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THE SCOTTISH TRADITION IN EDUCATION.

An intimate study of the early nineteenth century.

by Isabel Finlayson.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Scottish Tradition -- an Historical Survey.

Race and Character --the Celtic Period --education in the Feudal Period --the Pre-Reformation Period -- education and the Reformers -- the Buke of Discipline and afterwards -- the Seventeenth Century -- the Eighteenth Century -- the Tradition, a Retrospect -- the Nineteenth Century, --a Prospect.--

## THE SCOTTISH TRADITION IN EDUCATION.

An intimate study of the early nineteenth century.

Thesis for the Degree Ph.D., submitted by Isabel Finlayson.  
1966.

### SYNOPSIS.

In order to place the period studied in its context, a brief survey was made of the history of Scottish education up to the beginning of the 19th. century, studying the interplay of church and secular influences in forming the tradition. After a summary of the administrative developments which were to take place in the 19th. century, prior to the Education Act of 1872, the writer gave reasons for making a study of the educational experiences of individuals, to supplement the facts already in the text-books. Fifty such individual histories were studied, in order to open up the subject and suggest lines of enquiry. Points noticed included the great diversity of schools available, the numerous irregularities in the school-careers of individuals, the widespread practice of home study and self-education, and the existence of a certain measure of frustration in the after-careers of intelligent pupils.

Contemporary descriptions of schools were collected, revealing a variety of types of educational institution, of varying standards. Similar accounts threw light on the lives of school children, students and teachers.

It became increasingly evident that, at the period studied, Scottish education was dependent upon the home. The general atmosphere of homes of the time was investigated, and an account given of the studied pursued there. The private reading and efforts, both solitary and organised, towards self-improvement, of young people of the early nineteenth century, were considered, and a separate chapter was devoted

to the education of girls.

Consideration was given to some of the controversial issues of the time, such as the influence upon Scottish education of English ways, and the emergent conflict between science and religion.

In a final chapter the whole study was summarised and conclusions drawn, with comparisons between the period studied and contemporary developments, balancing loss against gain.

The gain in efficiency and comprehensiveness of the modern educational system would appear to be offset in Scotland by a certain decline in the family concern for education which was a special feature of the Scotland of the past, and was derived from the beliefs which underlay the Scottish way of life.

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Chapter One.

1) Race and Character.

The Scottish tradition in education is an aspect of our history often invoked by the orator. Generally and rightly assumed to be a heritage which has enriched the national character, this tradition is sometimes cited with the vaguest terms of reference, so that the stage Scotsman is scarcely more a conventional figure than the legendary Lad o' Pairts. But as time divides us from our forebears, and as our schools and collegos become more standardised within our own boundaries and more uniform with similar institutions in the world at large, it becomes increasingly important to study the Scottish educational past, both as a measure of progress and as a source of the principles which recur in our thinking and underlie our way of life.

The tradition of any people is a complex growth, made up of national characteristics and historical developments as these interact upon each other. Thus when we consider the history of Scottish education, we must first consider Scotland and the Scottish people. By comparison with her neighbours a small and unproductive country, Scotland, when the centre of civilisation was Rome, was a half-legendary outpost -- ultima Thule; and for many centuries the mountain chains and rivers which still constitute important divisions remained wellnigh insurmountable barriers, so that while history pursued its course in the central lowlands, the outlying regions were a world apart.

In this divided and debateable land lived a mixed race -- a dark-skinned people of Iberian type succeeded by a fair-skinned Celtic race akin to the Gauls, whose influence yielded in the south to that of the Saxons, a Teutonic people. The Norwegian conquest of Orkney and the Isles,

Anglo-Norman influence arising from the link between English and Scottish thrones, and French elements entering language and culture through the Auld Alliance, are examples of forces to be reckoned with in assessing the Scottish people. Racial mixtures, it is well known, give rise to tension and conflict, but also sow the seeds of greatness; and it may be that from the conflict of race derives the curious paradox inherent in the Scottish national character.

