deeply the very great kindness of the words which had been spoken. Their brotherly relationships had been, on all occasions, that which could have been wished. He took leave of them officially, not personally, and would still be among them as the friend of every one of them, if they wished it. Their testimonies had touched him deeply. He would ask every one of them to give him a brotherly shake of the hand, as he went to the duty to which he felt he had been called." Having shaken hands all round Mr Crockett left the Hall.

The Crocketts were respected and esteemed by all classes in the district of Penicuik, and before leaving there, a deputation waited upon Mr Crockett and expressed their regret at his having to leave the district in which he had been so long resident. They also conveyed to him their good wishes for the future; and hoped that Mr Crockett would, wherever situated, have many years of usefulness before him. Mr Crockett, in acknowledging their kind wishes, expressed his regret at leaving the district.

"The news of Mr Crockett's leaving Penicuik," writes a correspondent, "has been heard with sincere regret in the locality in which many of the outstanding features of his career have been directly, or indirectly, associated. Mr Crockett's

long residence in the district has added to the roll of able writers associated with the North Esk, such as Alan Ramsay, Drummond of Hawthornden, Dr John Brown, author of 'Rab and his friend,' and many others equally well known."

In the early summer of 1906, Mr Crockett, with his family, removed from Bank House, Penicuik, to Torwood Villa, distant about a mile from the ancient Royal burgh of Peebles. And nowhere could the novelist have found a more interesting, picturesque, and romantic district for his new abode. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town, on the banks of the river, there are some exquisite snatches of landscape, inviting to the artist. The extensive valley which affords a course for the "Silver Tweed," abounds in simple rural charms; and its green mountain-sides present many peaceful pastoral scenes, associated with interesting and stirring tales of romance, and ancient ballad lore.

There are also in the old town of Peebles, and the country around, numerous objects of great historical and antiquarian interest.

Torwood is in a beautiful situation, and with its latticed windows, and broad eaves, has a quaint and attractive appearance. There is also an air of quiet and retirement about the place that makes it, as a residence, congenial to the tastes of the lover of nature, the student, and the man of letters. So that, altogether, Mr

Crockett's "lines," in his change of abode, "have fallen in pleasant places."

In the never ceasing literary output of this generation, Crockett, though only a little past the meridian of life, has, since he adopted literature as a profession, succeeded in establishing quite a record in intellectual activity. It is to be hoped, however, that in his new home, near the classic valley of the Tweed which has been called the "Scoto-Arcadian district of pastoral poetry and song," there may be many more such productive years.

From his youth Crockett was embued with a love for literature, and an insatiable thirst for books. When at school in Castle-Douglas he had a small collection, most of them covenanting and religious books, which had descended to him from his grandfather; and, to satisfy his craving for more, he carefully hoarded the *bawbees* gathered together by those "ways and means" known only to boys in impecunious circumstances. In those days he had, as a "book hunter," little to spend; but, he tells us, "whenever he had a half-crown saved it went in the purchase of books, and that he used to go over to the late Samuel Gordon's book-shop in King Street, Castle-Douglas, to see what Mr Gordon could be induced to give him for his small savings." The purchase of a copy of "Jane Porter's Scottish Chiefs," a book, as Mr Crockett remarks, "now undeservedly forgotten," having been effected, the book was

carried home in high spirits, and the contents were greedily devoured.

Of the out-of-the-way books that made a mark on his mind might be specified Jane Porter's two romances, the one before mentioned, and "Thaddeus of Warsaw"; "Buffon's Natural History," "Eadie's Bible Dictionary," Whitson's "Josephus," "Nimmo's Edition of Swift," and complete sets of "Chambers' Journal," and "Hogg's Instructor." Mr Crockett has always been a keen student of dictionaries, and eager to learn the meanings and uses of new words. During the only illness he had as a boy, he read "Chambers' Etymological Dictionary" from cover to cover, having collected enough money previously to buy a first edition.

Mr Crockett has now a library that a Millionaire might cast envious eyes upon. In the literary world he has also attained to a high place; but, even with it all, he recalls with feelings of delight, and unalloyed pleasure, those boyish literary adventures. After the lapse of all those years Mr Crockett still loves to live again the memorable experiences of those struggling, yet withal happy, thoughtless days of his boyhood. And, in retrospective glimpses, his thoughts run on the lines of the author of "My First Fee," when Martinmas "brocht him his lang thocht o' store."

> "An lang years hae fled, wi' a fortunate train,
> But I never ance met wi' sic raptures again."

Photo by James MacKnaught, jun., Photographer Peebles

Interior of Study and Library, Torwood.

When a student at Edinburgh University Mr Crockett was a keen collector of books, especially of poetry. He was a constant frequenter of the second-hand book shops, and old-fashioned book-stalls in the by-ways of the city; and, by the time he was half-way through his College curriculum, he had collected, mainly from these stalls, a fair library of poetry, many first editions, including Tennyson, some of Browning's rarest, and the *Poems by "A"* (Matthew Arnold), now very scarce. "These," Mr Crockett says, "were the days of bargains in the twopenny box, but now-a-days, either patience is lacking, or there are too many on the scent for such, so that bargains do not now occur."

At the date of Mr Crockett's going to Penicuik, in 1886, he had collected nearly a thousand volumes. And in the year 1894, when he went to reside in Bank House there, he had about eleven thousand. Upon leaving Penicuik for Torwood, Peebles, the number of volumes in his library was estimated at from thirty five to forty thousand, and they were conveyed by steam traction, to the wonder and delight of the neighbouring population.

The structure, used as a library, which Mr Crockett had built on to the Observatory at Bank House, was, upon his removal to Peebles, taken down, and re-erected behind Torwood, it having been originally built in sections, with the object of removal in view.

A great part of Mr Crockett's library consists of books in various dialects of French and Spanish, particularly "Catalan," "Provencal," and "Lanquedocian." For a good many years he has seen fit to sandwich the production of his books, a Scotch book and a foreign one being published one after another. He has also acquired, in his travels, the *patois* and provincial languages of most of the parts of Latin Europe. Mr Crockett's most recent and popular works have dealt with Spain and Spanish history. He has strong sympathies with the people of that country, especially the agriculturalists and fishermen, many of whose lives he has related in such books as the *Adventurer in Spain*, *The Firebrand*, *Saint Lucy of the Eyes*, *Flower o' the Corn*, and the *White Plumes of Navarre*.

Mr Crockett, when on his travels abroad, prefers to lead a Bohemian sort of life, and in this way he gathers his extensive knowledge of brigands, smugglers, and people of that kind, by hob-nobbing with them. He makes friends with that class of people by going and living in their midst, and thus gradually gets so far into their good graces that he has quite an extensive correspondence with them. One thing that invariably helps him in that way is his camera. These people are always anxious to have their photographs taken, and a presentation copy seldom fails to insure friendship. He has at times had some stirring experiences with these "queer friends." He has made

several smuggling trips out of Spain into France, just to see how it was done. The greatest difficulty was in getting back into Spain. The guards think nothing of shooting there. "On one occasion," he says, "we were challenged, and had to lie low while the guards kept up a heavy fire over our heads, in hopes that we were somewhere within range. We were able to elude them eventually, and reached our houses in safety with the smuggled goods. I did not share in the profits, but I saw what the business was like."

"The smugglers in Spain," continues Mr Crockett, "are really a respectable people, except for the smuggling flaw in their characters, which is not looked upon seriously in that country. They are mostly farmers' sons, and very much like the smugglers round the coasts of Galloway my grandfather was wont to tell me about. In France labour is highly paid, so that the men don't need to carry on smuggling, and as a matter of fact they don't. In Spain it is very prevalent, and all the smugglers are Spaniards. It is also the cheapest country in the world to live in. A man could live on £60 a year in the suburbs of Barcelona, in a way that he could not do in this country on £200, that is, so long as he is satisfied with what the country produces itself. Of course, if he wants to buy foreign wines, and such luxuries, he has to pay dearly for them."

"Spanish beggars, about whom we hear a great

deal, are not the beggars we know by any means. They are not generally poor. They have their regular stances, which are handed down from father to son. Begging, indeed, is looked upon as not much short of being a regular business."

Speaking of life abroad, Mr Crockett says, "I have twice been in an earthquake, but on neither occasion was I so unfortunate as to be in a high house. Words would fail to describe the terrible scenes at such a time. On both occasions many people were killed who were living quite near to me. It is the extraordinary poverty of the Italian peasant which makes occurrences of that kind so terribly deplorable for the survivors. As a rule these poor people have but the meal of the moment in their houses, and anything in the nature of a catastrophe rushes them into absolute want. The sick and the injured are so poorly nourished that they have no energy to combat their misfortunes, and invariably die off very quickly."

"By comparison with Italy, Spain is quite a rich country, despite the prevalent idea that it is poor. It will yet be one of the biggest wheat and mineral producing countries in the world. And why should it not? It was the granary of the Roman Empire in the days of the Cæsars, and there is nothing to prevent it being equally productive except the want of capital.

More recently still, he has taken a great interest in the strife between Church and State in France and Spain, and was on the spot during the whole period of the recent Catholic evictions, going from one end of the country with note-book and camera. Mr Crockett has, from the very first, written every book of the thirty-seven for which he is responsible among the people, and on the spot concerning which he is writing. For instance, the conclusion of *Lochinvar* was written between the Farne Islands and Flamborough Head, the concluding scene being penned whilst sitting on the grass in the courtyard of York Castle; *The Men of the Moss Hags* was written at his friends the Macmillans of Glenhead of Trool, and *The Raiders* in George Duncan's house at Laurieston.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Novelist's Method of Work.

Mr Crockett made himself familiar with the type-writing machine before he began to write for publication, and all through his journalistic and literary career, he has taken advantage of it in his work. The habit of early rising which he acquired, as a youth, when working on the farm, has been rigidly adhered to by him in prosecuting his literary work. When writing, he is always up with the lark; and, as a rule, seldom engages in any work after nine in the morning. The best hours of every day are given to his desk, and the best hours for him are in the early morning. "When the Londoner begins to think of leaving his bed," says a writer in *The Bookman*, "Mr Crockett has his bundle of copy ready, and is away for the forenoon on the golf course. He has never abandoned the open air of his childhood, and has not known that symptom in which the city-worn Matthew Arnold recognised the on-coming of middle age, 'the foot less swift to meet the dew.' The rosy freshness of a June morning lies on his pages, and he knows, too, the hour when the

rose and the gold are hidden, and the dawn hangs, pearl-grey and changeful, over 'Rathan Sands.' All the wild, uncertain hours, when townsfolk dread the 'night air,' and, like Charles Lamb, are troubled with 'strange qualms' if they venture out, are dear and familiar to him. Who can forget his lovely moonlight scenes, unsurpassed save in 'Quentin Durward,' and the 'Merchant of Venice'? 'It was ever my custom,' says Patrick Heron, 'to walk in the full of the moon at all times of the year. This was now May, and the moon of May is the loveliest in all the year, for with its brightness comes the scent of flower-buds, and of young green leaves breaking from the quick and breathing earth.'"

In the making of a novel Crockett marks out, in his mind, the general lines on which the story is to run, and allows the characters to develop themselves as he goes along. He does not analyse. His characters appear to him simply, and he gets to know them, and they talk to him. Good talk it is too; but not all talk that can be used for a book, and so he has to select. When in the middle of a story, he says, "he lives a book, dreams a book, and sleeps a book."

Mr Crockett is, according to the "Daily News," a very methodical writer, or he could never have kept on writing stories with such success. He says:—"I think, plan, arrange slowly, often keeping a story months and years in my head without writing a single word,

slowly adding, altering, trying this way, and that, till I am decently satisfied. Then, when it comes to writing, I put down the first draft rapidly, caring for nothing but continuity of action and swiftness of motion. Generally, the more swiftly at this stage I am able to write, the better pleased I am with the result. If I write slowly the effect is an unsatisfactory patchwork. I never care in the least about the number of words I do in a day—only about getting the impression of the scene upon paper while it is in my mind's eyes. Then, after that, I begin really to work, often going over the whole four or five times before I let it go. I am naturally an early riser. I live in the country, and I like work for its own sake. Hence, though I can produce with some impression of rapidity, I am essentially a slow worker, hammering things out on the anvil of a day to which the artizan's eight hours is but a morning breather. I have done four or five thousand words of first draft in a day. I have been equally well satisfied with eight hundred. because in either case I count that first writing is no more than the raw material of fiction."

In the biographies of several of our great writers and poets, some extraordinary instances of inspiration in dreams are related, one of the most striking, and peculiar, being that told of Tartini,† the Italian musician, whose "Devil's Sonata" is well known to musicians.

† Disraeli in Literary Character of Men of Genius.

He dreamed that the father of evil played this piece to him, and upon awakening he put it on paper. It is a strange, wild performance, possessing great originality and vigour. It has also been the experience of the poet that his muse will visit his "slumbers nightly." Tasso has recorded some of his poetical dreams, which were often disturbed by awaking himself in repeating a verse aloud; and Coleridge's "Christabel," it is narrated, was the outcome of a dream. It is also unlikely we would have had "The Confessions of an Opium Eater," from De Quincy, had it not been for the opium dreams. And in the realm of science, Professor Dugald Stewart has observed, that there are probably few mathematicians who have not dreamed of an interesting problem. We have been led to refer to these instances of inspiration in dreams, in connection with Crockett's weird story of *Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills*, which, he tells us, was suggested to him by means of a dream. Of it, he says:—"I was lying in bed one night in a state of semi-consciousness, when I saw as in a dream, a poor dishevelled, naked, shivering old man, sitting on a rock on a barren and desolate hillside. His hair was wild, his nails were like claws, and his feet, curled up against the stone on which he was sitting, were cracked with frost. It was a weird sight, and impressed me so strongly, that, as I started up in bed, I cried out, 'Poor Devil.' I rose at once, dressed, came downstairs, and

began to write about this poor old man whom I had seen in so strange a manner. I wrote under the whip of the vision, and eventually finished it in thirty-six hours. It was refused by numerous editors, who all said it was the most lunatical thing they had ever read. But Low, of the *St. James' Gazette*, took it, and afterwards brought it out in book form by 'Unwin' on the back of *The Raiders*. It was eagerly purchased by the public."

Since the publication of "The Stickit Minister," in March, 1893, Crockett has written, in all, thirty-seven volumes of prose fiction. Such a record of productiveness in the world of literature could only have been accomplished by the author taking a real delight in his work, and by methods of regularity and steady application. Indeed, it is so amazing that Crockett has been accused by some, of writing too hastily, and to serve a purpose far too immediate; that literature is to be considered now-a-days not so much an art as a profession, and that with the present-day craving for fiction, the novelist, in writing up to the demand, sometimes sacrifices much of the literary style, and fastidious selection of the artist, for which the old novelists, who wrote for posterity, were distinguished. There may be some show of truth in this, but in charging Mr Crockett with haste, or over-production, it should be remembered that he served a long, and varied literary apprenticeship, before he finally adopted

literature as a profession. From his earliest years his thoughts had been turned towards following a literary career, and all his aims in life had been a preparation for it. It has been pointed out in this sketch, that for years he wrote numerous contributions to all the London Magazines, before he dedicated his whole time to literature; that he had acted, at various periods, as editor of different newspapers, and while on a visit to London, with a literary career in view, he was employed, for a short time, as a reporter of debates in parliament. It will thus be seen that, when Crockett took up the pursuit of literature, he entered on his work with a certain maturity of power, and a vast amount of varied experience in the walks of literature.

Mr Crockett tells us that he has never been able to write slowly. That if he does so he loses spirit and *verve*, and grows dull. It has been said that "his is the swift impromptu work of a man who writes direct from nature, and it may be doubted whether he would give us much better work were he to linger longer over his task." Crockett has usually written two books in a year, and often in addition, stories for children, such as, "Tales from Scott," "Sweetheart Travellers," "Sir Toady Lion" and "Sir Toady Crusoe," the first of which, "Tales from Scott," has, we believe, been adopted by the United States Government for use in the schools there.

Nevertheless, with all this steady output of literary work, it cannot be said that our novelist is slip-shod, or that there is any of the irresponsible writing of the literary hack about his productions. No author verifies with more care, and patient research, every historical detail in them. In *The Grey Man*, *Maid Margaret*, *The Men of the Moss Hags*, and his other historical novels, every incident and conversation are based on contemporary records. Mr Crockett has always in his employ a researcher at work finding manuscript, and other unpublished articles for his work. And it is customary with him, before starting on a book, to read every work he can procure bearing on the period of which he is writing. During his reading he makes copious notes. And, as an illustration of the painstaking research expended by Crockett in the writing of his novels, we understand that he spent several months reading up for "The Raiders." From ancient histories, chap books, and old maps of the district of Galloway, he carefully traced and identified the old roads, and bridle-paths used by the smugglers and cattle reivers during the period of which he was treating. And the actual writing of the book took him only two months.

Mr Crockett has always had a liking for the study of natural history, and he is also an ardent student of nature, so that the natural history allusions and powerful pictures of

scenery in his books are generally correct, and very interesting. "If there is anything good in his books," writes a reviewer, "it is the exactness of the natural history. All his books are redolent of the heath clad hills of his childhood. Like the late Professor Blaikie, in the old days, he carries his breeze with him, and is at heart a singer of a love song to the morn, the mantle of imperial purple clothing the hills through which the unfriendly granite shows its teeth, and seems to snarl; also the clear water as it slips to the sea; and all that grey Galloway land, where 'above the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying, his heart remembers how.' All these are dear to Mr Crockett, and words of them will continue welcome to Scotchmen the world over, like a dream of the dear homeland."

Which is the best of Crockett's novels is a question often asked by his numerous admirers? To this query a Galloway man can scarcely be trusted to give an impartial reply. He is almost certain to have a leaning towards those earlier works of fiction dealing with local subjects. With the present writer "The Stickit Minister," "The Raiders," "The Lilac Sunbonnet," "Maid Margaret," "The Cry across the Black Water," and "The Play Actress" have always been favourites. And of his novels treating of enchanted lands outside our own islands, we prefer "The Adventurer in Spain" and "The White Plumes of Navarre.'

The novelist's literary output has been so considerable and continuous, that many and varied have been the opinions expressed by critics on his productions. Some reviewers, while acknowledging he had done good work when he dwelt amongst the Galloway hills, prophesied his sure "decline and fall" when he took to wandering abroad writing of Latin lands, Spanish ceremonials, and the daring deeds of Italian brigands, and that his romances, treating of these subjects, are of inferior quality to his earlier, and healthier novels.

Other critics again assert that there is no diminution of his literary powers shown in these foreign novels, or in his latest productions. One writer, who has followed the novelist's work with enthusiasm from the beginning, writes:—"Of the foreign romances 'Joan of the Sword Hand' is best; but when we recall certain scenes of the 'The Red Axe,' 'The Black Douglas,' and 'Little Anna Mark' we are amazed at the fertility of Mr Crockett's invention. His North German story is a finer historical picture than German authors have themselves produced, and as a study of Teutonic mediæval customs is scarcely inferior to Gustav Freytag's Series 'Die Ahnen.'"

The same learned critic, in remarking on Crockett's local romances, gives the preference unhesitatingly to "The Grey Man." He says "although Crockett's writing has never in the

least degree slackened, that great book stands alone in recent Scottish fiction. Every scene and character becomes a perpetual possession to its readers. The feud between the houses of Kennedy and Cassilis is like some old tragedy of Greece; and the leading figures, especially the wicked John Mure of Auchendrayne, have an epic grandeur."

"'The White Plumes of Navarre,' a product of Mr Crockett's occasional residence, and research, in France, and one of his latest works, to quote the criticism of a leading journal, 'is far above the present day level of historical romance. It will take rank with Mr Crockett's most brilliant literary creations.'"

Crockett, as a writer, is particularly successful with his feminine characters. The types of women who figure in his works of local fiction are those among whom he had lived, and as a consequence they are truthful representations of individual character, and local life. His pages have generally been graced by fascinating heroines. The "loves of his lads and lassies are exquisitely natural, and charming, and he touches tenderly on the purest family affections." As a reviewer has remarked—"Crockett's heroines from 'May Mischief' to 'Joan of the Sword Hand' and 'Isabella of the Vardarelli,' are brave and winsome maids, but it is no disparagement to say that his Scottish lasses are the sweetest in his portrait gallery. The foreign princesses are gay, adventurous, and

right royal ladies, yet when we compare them with Maisie Lennox, Winsome Charteris, Nell Kennedy, and May Maxwell, we think of David Balfour's words when Barbara Grant asked if she was not bonnier than Catriona, 'I see the braw jewel—and I like fine to see it too—but I have more need of the pickle corn.' Each of the earlier novels was an idyll of noble Scottish womanhood, and in the procession on Mr Crockett's golden stair there are not only his fictitious heroines, but such heroic martyrs as Margaret Lauchlison and Margaret Wilson, who were drowned on the sands of Wigtown bay, and whose saintly memory he revived in the "Men of the Moss Hags." Having brought Mr Crockett thus far, in our sketch of his career, it now only remains for us to give here-under a list of the novelist's works; and thereafter a report of the banquet given in Mr Crockett's honour by his numerous admirers in Galloway and Dumfries.

LIST OF NOVELS IN ORDER OF PUBLICATION.