On the one hand, for example, we notice in that character a lively spirit of independence, the spirit of the Arbroath Declaration, expressed often in unwillingness to defer to authority. The ministers of the Reformation publicly rebuked their king from the pulpit, while they themselves were subject to searching criticism from the pew. "The last charge that will be brought against the Scotch," wrote Buckle, "is that of superstitious attachment to their princes." Yet on the other hand, the clan spirit which made possible the Jacobite rebellions still inspires the fierce loyalty of the Highland regiments. The typical Scot is an egalitarian who believes in fair opportunities for all rather than in sameness as between man and man; he is a home-lover, yet the drift south and the wanderlust are found far back in his history.

Similarly, the student of the Scottish intellect notes first a deep attachment to a religious way of thinking which dies hard even in a materialistic age. Why then should the best Scottish philosophers be found in an 18th century group of brilliant sceptics? "In Scotland," Buckle concluded, "a great logician would be deemed a great man; in England little account would be made of the beauty of his logic unless he was careful that the premisses from which he argued were trustworthy and verified by experience." Yet the practical, hard-headed Scot with his turn

for affairs, might seem from another viewpoint to be one of nature's pragmatists. Again, the critic of Calvinism stresses its intolerance, the failure of its adherents to adapt themselves to a changing world; but the Scot, nurtured in this diehard atmosphere, has a passion for political liberty which has led him into the front ranks of all progressive movements. Such is the complex and paradoxical background of race and character against which the Scottish tradition in education has evolved.

2) The Celtic Period.

This tradition could be pursued far back into the beginnings of Scottish history, where all is legend and obscurity. Long before the Romans, whose influence on what we now call Scotland was negligible, Druids and Bards represented wisdom for kings and their peoples. But it was not until Columba brought Christianity from Ireland in 563 A.D. that the racial mixtures and jarring cultures of this primitive time were welded into some sort of unity.

"Columba," writes McEwen (History of the Church in Scotland, p.62); "has an indisputable position among the founders of nations." His was an educational ideal which combined personal moral perfection with the quest for learning and beauty, the study and artistic adornment of scripture with pastoral work amongst simple people, a continuance of the classical tradition with acceptance of pagan Gaelic literature. Iona, it may fairly be claimed, represented monastic education at its highest terms. The importance for the tradition of this monastic education is in establishing the close connection between church and school on the one hand, between church and people on the other. For centuries after the coming of Columba, the clergy of North Britain

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were entirely Scottish, and were in touch with Celtic vernacular culture as well as with the Latin scholarship of the church. "There was," says Skene, (Celtic Scotland, II p. 458), "probably for generations not a Pictish child who secured any education at all who had not learned his alphabet and been taught to read by a Scottish monk."

The liberal tradition in education founded by the Columban monks fought against the asceticism of those enigmatic figures, the Culdees; and yielded finally in its decline to powerful moral and cultural influences from the south, introduced by Malcolm Canmore and his consort Margaret of England. Margaret's advisers were Benedictine monks. But the Celtic spirit was never violently suppressed, and never really died, lingering on in the Western Highlands, while in abbeys and church schools Roman monks carried on the work of education with no real break in the tradition. Thus the ferleyn of Celtic times became the rector scholarum, held in honour by the Scottish court, and a gradual change was made from the tribal division of territory to the English division of the country into parishes, each with its priest. By the time that the parish was recognised as the educational unit, the records were making mention of schools not confined to candidates for the priesthood. Thus the 12th century writer Reginald of Durham mentions a church school on Tweedside kept for the benefit of the neighbourhood; elsewhere he says that the practice of keeping schools is now common enough -- "more nunc solito."

3) Education in the Feudal Period.

Any intelligible account of the progress of education must relate schooling to social change. Feudalism, not a natural growth in Scotland, but a deliberate creation of kings who looked south for inspiration, proved a mixed blessing politically, while the transformation of the

church into a strong temporal power under royal protection was accompanied by a loss of spiritual strength. Materially, however, Scotland prospered. Flourishing towns became royal burghs within whose walls trade guilds evolved, and traffickings with other countries brought European influences to bear upon Scottish culture.