The Stickit Minister (T. Fisher Unwin, London)	1893
The Raiders, with Glossary by the late Patrick Dudgeon of Cargen (T. Fisher Unwin, London)	1894
The Lilac Sunbonnet (T. Fisher Unwin, London)	1894
Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills (T. Fisher Unwin, London)	1894
The Play Actress (T. Fisher Unwin, London)	1894
Bog-Myrtle and Peat (Bliss, Sands, and Foster, London)	1895
The Men of the Moss Hags (Isbister & Co., Ltd., London)	1895
Sweetheart Travellers (Wells, Gardner, Darton, & Co., London)	1896
Cleg Kelly, Arab of the City (Methuen & Co., London) ...	1896

The Grey Man, also Edition de luxe (T. Fisher Unwin, London) 1896
Lad's Love (Hodder & Stoughton, London) 1897
Lochinvar (Methuen & Co., London) 1897
Sir Toady Lion (Wells, Gardner, Darton, & Co., London) 1897
The Standard Bearer (Methuen & Co., London) 1898
The Red Axe (Pearson, London) 1898
The Black Douglas (Smith, Elder, & Co., London) ... 1899
Ione March (Hodder & Stoughton, London) 1899
Kit Kennedy: Country Boy (James Clarke & Co., London) 1899
Joan of the Sword Hand (Ward, Lock, & Co., London) ... 1900
Little Anna Mark (Smith, Elder, & Co., London) ... 1900
The Stickit Minister's Wooing (Hodder & Stoughton, London) 1900
The Silver Skull (Pearson, London) 1900
Cinderella (James Clarke & Co', London) 1901
Love Idylls (John Murray, London) 1901
The Firebrand (M'Millan & Co., London) 1901
The Dark o' the Moon (M'Millan & Co., London) 1902
Flower o' the Corn (James Clarke & Co., London) ... 1902
The Adventurer in Spain (Isbister & Co., London) ... 1903
Banner of Blue (Hodder & Stoughton) 1903
Red Cap Tales (A. & C. Black) 1904
Loves of Miss Anne (James Clark & Co., London) ... 1904
Strong Mac (Ward, Lock, & Co., London) 1904
Raiderland (Hodder & Stoughton, London) 1904
Maid Margaret of Galloway (Hodder & Stoughton, London) 1905
The Cherry Riband (Hodder & Stoughton, London) ... 1905
Kid M'Ghie (Jas. Clarke & Co., London) 1906
The White Plumes of Navarre (Religious Tract Society, London) 1906
Little Esson (Ward, Lock, & Co., London) 1907

CHAPTER IX.

Entertained at a Public Banquet in Dalbeattie.

We have seen that on the publication of "The Raiders," in the year 1894, Crockett's literary genius was recognised, and publicly acknowledged by the literati of Edinburgh. His name, as a novelist, had also become so well known in America that he was offered the sum of £6000 by Major Pond for a series of readings and lectures in the United States. Lecturing, however, Mr Crockett did not consider his *forte*. He was also averse to associating his name with such a system of self exploitation, and refused the offer. In Galloway, Crockett had also numerous ardent admirers of his works; but, his fellow Gallovidians were somewhat tardy in giving public expression of their appreciation of the literary achievements of one of the most gifted, and widely read of Scottish novelists. Notwithstanding these public testimonies of the esteem in which he was held, on account of his literary merits, it was not till the Autumn of 1906 that a move was made in Galloway to do honour to such a distinguished son of the province. It

appeared as if the old scriptural adage "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, and in his own house," was to be Crockett's experience. This seeming appearance of neglect of his claims to public recognition by his fellow Gallovidians, is to be attributed, however, more to the proverbial caution, distrust of external appearances, and first impressions, inherent in the Galloway character, than to any want of friendly feeling, and appreciation of real merit. "It has often excited surprise," observes Disraeli in his *Literary Character of Men of Genius*, "that men of genius are not more reverenced than other men in their domestic circles. His companions behold him merely as one of themselves—the creature of habits and infirmities." In like manner, the novelist, who may be a prophet also, is not always accepted by his own people in his native parish and county. By them the literary abilities and genius of the man is overlooked, and they recognise only the humble individual whom they knew when amongst them. Burns, the peasant bard, when in Edinburgh, received the homage of the "high born and the gifted fair," and the literati of the "modern Athens" hailed him as the prince of Scottish poets, while to the people of his own village of Mauchline, he was only "a daft ploughman." Allan Cunningham, in his day, famous as a poet, song-writer, and novelist, and who was entertained to a public banquet in Dumfries, was

in his native village of Dalswinton, only recognised as one "brocht up here aboots, of whom nocht in particular was known." And among the villagers of Ecclefechan, the great teacher, Thomas Carlyle, was reckoned as "a puir creature." So it was something, after all, that Mr Crockett was to have some honour in his native county. And it was in every way fitting that one, who by his writings had earned fame for himself, and honour for his native province, should receive the well-deserved laurel-leaf of his native Galloway, from his own people in his own home-land. And no greater honour could have been accorded to him than that of the brilliant and enthusiastic gathering of his admirers, from all parts of Galloway and Dumfries, who assembled at the public dinner in Dalbeattie, on the 28th September, 1906. Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monreith presided, and in proposing the toast of the evening delivered "an altogether charming speech, distinguished by the warmth of its local sentiment, by a generous appreciation of the value of Mr Crockett's works, and by a graceful literary manner."

All the local papers gave appreciative and lengthened accounts of the meeting. The full and exhaustive report, which is reproduced here, is from the columns of the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier and Herald.*

Herbert Maxwell

An Enthusiastic Gathering.

The idea of holding a banquet at which Mr Crockett should be the guest and central figure was taken up with enthusiasm by a large body of gentlemen representative of a wide area, and immediately upon their request the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart. of Monreith, who, too, has brought to Galloway great renown for literary genius, consented to take the chair and propose the principal toast in honour of a fellow-author. Mr J. M. Austin, High Street, Dalbeattie, carried through, as a labour of love, the arduous duties of secretary, and the other members of committee were—Mr Robert Blyth, Dalbeattie; Mr John F. Brown, "Galloway Gazette," Newton-Stewart; Mr Ivie A. Callan, "Stewartry Observer," Dalbeattie; Mr J. Gordon Carter, The Rotchel, Dalry; Councillor Clark, Dalbeattie; Rev. A. B. Craig, Laurieston Manse, Castle-Douglas; Mr S. M. Crosbie, 77 Priory Road, Annfield, Liverpool; Mr A. W. Cullen, "Courier and Herald," Dumfries; Viscount Dalrymple, M.P. for Wigtownshire; Provost Davie, Dalbeattie; Mr W. Dickie, Merlewood, Dumfries; Councillor Ferguson, Dalbeattie; Rev. David Frew, B.D., The Manse of Urr; Mr M. M'L. Harper, British Linen Bank, Castle-Douglas; Major W. D. Y. Herries, Spottes, Haugh-of-Urr; Provost Herries, Maxwelltown; Councillor Jack, Dalbeattie; Mr F. J. Johnstone, Claycroft, Dalbeattie; Mr Robert Lochtie, "Wigtownshire Free Press," Stranraer;

Mr W. S. Macgeorge, artist, 11 Melville Place, Edinburgh; the Provost of Castle-Douglas; Mr J. H. Maxwell, "Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser," Castle-Douglas; Bailie M'Clymont, Dalbeattie; Provost M'Connell, Glasnick, Kirkcowan; Major Gilbert M'Micking, C.M.G., M.P. for Kirkcudbrightshire; Mr J. M'Culloch, "Wigtownshire Star," Renton, Portpatrick; Mr J. R. Payne, Douglas Arms Hotel, Castle-Douglas; Councillor Rae, Dalbeattie; the Earl of Stair, Lochinch, Stranraer; Sir Mark J. M'Taggart Stewart of Southwick, Bart.; Mr T. Watson, Castlebank, Dumfries; Rev. D. R. Williamson, Manse of Kirkmaiden, Wigtownshire; Dr M'Knight Wilson, Oaklea, Colvend; Mr Robert Wilson, Linnwood, Dalbeattie; Dr J. Maxwell Wood, "The Gallovidian," High Street, Dumfries.

The Town Hall, in which the banquet was held, was brilliantly decorated for the occasion by Messrs W. Sinclair & Son, joiners, Dalbeattie, with streamers of bunting, flags, and garlands of evergreens, artistically arranged. Sir Herbert Maxwell, as indicated, presided, and was supported on his right by Mr S. R. Crockett, the guest of the evening; Lord Ardwall; Provost Glover, Dumfries; Major Gilbert M'Micking, C.M.G., M.P.; and Dr J. M. Wood, editor of "The Gallovidian," Dumfries; and on the left by Mr W. J. H. Maxwell of Munches; Mr J. H. Balfour Browne, K.C., of Goldielea; Sir Mark J. M'Taggart Stewart, Bart. of Southwick; Provost Wilson, Penicuik; and the Rev. David

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PROVOST CLOVER.
DUMFRIES

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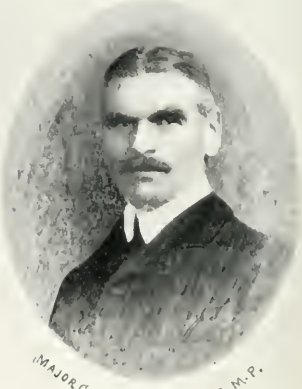
Frew, minister of Urr. The croupiers at the Chairman's table were Provost Herries, Maxwelltown; and the Provost of Castle-Douglas; while at the other two tables that stretched the length of the hall Provost Davie, Dalbeattie, and Provost M'Connell, Newton-Stewart; acted as croupiers. The other gentlemen present were—Major Herries of Spottes; Sir Joseph Fayrer and Captain Fayrer, I.M.S. Madras, who are at present resident at Spottes; Captain Campbell, Bristol; Mr D. M'Laurin, Dalbeattie; Mr Maxwell, yr. of Munches; Mr Philip Crockett, son of the novelist; Mr John P. Thomson, Penicuik; Mr Alex. Wilson, Dalbeattie; Mr James Little, solicitor, Dalbeattie; Ex-Provost George Shaw, Dalbeattie; Mr Malcolm M'L. Harper, Castle-Douglas; Mr J. R. Payne and Mr A. E. Payne, Castle-Douglas; Mr S. R. Gordon, Castle-Douglas; W. D. Robinson Douglas of Orchardton; Archibald Chalmers of Kipp; Mr Wellwood Maxwell of Kirkennan; Mr Robert Blyth and Mr Wm. Blyth, Dalbeattie; Councillor Josiah Ferguson, Dalbeattie; Bailie M'Clymont, Dalbeattie; Councillor Jack, Dalbeattie; Rev. George Laurie, Castle-Douglas; Mr A. C. Penman, Dumfries; Mr Wm. Sproat, Laurieston; Mr Adam Rae, Castle-Douglas; Mr Wm. Brown, Urioch, Laurieston; Captain Cassidy and Rev. A. B. Craig, Laurieston; Councillor Rae, Dalbeattie; Mr R. Wilson, Dalbeattie; Mr J. M. Austin, secretary of the

committee that organised the function; Mr John F. Brown; "Galloway Gazette," Newton-Stewart; Mr Ivie A. Callan, "Stewartry Observer," Dalbeattie; Mr J. J. Carter, Dalry; Mr H. J. Dobson, Edinburgh; Councillor Clark, Dalbeattie; Mr W. S. M'George, artist, Edinburgh; Mr J. M. M'Culloch, Renton; Mr T. H. Russell, Anchor Inn, Kippford; Mr T. Aitchison, Dalbeattie; Mr D. Newall, chemist, Dalbeattie; Bailie Newall, Dalbeattie; Mr John Cochrane, Auchenhay; Rev. G. T. Ferguson, Dumfries; Mr Wm. Sinclair, Dalbeattie; Mr J. H. Maxwell, junr., "Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser," Castle-Douglas: Mr Robert Thomson, Dalbeattie; Brigadier-General Sir Geoffrey Barton, K.C.B.; Mr John Grierson, town-clerk, Dumfries; Mr R. M. Halliday, Dalbeattie; Mr J. E. Milligan, solicitor, Dalbeattie; Dr Anderson, Dalbeattie; Mr W. N. Newall, granite merchant, Dalbeattie; Mr James Flynn, Dalbeattie, representing Mr S. M. Crosbie, Annfield, Liverpool; Mr A. Baxter schoolmaster; and Mr D. Mundell, Dalbeattie; Mr J. Copland, artist, Dundrennan; Mr T. Watson, "Dumfries and Galloway Standard," Dumfries; Mr W. Murray, Richorn; Mr G. Bentham, schoolmaster, Barnbarroch; Dr Semple, Dumfries Academy; Mr A. S. Morton, solicitor, Newton-Stewart; Mr J. R. Saunders, solicitor, Castle-Douglas; Mr James Affleck, Castle-Douglas; Mr W. Stewart, chemist, Castle-

SIR MARK. J. Mc. TAGGART STEWART.