The standard of church schools in the 13th century was not high. Of 18 schools known to exist before 1286, only eight were new foundations made by the monastic orders, while in six the teachers and pupils retained their Celtic names. (MacEwen, op. cit. p. 200). But the cathedrals were educational centres; a little teaching went on in the parishes; and it was possible for boys of ability to obtain in Scotland an early education which would fit them for an academic career abroad. Ecclesiastical education was hierarchical in its principles. Most important were the cathedral schools of theology, where the Chancellor taught priests and licensed teachers. Next in order was the grammar school under its master; while in some places a song school, taught by a priest, provided elementary education. This system diffused some book-learning amongst laity as well as clergy: thus in 1260 a lady in the Kelso district paid the monks for boarding and educating her son, not an intending priest. (Grant, History of the Burgh Schools of Scotland, p.12.) On the other hand, informal education, the education of experience, flourished in the burghs, where young people learned mastery of a trade, citizenship through guild membership, and worldly wisdom through travel on trading ventures abroad. The modern languages needed for this last were acquired by the direct method. "The burgh communities

...possessed wealth and a measure of freedom, associated with some culture and intelligence." (Mackintosh, History of Civilisation in Scotland, p.233.)

4) The pre-Reformation Period.

In the two centuries which preceded the Scottish Reformation, a stormy political history saw the gradual emergence of law, an increase in trade accompanied a rise in the standard of living, while at the same time the church as an institution lost ground to an emergent secular spirit, of which the burgher class was the strongest representative. Educational history illustrates the relations between king, nobility and people at this time. With regard to the king and the nobles, James IV's Education Act of 1496, the first of its kind on the Scottish statute book, was an attempt to compel barons and freeholders to send their sons to school. (McEwen, op. cit. p. 375.) It shows not only that the king was trying to civilise his nobility by educational means, but also that schools of a certain standing existed. As for the education of the people, there is evidence that by the end of the 15th century there were, as well as song-schools connected with churches, elementary schools maintained by private enterprise in reponse to public demand; these "lecture" or dame schools are known to have existed in Edinburgh. (Grant, op. cit. p. 10.)

While the church became more worldly and lost interest in its educational work, the magistrates of the burghs were glad to assume some control over the schools. The church retained nominal supremacy. In Glasgow, for example, in the 15th century, the Chancellor of the diocese still controlled the grammar school, but financial backing, and in consequence some say in school management now came from the burgesses. (Mackintosh, op. cit. I p. 465.)

It accords with this tendency that the rector of the schools ~~now~~ often did work connected with what we should now call local government: a rector of Haddington was town clerk, a Cupar schoolmaster acted as collector of customs. In the same way, the Scots vernacular began gradually to make its way into the grammar school, the work of which was traditionally the teaching of Latin in Latin.

The most striking achievement of Scottish education in the pre-Reformation period was, of course, the founding before 1500 of three Universities in a remote and impoverished country. This development was inspired by the brilliant careers abroad of the wandering Scottish scholars of mediaeval times, and the foundations were modelled on continental prototypes. The Universities were under the protection of Church and King, the church interest stressing theology, while the royal desire for stability in government underlined the importance of law. The self-governing powers given to the students illustrate the strong democratic tendencies of the Scot; and although the Scottish Universities suffered in their early days and for long afterwards from lack of funds, shortage of staff and the extreme youth of the students, their continuance testified not only to the Scot's love of learning, but also to his patriotism in seeking to develop a national culture not wholly dependent on Europe.

5) Education and the Reformers.

Although in the half-century preceding the Scottish Reformation, the old church made a strenuous attempt to recover lost ground in education, it may fairly be argued that the laity had at this time more cultural vitality than the clergy. As early as 1525, Scottish traders were smuggling in copies of the New Testament translation from Antwerp.