W. J. H. MAXWELL.

J. H. BALFOUR BROWNE. K. C.



MAJOR C. Mc. MICKING, C.M.G. M.P.

Douglas; Mr A. Hitchcock, Schoolhouse, Laurieston; and Mr Dickie, "Dumfries Standard."

Written Tributes to the Novelist.

Apologies for absence were received from Viscount Dalrymple, M.P.; Sir James Crichton-Browne; Dr Robertson Nicol, Frognal, Hampstead, London; Colonel M'Kenzie, Downham Hall, Brandon, Suffolk; Provost Ballantyne, Peebles; Provost Cowan, New-Galloway; Mr N. B. Gunn, Edinburgh; Professor H. M. B. Reid, University, Glasgow; Mr Andrew Lang, 7 Marloes Road, Kensington, London; Dr William Wallace, "Glasgow Herald"; Mr George C. Pringle, Peebles; Dr M'Knight Wilson, Glasgow; Dr Norman J. M'Kie, Newton-Stewart; Mr W. Stewart Ross ("Saladin"); Mr John Blacklock, Kirkcudbright; Mr J. Peacock, Prestwick, Manchester; Mr John M'K. M'David, Gavinton, Duns; Mr Wm. Barbour, Cuilpark, Castle-Douglas; Rev. George Walker, The Manse, Castle-Douglas; Mr Henry Maclellan, banker, Castle-Douglas; Mr Walter Ovens of Torrs; Mr Wm. Dykes, Cheshire; Mr S. M. Crosbie, Annfield, Liverpool; Mr Taylor Innes, Edinburgh; Mr George R. Murray of Parton; and Mr A. W. Cullen, "Courier and Herald," Dumfries.

Viscount Dalrymple sent a telegram regretting his inability to be present, as did also Mr Andrew Lang.

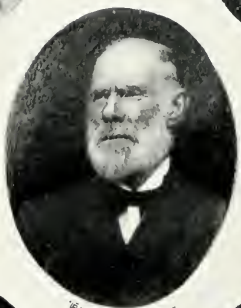
Among others, the following letters of apology were received :—

Crindau, Dumfries,
September 24th, 1906.

My dear Sir Herbert,—Aberdeen claims me bodily on the 28th instant, but I shall stray in spirit for a little to Dalbeattie, and participate, as far as may be, in the gathering in honour of Mr S. R. Crockett, of which, happily, you are to be the "Fugleman." I have no title to be critical or to assign to Mr Crockett his place in literature. I am merely the man in the arm-chair; but in that capacity his novels have given me pleasure, and I am grateful to him for having imparted to some of them, with artistic skill, that local colouring which of all local colourings is to the good Gallovidian the most sweet and delightful. I am not native-born, but heart-bound to Galloway. From it have sprung the choicest blessings of my life. My happiest associations—now, alas! my saddest memories—hover over its hills and dales and haunt its seashore. I love it as well as any of its own sons can do, and rejoice, therefore, that something has been done to chronicle its natural beauties and fugacious legends, to pourtray the strong character and romantic temperament of its people, and to create a repertory of their idioms. Mr Crockett has opened up a new vein for the Scottish novel—a vein from which he has excavated much good metal, but which is

PROVOST WILSON.
PENICUIK.

PROVOST DAVIE.
DALBEATTIE.



PROVOST HERRIES
MAXWELLTON

COUNCILLOR FERGUSSON.
DALBEATTIE.

PROVOST M^CONNELL.
NEWTON STEWART.

still rich in precious ore, waiting to be minted and made current in the world. It is to be hoped that Mr Crockett will continue to work this vein. Rustic love, in all its infinite simplicities, still dimples under many a "Lilac Sunbonnet" in Galloway. "Kit Kennedys" are still growing up heroic there under adverse influences. The land is still fragrant with "Bog Myrtle and Peat." Strange stories of "Grey Men" and of "Raiders," of wild adventure and of deeds of treachery, still echo in its Moss Hags and ocean caves. Who so capable to catch and record all these as Mr Crockett, who has a sympathetic eye and ear, and who wields a pen fluent and picturesque? We look to him for much stirring of the blood and agreeable stimulation of the nerves yet to come. The kailyard no less than the vineyard can supply exhilarating drafts. Mr Crockett has done honour to Galloway, and it is fitting that Galloway should do honour to him, and for myself I would rather have honour in the flesh than in the marble. I wish I could be with you to add one cheer more to the volleys with which Mr Crockett will be welcomed at Dalbeattie.—Always yours most faithfully,

(Signed) JAMES CRICHTON-BROWNE.

Mr S. M. Crosbie, Annfield, Liverpool, wrote: —Circumstances seem likely to prevent my being present to-morrow evening, but I shall be with you heart and soul. It seems to be wiser

to honour our men of genius whilst they are alive rather than wait until they are dead, and I am proud that Dalbeattie leads the way in doing honour to Mr S. R. Crockett. Surely it is only a magician who can cause such places as "Sammle Thamson's" house at Mossdale, the bridge over the Dee, and the Gairland Burn, to be turned into classic spots. I have taken Dalbeattie Councillors and others to "Rathan Isle," and down the neck-breaking cliffs to the cave of "The Raiders," and where it was said to be smaller than the one described in the book. I showed where the cliffs forming the outer cave had fallen, and so reduced its size. Then Mr Crockett comes along with his Raiderland, and brings disillusionment by telling us that it was a description of a cave on the Irish coast which he gave. I forgive him, as I hope to be forgiven by those I misled, unintentionally though it may have been, and I wish him long life and the power to give us many more Galloway stories.

Dr William Wallace, of the "Glasgow Herald," wrote asking the secretary to give his regards to Mr Crockett, and hoped that they would have a brilliantly successful night. He was sure they would have a hearty one.

Mr A. W. Cullen, dating from the "Courier and Herald," Dumfries, 28th September, 1906, wrote :—I regret I shall be unable to be present at to-night's dinner to Mr Crockett because of duties in the office here connected with the tele-

graphing of the proceedings rendered necessary by the circumstance that the "Courier and Herald" must, as usual, be available to the public on the earliest demand to-morrow morning. Though not able to claim the honour of being a son of Galloway—which Mr Crockett somewhere facetiously says is divided into three parts: the Stewartry, the shire, and the parish of Balmaghie—I yield to none in my admiration of the one man who, in modern times, has made Galloway famous. True, in that same Galloway he had groundwork and inspiration in rare abundance for all he has written concerning the beauties of the Crockett country and the characteristics of the "Men of the Moss Hags," but he had the artist's eye to see and the literary pen to pourtray as none else had ever done in the same way; and in honouring him as they are doing on this occasion, Gallovidians have the satisfaction of knowing that they are really honouring themselves.

The late Mr W. Stewart Ross wrote as follows:—I should have liked to have been a guest at the Crockett dinner on the 28th, but the nerve malady that has laid hold upon my locomotive organs, although it brings no pain, renders any attempt at walking abortive, so, when you Gallovidians, who have legs equal to the task of striding through the heather and over the granite of your native hills and mine, are at the festive board, in just tribute

to the author of "The Raiders," I shall have to remain here in Babylon corporally, but I shall be in Galloway with you in spirit. How I should have liked to have met Mr Crockett, whose pages have often wafted me back to boyhood and grand old Criffel with its grey solemnities and Ossianic mists and memories. On the 28th, and always, may peace and joy be wi' ye a'.

Mr J. M'K. M'David wrote:—As a *quondam* "minister of education" in the capital of Ba'maghie, where your next Friday's guest (when wee'er than the maister) was lickit into shape, I would much enjoy the distinction of being permitted to share in the honouring of Mr Crockett. But duty keeps me here. Such a "gathering of the clans" cannot fail to be a happy one, and I wish it all success.

Mr George C. Pringle wrote:—I very much regret that it will be impossible for me to attend the dinner in honour of Mr Crockett on Friday. I should have regarded it as a great privilege to be able to pay our greatest living Scottish novelist my humble tribute of respect and admiration.

Mr Peacock, Prestwick, Manchester, wrote as follows:—I regret that it is impossible for me to be present at the dinner much as I should have liked. Instead of breathing the caller air of Grey Gallawa' for a day, I must respire my Scottish breath in a dull English atmosphere, and feel that my lot is that of

Illustration on Menu Card.

an exile. But I shall be with you in spirit, for personal reasons, because my father and the author's uncle Samuel were life-long friends as well as distant relations.

The Dinner.

After grace had been said by the Rev. David Frew, an excellent dinner was served by Mr Donald Anderson, Maxwell Arms Hotel, Dalbeattie. The following was the Menu :—

Scotch Broth. Turtle.
Boiled Turbot. Lobster Sauce.
Fried Fillets of Sole. Anchovy Sauce.
Fillets of Beef Financiere.
Cream of Chicken.
Haggis and Mashed Potatoes.
Roast Sirloin of Beef.
Roast Ducks and Green Peas.
Game.
Apple Tart. Galloway Pudding.
Creams and Wine Jellies.
Compote of Fruit.
Galloway Rarebit.
Dessert.

During the dinner the following programme of music was beautifully rendered by Messrs Hume's band, Dumfries:—Overture, "The Fatherland" (Apitius); valse, "Vienna Life" (Konzak); violin solo, Scotch Airs (Hume); march, "The Tourist" (Zillmann); selection, "The Spring Chicken" (Monckton); valse, "Pluie d'or" (Waldteufel).

An interesting feature in connection with the dinner was the "playing in" of the haggis by Piper Robertson, Dalbeattie, in the old High-

land style. On reaching the Chairman's table Sir Herbert offered a glass of "Scotch" to the piper, who after drinking "good health" continued his march round the hall.

The Chairman gave in formal terms the toast of "The King," which was followed by the chorus of the "National Anthem." In the same way the toast of "Queen Alexandra, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other members of the Royal Family" was formally given and received with musical honours.

Lord Ardwall then submitted "The Imperial Forces," and in doing so he said—Mr Chairman, croupiers, and gentlemen, the toast I have to propose is one that is always well received in all companies of patriotic citizens, and specially of patriotic Scotsmen. The Imperial Forces is a very comprehensive term, and takes in, I opine, not only the regular service, the navy, and the army, but also the militia and volunteers, as well as our splendid Indian army and our colonial battalions who recently gave us such good assistance in South Africa; and I would not even exempt the gallant body of native troops whom we see by to-day's papers have made such a brave stand in Central Africa against some attacking forces. (Applause.) The toast, as I have said, is a wide one. We have been here for two hours now, and we have a long programme before us. I do not think you actually want me to discuss the navy or army estimates at the present moment, but we

wish well to both of these services and the others to which I have alluded. We are all agreed that our Navy must be kept up to full efficiency. I do not think there is a dissentient voice in the whole country on that point—(applause)—and, in regard to the Army wiser heads than mine are busily engaged endeavouring to discover how the Army will be rendered more efficient, and to decide as to changes that will be introduced. Gentlemen, I give you the toast of "Our Gallant Defenders" in these services with all the honours, and I have to couple the toast with the name of the gallant Major, who has the honour to represent this county in Parliament. (Applause.)

The pledging of the toast was followed by the singing of "Rule Brittania."

Major M'Micking, in replying, said—I should first like to say how glad I am to be here this evening, and to assist in doing honour to our distinguished guest. (Cheers.) I happen to come from a very wild part of Wigtownshire, and Mr Crockett's description of the moors, the wild moss hags, and the people there, have always afforded me very much enjoyment, and I sincerely trust he may long continue to revive, by his literary art, those old-time memories which are so dear to the heart of Galloway folk. (Applause.) I feel it a great honour that my name should have been coupled with this toast, but I cannot help feeling also that, if the gentleman who is responsible for this toast list

had known that several distinguished officers were going to be here this evening, perhaps I should have been relieved of my arduous though pleasant duty. (Cheers.) Continuing, Major M'Micking went on to say—During the past six years there has been a torrent of criticism directed against the Imperial Forces. Much of that criticism has been thoughtful and luminous, but, on the other hand, much of it has been superficial and ill-formed. (Hear, hear.) I am inclined to think that on the whole the criticism has served a very good purpose. It has focussed the attention of the public on the problem of defence, and in consequence Statesmen have been compelled to think of and to deal with the important question. As a result of action by the late Government, a committee of Imperial Defence was called into being, and I have always been one of these people who thought that it was a very good thing that the committee should have been formed. The Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet concerned, are brought into touch with and receive the direct opinion of the best experts in the service; and, moreover, the committee has a permanent secretariat, and minutes of procedure are filed and available for successive Governments. Such a committee must in the long run tend to help the Government to maintain a continuity of defensive policy —a very important matter if we are to have efficiency combined with economy. Major

M'Micking next dealt with the question of the navy, and the recent launching of war vessels, which he described in great detail. He referred in particular to the setting afloat the other week of H.M.S. Shannon, as, he believed, the longest ship that ever left the ways of the royal dockyard at Chatham. The name Shannon he remarked, would recall to students of history —and in these days of Carnegie libraries we are all students of history—the unfortunate war with our American relations in 1813, and the unfortunate encounter between the Shannon and the Chesapeake.

Going further into the Army Problem, he said that what some people called this "insoluble problem" was really bound up in the fact that so many recruits now-a-days were rejected as medically unfit, and that unfitness he attributed to physical deterioration of the class from which recruits are drawn, due in large measure to the conditions of life in large centres of population. As time goes on, and generation succeeds generation, the problem will become accentuated unless a larger proportion of our population can be induced to live in country districts, where they can obtain pure air, and live amid healthy surroundings. (Applause.) That, to his mind, was the real and vital question which underlies the Army Problem. (Applause.)

The Chairman, rising amid cheers to give the toast of the evening, said—We are assembled here to-night to offer a spontaneous tribute in

honour of a fellow countryman who has not only shed lustre upon the land of his birth by the profusion and brilliancy of his accomplishments, but who has practically discovered Galloway for millions of the English-speaking race. (Applause.) About half a century ago, when I was a small boy, I went to a school in Warwickshire. The other boys asked me what county I came from. "Wigtownshire," said I. "Wigtownshire," asked they, and where is that?" "In Galloway," said I. "In Gallilee!" they cried—(laughter)—and I ran a narrow shave of being kicked out as a Jew. (Laughter.) Now I venture to lay odds that if any boy answered to-day that he came from Galloway he would be received with the nick-name either of "the raider," or "a man of the Moss Hags." (Laughter and applause). This toast might very easily have been placed in more competent hands than mine for this reason, that the preoccupation of a somewhat desultory life has prevented me of late years from being a very industrious student of fiction. It is true that for many years I have been a humble private in the ranks of that much-abused army of literary critics; but I have always, with two exceptions, drawn the line at fiction. I have never reviewed any works of fiction except two. One was Mr Rudyard Kipling's Jungle book, and the other was "The Raiders" by Mr Crockett. (Loud Applause.) Now, I would not like you to suppose that I have avoided

fiction from any belief that it was either frivolous or futile. Quite the contrary. Major M'Micking has told us that most of us are students of history, but I am afraid that statistics are against him in the assertion. The returns from every Free Library show that upwards of 80 per cent. of the books asked for are works of fiction, and therefore it is evident that it is of the highest importance that our British fiction should be of the right sort. In my opinion it is indispensable that it should hold out a clean, lofty, courageous ideal of character and conduct. (Applause). Do not misunderstand me. I have no appetite whatever for what is called goody-goody literature. There is plenty of evil in the world, and he who would pourtray human nature must not shrink from setting his palette in the dark colours as well as with bright ones, and if I do not advocate goody-goody literature, still less do I commend to you that which must always be a bad and imperfect work of art—the story with a moral. No, in my opinion, the true novelist—the good novelist—is he who leads the mind in search of recreation through the dusky labyrinth of human circumstances to higher levels, and opens the understanding to the beauty and poetry of common things. (Applause.) I do not think I can illustrate my meaning better than by reciting episodes from lives of almost the two great novelists whom our guest of to-night has not yet surpassed in profusion and abund-

ance of output. One was a Frenchman, Honore de Balzac, who was possessed by the belief—or, at all events, caused in his readers the impression that he was possessed by the belief—that society was a festering mass of corruption, that the lives of innocent people were irredeemably at the mercy of the selfishness, the avarice, the lust of their fellow men and women. The other was Walter Scott—(applause)—to whom the world appeared to be one wide theatre for chivalrous action and quaint kindliness; and, I believe, of the two schools there can be no doubt in your minds to which our guest of to-night belongs. (Applause.) I have said Honore de Balzac took a dark and sinister view of society. He was fond, indeed, of introducing into his fiction passages of great power and beauty. He was especially fond of apostrophising Paris. "Oh, Paris," he exclaims, "he who has not marvelled at thy sombre landscapes, thy gleams of radiance, thy profound and silent alleys, he who has hearkened to thy muttering between midnight and two in the morning, has learned nothing of thy true poetry, nor of thy grotesque and vast contrasts." He lived in a small villa in the suburbs of Paris, and it was his custom, when guests dined with him, to take them out on the terrace after dinner to look down on the city. "Venez," said he, "crachez sur Paris" ("come and spit upon Paris.") That was the true man coming out in intimate society. And if you want to

contrast the other novelist whom I have mentioned, Sir Walter Scott, take the little episode described in his biography by Lockhart in these words—"Scott's daughter once said she could not endure something because it was vulgar. 'My dear,' replied Scott, 'you speak like a very young lady. Do you know, after all, the meaning of this word vulgar? It is only common. Nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of with contempt.' (Applause.) 'When you have lived to my years you will be disposed to agree in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is uncommon.'" (Loud applause.) After listening to that explanation of the true meaning of that word "vulgar," I will have the hardihood, in the presence of our guest, to tell you that I have heard people object to his romances on the ground that they were vulgar. (Laughter.) Why, after Sir Walter Scott's explanation, surely that was a compliment to them. (Applause.) Mr Crockett's heroes and heroines do not wear coronets; they do not roam about the country in motor cars; they chiefly belong, as far as my reading has carried me, to the middle and lower classes—the common people—(applause)—and we may join with Sir Walter Scott in thanking God that nothing that is really worth hearing about or reading about can ever be uncommon. (Applause.) Mr Crockett began his life's work as a minister

of the Gospel. I know nothing of the motives or the impulses which caused him to turn his gifts to a different purpose. Indeed, I am inclined to ask—are we sure it is a different purpose? Our Master, the Man of Sorrows, was primarily a teacher, but how often did He turn aside from mere dry instruction and use fiction as His handmaid to enforce a lesson? What are the parables but short stories? Dives and Lazarus, the good Samaritan, the ten virgins—they had no real actual existence. They were creatures of the imagination. "There was a certain rich man" that was a favourite beginning with the parables. And so, how do we know whether Mr Crockett, in leaving his congregation in Penicuik, did not merely go in search of a much wider and larger field? This much is certain, that for every hundred understandings which he could touch from the pulpit, he has interested tens of thousands from his desk—(loud applause)—and we are proud of that, for the principles are the same. He has directed them to the same lofty end, and it is only the means that are different. (Applause.) All of you who think as I do with the Douglas of old, that "it is better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak," will be grateful to Mr Crockett for the light he has shown upon the inner meaning of our Galloway glens and hills, for the characters with which he has peopled our moorlands and our waysides. He has not taught us to love

Galloway—to love the land of our birth. We learned that long before we heard of him. But he has shown us an inner meaning to its common things. He has thrown over all our landscapes a web and a glamour of romance, and it will be long before that will pass away. (Applause.) He has done in short, for Galloway—and it is a grand thing to say of any man—what Walter Scott did for Tweedside. Do you remember how much that was? When Washington Irving came to visit Scott at Abbotsford, Scott took him up to what he used to call his "delectable mountains," a hillside fragrant with the memories of Thomas the Rhymer, and a thousand other of the Border legends, and he showed him all the glories of Torwoodhill, Ettrickdale, and Teviotdale, straight before him. What was the impression on that distinguished American's mind? "I gazed about me," he wrote, "for a time with mute surprise; I may almost say disappointment. I beheld a mere succession of grey waving hills, line beyond line, so far as my eye could reach, monotonous in their aspect, and so destitute of trees that one could about see a stout-fly walking along their outline, and the far-famed Tweed appeared a naked stream between bare hills, without a tree or a thicket on its banks, and yet such had been the web of poetry and romance thrown over the whole that it had a greater charm for me than the richest scenery I had ever beheld in England."

(Loud applause.) That is what Mr Crockett has done for us in Galloway, and we are grateful to him, not only for doing it, but for the manner in which he has done it. (Loud applause.) He has made use of the material at hand, and he has woven it into a structure which has delighted thousands of people who never had heard of Galloway before. He has ranged our ancestors upon his stage, and he has had the tact to do so—I was going to say without giving offence, but I am afraid I must keep within the limits of truth. (Laughter.) He has given offence. (Laughter.) There was a story of his which I think first appeared as a serial as "Mad Sir Uchtred of Garthland," and a capital story it is, but it so happened that one of my sisters married the present M'Dowall of Garthland, and she was very indignant at this title. (Laughter.) She wrote to me—"Is it fair—is it legal—for a man to throw a slur upon another man's ancestors? How would Mr Crockett like if in future generations some one was to write of an individual called 'Crackit Crockett of Penicuik.'" (Loud Laughter). I do not know if Mr Crockett recalls it, but though I had not the pleasure of his acquaintance at that time, I sent him the letter—(laughter)—and he had the goodness to change the title when the work was published in book form to "Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills." (Laughter and applause.) That was the only offence I ever heard—and a very venial one—

which was ever in Mr Crockett's writings. Now, we have invited him here to offer him tribute of recognition of his gifts and attainments. We are doing it in a somewhat barbarious fashion, as is the custom with Britons. We have excluded all the fair sex, we have shut up ourselves in a room, and we have offered Mr Crockett a dinner. As I say, the only excuse for that is that it is a custom derived from very high antiquity, when dinners were not always easily come by—(laughter)—and the greatest compliment we could therefore pay to man was to fill his belly. (Laughter.) We retain that trace, but unfortunately we have added to the custom another which always reminds me of the painful one indulged in by some barbarious tribes up to this day—namely, of slashing themselves, wounding themselves, and giving themselves pain in honour of a deity —we make speeches. (Laughter.) And those who have not speeches to make are even more to be pitied for they have to listen to them. (Laughter.) Will Mr Crockett kindly overlook the barbarity of the action and the means we have taken to show our deep respect for him and his work? It is the best we have to give, and in asking you to pledge a bumper to his health, I am sure you will join with me in pronouncing upon his past a hearty "Well done," and upon his future, bidding him bravely to "gang forward." I give you, with all the honours, the toast of Mr S. R. Crockett.

The toast was pledged with three times three, and the singing of "He's a jolly good fellow."

Mr Crockett, who, on rising to reply, had an enthusiastic reception, said — Sir Herbert, gentlemen, and brother Gallovidians, I have had some difficult tasks in this life, but I do not think I ever had a more difficult set to me than I have to-night. I have to thank you for an honour which has entered deep into my soul. I have to thank you for what our Chairman called the best and highest honour that you can give me. I can only thank you most deeply and most sincerely. I feel that we are met together not so much to honour a man, as to celebrate that grey Gallowayland which is the mother of us all. Your kindness moves me deeply, more than I can say. I do not know whether after all any prophet has honour in his own country, and if you have shown me that I have a little, I can only put it down to the fact that the prophet is such a very minor one (No, no.) But I would not underrate or undervalue the great honour you do me. Nothing ought to touch a man more than such a recognition. I love the simple old formula more than crowns or riches, that such an one has "deserved well of the commonwealth!" (Applause.) Now, if of old, we of Galloway and the Nith Borders were called the men of the Free Province, it is certain that you have a right to bid one of your sons a kindly God-speed on his way. I admit that at first I did not quite take to the notion of

such an honour. It seemed too great during a man's life-time. (Though how to ask him to dine after he was dead seemed an equal difficulty). Ever since it came upon me I have been endeavouring to form within myself what I would say to-night, or what I would tell you of my feelings in regard to Galloway and Galloway people. Some little time ago I was in Glasgow and I heard a story. It is a great place for stories, Glasgow, and I daresay, if you have been there, you have heard this one too. It appears that Admiral Togo was over here as an attaché in the navy when he was quite a young man. He was taken on one occasion to a great public dinner, and not being acquainted with the customs of the country he naturally asked his companion who everyone was. At last he asked who the men were who sat at the top table with pale faces, crumbling bread between their fingers. (Laughter.) He supposed them to be some royal or priestly caste who did not eat with the common throng. "Oh!" replied his friend, "these are the men who make the speeches" (Loud Laughter). That is exactly what I feel, and I wish I could have got my speech over first, and then taken my dinner afterwards. However, being aware of the fact that I am not at all a ready or good speaker, I took care to write out my speech beforehand, and some of my friends of the newspapers asked me to send it to them. I did so, and you will see an excellent speech

to-morrow morning, but I won't promise you that you will hear the same speech to-night. (Laughter.) But since the honour came to me unsought and undreamed of, and mixed with it the spreading knowledge of our beloved Southland, I allowed myself to be persuaded. (Applause.) It seemed right that I should come to meet my friends, my well-wishers, and those who have met me in my books. I see faces here that I have not seen for twenty or thirty years, and that awakens chords in my heart that thrill, and will continne to thrill long after to-night. There is in the writing of a Provencal poet, lately dead, some verses in dialect which please me greatly, and of which the rough translation is :—

> I love my cottage more than your cottage,
> My village more than your village,
> My province more than your province,
> My own countryside is my little Fatherland,
> I serve it not better,
> *But I love it more.*

(Applause.) So I think a man ought to feel a special love for his little Fatherland — for Galloway, for Dumfries, for the Borderlands. He is all the more a good Scot because of that. We will not be the less but the more good citizens of the Empire, because we love our village more than your village! Somewhere my friend Mr Barrie has said that "genius is the re-discovery of the boy within us." Well I have found that to be so: not that I have found the genius, but such talent as I have been enabled

Mary Campbell's Cottage, Crae Brig. A great haunt of Crockett's in his early days.

to show in my books—little as it may have been —has been the re-discovery of the boy who used to walk from the Duchrae to Laurieston School, who afterwards played about the loch of Carlingwark at Castle-Douglas, and wandered over the purple hills as for as Loch Trool and Loch Enoch, and even to the Wigtownshire moors so well known to Sir Herbert's country. *La petite patrie*, my little fatherland: And if I have been able to make it dearer to any soul throughout the world, I feel that my own life has not been entirely thrown away. (Applause.) Whatever I have written for other people I have always kept the best for you, and if I forget Galloway, my little Fatherland, may my right hand forget its cunning. (Applause.) Sometimes it is said to me—"Ah, the 'Raiders,' the 'Lilac Sunbonnet,'—this, that, and the other—why do you not write us another 'Raiders,' another 'Stickit Minister?'" Well, it is like this. I do not need to tell a Galloway audience anything about the rotation of crops. Suppose for a moment that year after year for ten years one of you sowed only one kind of crop. What would be the consequence? The soil would be exhausted. Moreover, before that even, the landlord's patience. (Laughter.) Now, so with books, which are the crops of the mind. You cannot go on producing the same kind of crop. After each book is finished the brain becomes something like cold boiled turnips. To recover its elasticity, to strike fresh

that unexhausted soil, one must try a new crop —something as different as possible from the old. There are, besides, for the professional author, not one landlord, but many. Editors and publishers who out of their wisdom desire such and such a crop, and will only pay according to their needs. But though I write of Latin lands, of stately Spanish ceremonials, of Apulian brigands, true it is that of Galloway I may always say, "My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee." (Loud Applause.) But I think, I hope, I believe that I have yet kept the best for you. And to you to-night I promise that some day, when editors cease a little from troubling and publishers from dictating, I will write for you of Galloway, and for you, brither Scots, akin to her, a real Galloway book, in the full dialect, to be understood only by those to the manner born. (Loud Applause.) I did not think until the other day that such a book would find a publisher, but I met a friend who said, "I'll publish it when you write it." We poor authors may get our fame and our inspiration from our homelands, but we have to get our money elsewhere than where the heather grows. Our inspiration! Ah, that is a true word. Galloway has always had a cult which counted many true worshippers. I am only one among them. It chances that I have concentrated more, but that is all. The Galloway man in the widest sense; the best known politically and personally, the most ready with tongue and pen, prodigal

OLD SLOANE

of work, wise and far-seeing, with a genius which touches all things and adorns all that it touches, is undoubtedly Sir Herbert Maxwell, our chairman to-night. (Loud Applause.) I had the delight of taking his history of the Peninsular War—that part of it concerned with the life of Wellington—over the battlefields; and I was extremely astonished to-night to find that Sir Herbert had not seen these battlefields. From what I have read I found he had described them more accurately than I could have done myself, who had visited most of them. And when I knew that Sir Herbert was coming two thousand miles here to-night, as well as my good friend, Lord Ardwall — I was going to say the Sheriff; we can hardly forget the old title in his higher rank — I felt that it was almost too great an honour. There were others, too, when I was younger, some of whom are still with us, men who taught me to love the grey land. The men who first of all drew my thought to writing were two, one of whom did not write anything so far as I know, but who accompanied the man who did write. These two men were Malcolm Harper and Thomas Bruce, late of Slogarie. (Applause.) Often as a boy I have seen them starting off, staff in hand, to spy out the land. Once I encountered them on the links of the Cooran, when I myself was going to sleep the night at the herd's house of Loch Dee. I think they had been staying in the shepherd's hut the night

before. They waved their hands and cried "good morning," as I was passing down the valley. I remember I had the book in the portmanteau at my back, and it was great excitement to me to see the man who had written the "Rambles in Galloway." Certainly no local book was so much to me in my wandering boyish days as "Harper's Rambles in Galloway." (Applause.) I rejoice that it has kept its place. It carries with it the wild yet homely fragrance of bog myrtle and peat, of soda bannocks and farles of cakes, and will, I hope, be remembered as long as there is a literature of Galloway and Galloway men. I hope that some day Mr Harper will give us another of the same kind, full of reflections of the old historic spirit of the freedom of Galloway. I have often, in print, demanded of Sir Herbert Maxwell, too, that he should write a full and faithful history of Galloway, and I am glad to tell you that to-night I got a sort of half promise that some day he would write it if he could find a publisher. I hope he will keep faith because *his* Fatherland requires it of him. I on my part will try and do something also for Galloway, something which I have had in my mind for a long while. Of course there are factors, and landlords, and editors, and publishers to be reckoned with. We authors cannot always do just exactly what we would like. The publisher tells you to cut down the dialect because the English public

does not understand it. (It ought by this time.) The editor must have a book on a certain subject, because public interest calls for it. The land that holds the heather and the sheep does not hold the money for the man who has to live by his pen. So that to a certain extent the author is dependent upon a more distant public. But some day, when I have time, I intend if I have the ability, to write a book entirely for Gallovidians and Nithsdale people, for those who are to the manner born, and can understand every word of what is meant. It is fitting that I express my gratitude to Dalbeattie for thus calling my friends, known and unknown, together to this feast. Why at first I did not know, but a wise Stewartry farmer, who called upon me at the Peebles show a month ago, furnished an explanation at once satisfactory and complete. "Aye," he said thoughtfully, "the Da'baittie fowk wadna ken ye sae weel as them about Castle-Douglas." (Loud Laughter.) He was a farmer from the neighbourhood of Castle-Douglas, and reminded me that on more than one occasion he had made my acquaintance when attached to one of his Swedish turnips, and sitting on the top of his dyke. (Laughter.) There may be something in it, too. At that time I used to come to Dalbeattie once a year, always about this very time of the year. I came always on the same errand, not exactly for a dinner—(laughter)—but at least for something to eat. It so happens

that about Castle-Douglas there are no nut-woods of any great value, so that certain spirits fixed to certain laddies about Castle-Douglas used to make an annual trip. There used to be four of us who took that excursion every year. One of them was William Maxwell, a son of a family of journalists, and a famous one himself; the second was my older friend Andrew Penman, as distinguished in business and invention; the third was W. S. M'George, our precious Galloway painter and humourist. (Applause.) We generally encountered the Dalbeattie boys with whom we fought; we sometimes encountered the local keepers, from whom we ran; and we always were "no weel the next day," owing to the inordinate number of fruits of the earth of which we partook upon the raid. (Laughter.) And it strikes me that even as we are met here, the brambles and the nuts will be about ripe round by Craignair, and over the Cloak Moss. I confess I should like a turn at them, with, in addition to the old quartette, the Provost, perhaps, and Sir Herbert. I think the keepers could catch us now, but we would still give them a good race for it! Well, gentlemen, I had a conversation not long ago in connection with my literary labours with an old goodwife among the hills. "Aye," she said, "and hoo do ye like it—as far as ye hae gotten?" I informed my questioner that up to the present time of asking I like it fairly well. "An' ye can pay your way, na, wi' just writin'


J Copland
1902

o' buiks?" (Laughter.) I intimated that so far I have not had to take advantage of the Bankruptcy Acts, "Aweel, aweel," said Mary, "there's mony a shift in this warl'." (Laughter.) But I have said enough, and more than enough. I thank you, Mr Chairman, for the too kind and generous estimate of my works, for your graceful words about myself. I thank you, gentlemen, my friends and neighbours, for the heart-stirring reception you have given me, and I thank all those who have deemed this honour befitting the feeble efforts I have made to spread athwart the world the fame of the land of lochans and granite, of green howes and dark heathery hills, through which the green valleys run like veins of gold in quartz, of fair scenery and kind hearts. (Applause.) I can only add that, little as I have deserved it, your reception of me to-day will inspire me to further efforts. (Applause.) Like Braddock, borne away, dying after defeat from the banks of the fatal Monagahela, I say—"We will do better next time." Loud and prolonged applause.)

The Provost of Castle-Douglas proposed the toast of Galloway literature.

Dr J. Maxwell Wood, in replying said—The subject of Galloway literature, he was sure, they all had very much at heart. The question, he said, might be asked, "Has Galloway literature any special quality or qualification peculiar to itself?" and the answer to that is, that, if any such distinction can be found, it is in its robust

and healthy character, so much in accord with the rugged and health-giving native beauty of the province itself. It matters not what special section of its literature is turned to—the work of the historian, the novelist, the poetical product of the "bard," and even the topographical researches of the chairman himself, they are all alike, one and all distinguished by a breeziness and purity of tone that is never other than bracing and refreshing. (Applause.) It is never recorded that a Galloway man wrote a problem play or bothered his head with what might be termed psycho-physiological matters. The Galloway man has more good sense! (Laughter and applause.) It is probably the wholesome rugged environment that creates the unmistakable poetical strains that runs in the veins of the Galloway people; for it is a distinct proclivity of Galloway folk that they are more than inclined to "drop into poetry," and the Galloway poets are certainly a host to be reckoned with as that excellent compilation of Major Harper's "The Bards of Galloway" goes far to prove. (Applause.) We are very justly proud of our Galloway literature, and acknowledge a deep sense of gratitude to the memory of those writers who have borne the heat and burden of the day, and who have crossed the bourne; and we extend a thankful prayer of encouragement to the living authors who are keeping the literary fire of Galloway alight and glowing, as Mr Crockett, Sir Herbert Maxwell,

and others are doing. (Loud applause.) Might I be allowed, in passing, to allude to a meteoric Galloway light, Robert Heron, born in New Galloway, and who one hundred years ago next April, died miserably, a pauper and a debtor in Newgate Prison in London. His chief contributions to literature were, as you know, a History of Scotland in six volumes, A Journey through the Western Parts of Scotland, still much prized and sought after; a Biography of Robert Burns, which Dr Currie made use of; and he rendered valuable assistance to Sir John Sinclair in the production of the First Statistical Account of Scotland which he edited, and himself described many of the parishes. It is not a great occasion this coming centenary in April. It will be, perhaps, little more than a passing knell in the ring of our local chronology, but it might call forth some little kindly remembrance of this wayward-tossed literary Galloway waif, and in this hope I have mentioned it. (Loud applause.)

Mr Balfour Browne then gave "Galloway," and in doing so, said—It gives me very great pleasure to propose the toast "Galloway." There is no district in Scotland that has finer or more rugged features. Contrasted with Dumfriesshire, which is soft and beautiful, with the comeliness of a carpet knight, Galloway is like a man in armour, and the many lakes with which it is studded flash like burnished shields. Galloway has high, blunt hills, moors over which

the red grouse crow, lithe rivers, a salt sea along her wholesome coast, and a climate which is made up of smiles and a good many tears. So far as scenery is concerned, her high lands are such as to endear her to the passionate hearts of her sons. (Applause). From the Brigend of Dumfries to the Braes of Glen App—I know it all. I have read it with more pleasure, with more wholesome profit than I ever read a book for although the engraving is rough, it is one of the best pages in God's album of Nature. Carlyle, when he met Queen Victoria at Dean Stanley's, told Her Majesty that "he believed there was no finer or more beautiful drive in her kingdom than the one round the shores of the Stewartry by Gatehouse of Fleet," and Ruskin, who was—let our pride think it—descended from a Galloway family, said—I think it was in "Fors"—that he "fully understood the power, not on Sir Walter Scott merely, but on the character of all good Scotsmen (much more of Scotswomen) of the two lines of coast from Holy Island to Edinburgh, and from Annan to the Mull of Galloway." (Applause.) But it is not only our scenery of which we have reason to be proud. We have a stalwart history. Beginning with the Selgovæ and Novantæ, we have maintained a commanding place in history. Some one divided the Scotch races into caterans of the north, people of the west, "fowk" of Fife, and Paisley "bodies." But I find that in all the charters which refer to this district, Gallovidians

On the Banks of the Esk near Penicuik.

are spoken of, in the highest compliment, as "Men of Galloway." Robert Fergusson—the neglected poet who lay in a neglected grave until Burns marked it with a tomb-stone, in a poem, "The Farmer's Ingle," which to my mind is as fine as "The Cottar's Saturday Night"—speaking of Caledonia and her wholesome food, said—

> "'Twas this that braced her *gardies*, stiff and strang,
> That bent the deidly yew in ancient days;
> Laid Denmark's daring sons on yird alang,
> Gar'd Scottish *thristles* bang the Roman bays:
> For near our crest their heads they doughtna raise."

(Applause.) I always thought those lines peculiarly applicable to Galloway—our hirsute kingdom. But not only have our thistles (our best crop) "jagged the thumbs" of the Romans, for I am convinced that although they subjugated Dumfriesshire—there Birrenswark and the rest speak for their accepted rule and military grip—the "Picts" of this district, as they were sometimes called, were never really under the Roman sway. They have resisted other aggressors, for, when the Roman rule in Britain ceased, Galloway was overrun by the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria, but as history tells us—and I believe history when it confirms my sentiment—we were "never thoroughly subdued." (Applause.) Never thoroughly subdued—that is our history. Who will tame the lands which lie on the backs of the three Cairnsmuirs, of Carsphairn, of Fleet, of Dee? The plough to do that has not been invented. (Laughter.) The

Romans and the Anglo-Saxons have tried the "coulter" of their arms without success in subduing the stubborn men of Galloway. (Applause.) We were turbulent to the oppressor; our thistle defied the bay. We were Selgovæ, or hunters, or raiders, but were never under the heel of tyranny. We became one with the rest of this great nation in soft peace, never under the dictation of harsh war. But the kingdom of Galloway has traces of higher things than mere indomitableness. In the old days of Catholicism the religious life of the district must have flourished. At Whithorn we have the Candida Casa and St. Ninian's Cave, with its Latin cross on the rock wall, and that shines out of the obscurity of the past like a white star out of the darkness. But we have other great relics which show that here there were fervid centres of religious life. We have a melancholy boast in such ruins, with their empty eyes, as Dundrennan and Newabbey, which speak of the great days of Galloway. But is the missal gone and has the novel taken its place? We are here to-night to recognise a great contribution to that new institution, the press—the press which teaches by the persuasion of interest, instead of by the birch of compulsion; and it is because we see in the author of "The Raiders" a worthy descendant of the men of Galloway—who were never subdued—and even of the monks of Galloway, who kept the lamp of religion burning in these fanes, now unhappily ruins, that we are

here to do honour to a man who can weild the pen as our ancestors laid about them with the broad sword, and who keeps polite learning alive as the monks did through the "mirk" of the Middle Ages. (Applause.) But I have to couple this toast with the name of Sir Mark Stewart, "a representative man"—as Emerson would have used the word—although he no longer represents any part of Galloway in that Din we call the House of Commons. I am no politician to-night, but I claim the right of friendship to say that there is no man in Galloway who is more deserving of respect—nay, I want a warmer word—of affection than Sir Mark, and I feel that if I have failed in all else to recommend this toast to you, I have succeeded by coupling it with the name of my most estimable friend Sir Mark J. M'Taggart Stewart. (Loud applause.)

Sir Mark J. M'Taggart Stewart, in reply, said —When my friend Mr Balfour Browne was making that speech of great eloquence an anecdote came into my head illustrating how the characteristics of the English, Irish, and Scotch races are different. When an Englishman leaves a train he generally gets out in a demure, circumspect manner; an Irishman jumps out in a headlong rush before the train stops, and very often falls. (Applause.) A Scotsman, on the other hand, always looks behind to see if there is anything left. (Laughter.) I am like the Scotsman to-night;

I find there is nothing left to take up. I feel my friend's eloquent address on Galloway, I feel the honour of responding to this toast; and I am also honoured at the reception you give to it. I suppose I was so honoured because I am associated so very closely with Galloway. My better half comes from the Shire and I come from the Stewartry. (Applause.) We are both proud of and love Galloway. I am only repeating what is in all your hearts when I say that you also love Galloway. (Applause.) I always think that one of the great opportunities we in Galloway have is the great source of pleasure we derive from considering the past and looking on at the present. It is a fact that the Gospel was first introduced into Galloway as far as Scotland was concerned. St. Columba came over to this country, and we are told that St. Ninian founded his monastery at Whithorn. He did not stop there. He came to the Rhins of Galloway and founded chapel after chapel, his earliest one being at Ardwell, where I pass some months every year. Then there is the old cathedral at Luce, and following the Solway track there are reached the abbey at Tongland; St. Cuthbert's, Kirkcudbright, Dundrennan, and Sweetheart Abbey. There you find by the princely munificence of certain donors churches and abbeys established and religion taught. That is the great historic history of Galloway. The torch of religion was first lighted in Galloway, and it permeated westward and northward, so

that from John o' Groats to Maidenkirk, Galloway, was a benefactor. But then it does not stop there. We find that Galloway produced not only religious edifices of great beauty but also great men. We know that from Galloway three Kings of Scotland came. Banquo, a descendant of Malcolm III., was followed by Allan Fitzallan, and I may say Robert the Bruce. A loyal and kingly race has sprung out of Galloway. We have, too, the most illustrious names in Scottish history emanating from Galloway. We have great lawyers and great judges—Stair, Glenlee, our Right Honourable friend Lord Ardwall, and many others I could name. We have great names in the army, and in that respect we have unhappily lost one of the most valuable assets we could own by the lamented demise of Sir William Gordon of Earlston. There are other names connected with the army and navy which I need not rehearse at this time. Only one other name occurs to me at the moment who produced great consternation not only in this country but wherever he went, Paul Jones. (Laughter and applause.) He was a Gallovidian who had grit in him and who made the best soldiers and sailors in the world. And, in the domain of Art, we have had, in the homely and pathetic interiors of the late John and Thomas Faed, artists, who, as delineators of humble Scottish life, have acquired a great, and world-wide reputation; and in Mr Macgeorge, a member of the Royal Scottish Academy, who is

present with us to-night, whose bright figure subjects are always so pleasing, and Mr James Faed, junr., who was not so far away, and many others have given us delight by their works of the pen and pencil. I do not think I need go further than the guest of the evening. I ask you to read his books; I ask you to read "The Raiders," "The Men of the Moss Hags," and others, and you will find far more about Galloway than any speaker in a five minutes' speech could possibly give you. We glory in the descriptive powers Mr Crockett has shewn in his various writings.

He has depicted in vigorous and beautiful terms the wild scenes of our smugglers, as well as of the killing times. He has shewn of what sort of stuff Galloway men were made, and what carried them through these trying times, and made them bold and courageous to fight for their religion and the principles they held to be right in every part of the world. (Applause.) That is what you learn from a good novel: you learn a moral of the very deepest character, which not only permeates the man who does not think about religion, but also those who do think about it. Our sons go out to their daily walk in life, and in the colonies they astonish the people with their superiority. It is not that they are superior, but it is because of their fixed principles which they adhere to through life till death that makes them appear to be so. (Applause.) I thank

you heartily for the response given to the toast, and I hope we shall all continue to do our duty faithfully and truly by the province we love so much. (Loud applause.)

Mr W. J. H. Maxwell of Munches, in submitting "Galloway Raiders," said "the toast I have the honour to propose is the 'Galloway Raiders.' Now when I saw that I had to propose this toast I put to myself the question 'What were Galloway Raiders?' I do not know, if I were allowed to heckle you, what your answer would be to that question. It appears to me there might be three answers given. The Galloway Raiders first of all are Galloway men who raid one another. That was a practice not unknown in Galloway in bygone times. I suppose it is extinct now. I am not quite sure—(laughter)—but I hope it is extinct. Another answer is that Galloway men went forth from Galloway to spoil the men of other countries, and perhaps of our own country too. I have known a few of those, and I am glad to think that some of these Galloway Raiders have not forgotten their province, and have come back laden with spoil. I have the honour at the present time to be president of an Association which I think might be called an Association of Galloway Raiders It is the London Galloway Association. These men are all engaged in that interest and pursuit, and I have received a message from the Secretary of the Association asking me to

convey the good wishes and congratulations of Gallovidians resident in London to our guest this night. I have to congratulate him upon the honour which has been conferred upon him here. (Applause.) I suppose the other answer to the question is—those who have made a raid into Galloway this evening—our friends who are present from other parts of Scotland. (Applause.) I trust they do not feel like strangers in a strange land here to-night, and although they have heard a great deal about Galloway, I think they must have learned also that we admit, we do admit, perhaps with some reluctance, and there are regions beyond Galloway; but, as Sir Herbert has pointed out, much as we hold to Mr Crockett, a number of us knew something about Galloway before Mr Crockett, but of it all these strangers knew nothing at all. I think they owe a greater debt of gratitude to Mr Crockett for having revealed this great country of ours to them. (Laughter and applause.) They have seen the valley of the Water of Urr to-night. I was born on the banks of the Water of Urr, and Mr Crockett was born on the banks of the Black Water of Dee. Perhaps you will allow me to say that he has never been able to appreciate the Water of Urr. (Laughter) Notwithstanding that, however, I trust that the "raiders" who have raided Galloway to-night, will extend their trip, if not at the present time, on some future occasion. I have great pleasure in

coupling this toast with one who is an old friend of our guest—Ex-Provost Wilson, Penicuik."

Provost Wilson, Penicuik, in acknowledging the toast, said:—There was a time in Midlothian when it was believed that we, of Penicuik, had our guest of this evening all to ourselves, and the sense of possession was strengthened by the coming of interviewers and others who came from afar, but as the work of his life became more clearly expressed, it was all too evident that his heart was still in Galloway—(applause)—and if any lingering doubt on that point remains in the minds of any it must surely be removed by the testimony of this distinguished gathering. (Renewed applause.) I confess it gives me much pleasure to be present at this meeting, but the sunshine of my satisfaction is overcast by one little cloud. I am called upon to-night to reply for "Raiders" in this historic land, and I believe there is no part of Scotland where the term "Raiders" has more significance than in Galloway, and that by reason of the long line of "Raiders" from the early centuries down to this period of settled government, so that I approach with trepidation the task of replying to the toast on behalf of this great cloud of witnesses. (Laughter and applause.) The veracious chronicler has related an incident in the history of Mary, Queen of Scots, who, after her capitulation at Corberry Hill, was highly incensed on being carried—not to

Edinburgh Castle, but to the house of the Provost, so that, when I recall the old-time raiders in Galloway, I feel that it is enough to make the shades of Wallace and Edward I. turn in their graves that this toast should be acknowledged by a mere Provost of a small provincial town. (Laughter.) This being so, in a county with a record so militant, it requires no little boldness in even a modern raider to express his true sentiment. There was once a raid in Scotland, which, however, did not reach Galloway—for the reason, let us say, that the brave sons of Stranraer were sent to assist in its interception—and it is related of a clergyman in Edinburgh that wishing to maintain his loyalty and withal give no offence to Prince Charlie's raiders, he prayed for the reigning king, and at the same time conveyed in his devotions the hope that the other king might be translated to higher dominions and receive a crown of glory. (Laughter.) There is, however, no need even to imply the demise of our distinguished guest as a condition of his receiving his crown of glory, for I am certain that throughout the whole English-speaking world he already wears the laurels, to which, indeed, the seal has been put this evening by this illustrious and representative gathering, (Loud applause.) While replying for the toast of the "Galloway Raiders," I cannot but refer in a few words—in the circumstances under which I come here—to

a raid of peace and goodwill to men accomplished by our honoured guest to our little township lying on the Pentland slopes near the spot where the breath of summer falls softly over the graves of martyrs. I know he can ever hold in his heart the sure knowledge of the true respect and affection gained there while in our midst, so that, while the crown of genius has been placed on his brow, perhaps he still may find the deeper and more sacred memories of the offering of many hearts a source of comfort and stimulation in the years to come. (Loud applause.)

Provost Glover, Dumfries, rising amid cheers, proposed the closing toast, saying—Croupiers and gentlemen,—It is with the greatest pleasure that I rise to propose the health of "The Chairman," being deeply conscious that, however inadequately the toast may be presented, it will receive a most cordial reception at your hands. (Loud applause.) Gallovidians have dedicated this night to a discharge of duty—the recognition of living genius. It cannot be said that we meet to indulge foolish and unprofitable exultation, but, setting aside the shams and falsities which alienate man from man, to strike a sympathetic chord in honour of Galloway's most distinguished sons. (Applause.) In this respect our chairman must of necessity find a place in the very forefront. (Renewed applause.) It has been said that genius is the result of accident, or that vague and mysterious quality called chance, but

I am prepared to submit that genius springs from a wise purpose, and forms part of a grand design, for it is confined to neither class nor station.

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that.

(Applause.) As Scotsmen we rejoice in the high attainments of our chairman, and recognise to the full the position he bravely holds by virtue of his brain and courage—the conscientious discharge of every duty. (Applause.) Sir Herbert is to my mind the incarnation of intellectual energy and prodigious activity. If I may be permitted to say so without giving offence to any one, his political life was characterised by integrity of purpose and a fine regard for the susceptibilities of his political opponents. (Applause.) Our chairman does not belong to the fleeting order of literati who make a transient flash like a firefly upon the sunny meadows, or like the Crossland type who rise and as suddenly take a backward leap like an insulted ghost into the purgatorial realms of the rejected. (Laughter and applause.) Sir Herbert's work is living, and will continue to live, for the man and his work bear the stamp of nature's true nobility. I think Tennyson must have had the chairman in his mind's eye when he wrote—

> "Man, am I grown, a man's work must I do.
> Follow the deer? Follow the Christ, the King,
> Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King,
> Else wherefore born?"

I give you the toast of "The Chairman," and ask you to rise and heartily drink to his health. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The toast was enthusiastically pledged, and "He's a jolly good fellow" was sung with gusto.

Sir Herbert, in reply, said:—Provost Glover and gentlemen,—I do not know which is harder —a man accused of a crime of which he is innocent, or a man to whom virtues are attributed which he does not possess. The latter is the position I find myself in, and it almost deprives me of the power of speech, but it does not deprive me of the sense of gratitude of the kind feelings which inspired the speech to which we have just listened. I beg to assure you that though my reply is exceedingly brief it is not because of ingratitude, but because of the late hour at which we have arrived. I was very deeply sensible from the first of the honour which has been conferred on me in asking me to preside on this honourable occasion. I need not say it gave me the greatest possible pleasure to accept the honour to unite with you gentlemen in giving a hearty welcome in his native land to our guest to-night. (Loud applause.)

The function terminated in the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Much admiration was elicited by the beautiful and tasteful souvenir incorporated in the menu card, the front page of which, having for

centre piece an excellent photo of the author, presented also a picture of his cottage birthplace, and a typical Galloway scene, this work of art being a sketch by Mr Copland, artist, Dundrennan, an old friend of Mr Crockett.

S. R. Crockett at the House of his Uncle, Castle Daffin Auchencairn.

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What were they?

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