Antwerp, and when in 1543 reading of the Bible in the vulgar tongue was permitted by Acts of Parliament in both England and Scotland, the limitation of this privilege to "noblemen, gentlemen and merchant householders," appeared in the English Act only, obviously because the standard of literacy was higher in Scotland than in England. (McBwenz op.cit. p. 436.) We have too John Knox's statement that, in a debate in Parliament in 1543, the lay members showed better acquaintance with Greek than the clergy.

Much of the vitality of the reforming movement came from the people, who were inspired by Bible reading, and by popular ballads, sacred or satirical, which spread new ideas even amongst the illiterate. The spell of the old Latin culture of the church was now broken, and the informal education of the popular hymn and the popular lampoon, of the circle of friends reading the scriptures, became for a time a more potent social force than formal instruction at school and University.

The violent challenging of the authority of king and government by ministers of the Reformed Church can be traced back to "theocratic notions gathered out of the Old Testament." Their bitterness of attitude is in tune with the second phase of the whole European Reformation, when, in Eustace Percy's phrase, "amid a rising clamour of pulpiteering and persecution, Christendom plunged towards the Wars of Religion." Amidst this turmoil, the centre of interest shifted from the powers-that-be to the individual -- to personal spiritual experience in religion, to democratic trends in politics. In Scotland, the clergy led their people in this revolution.

Paradoxically, while the ministers stirred up the laity to question authority, their own prestige was maintained or increased: it was their aim that in the sphere of education

as in other matters the authority of the church was once more to be supreme. Since there was so much of the formal and the dogmatic in the culture of the clergy, it was only natural that the education they sponsored should be authoritarian in curriculum and discipline, showing a strong bias in favour of the ablest pupils. Schools which pay little heed to social class may draw intellectual distinctions and share in sectarian controversies.

During the Reformation period, echoes of the conflict in the world at large penetrated into schools which sought only to proceed peacefully along traditional lines. Disputes between town and Chancellor over the control of schools led more and more often to a victory for the burghers, while by 1550 the master's salary was usually paid by the burgh. (Grant, op. cit. p. 30.) Attempts made to prevent schoolboys from speaking in the vernacular testify to the increasing influence of the vulgar tongue; and there is evidence that such new ideas as filtered into the schools came from the homes of ordinary parents rather than from official sources. For example, the famous Protestant riot led by school children in a Perth church began with boys who had learned Lyndsay's anti-clerical verses from their fathers, who were artisans. (McEwen, op. cit. p. 460.)

6) The Buke of Discipline and Afterwards.

The First Buke of Discipline has been aptly described as "the blue-print of Scottish education." (H.M. Knox, 250 Years of Scottish Education, p. xii.) Published in 1561, the work of John Knox and others, it is a document both idealistic and practical. It proposed that each church should have a schoolmaster, able, if the town be of any

reputation, to teach Latin grammar. In every notable town there was to be a college, teaching logic, rhetoric and the tongues, (comparable, perhaps, to the modern French lycee,) and the Universities were to be strengthened and reformed. The rich would be compelled to have their children educated, while the children of the poor would be educated at the expense of the church, till it be discovered if they had any ability. Since the purpose of this education was taken to be the sustaining of the reformed spirit in religion, religious instruction took a prominent place in the curriculum, and regular examination of the schools by ministers and elders was suggested.

As is well known, for lack of money from the confiscated endowments of the old church, which were not in fact given over to education, Knox's scheme did not at once become a reality. But the reformers, while struggling to establish more and better schools, continued their forceful campaign against ignorance in other ways, encouraging the catechism of children, the examination of church members by ministers and elders, and the religious instruction of each household by its head. They thought of education as radiating outwards from a devout and disciplined family circle, through the parish church and its school, to the higher branches of learning.

Meanwhile in the schools the kirk claimed the right to examine pupils and appoint teachers, and the burghs went on bearing the main financial burden. The schoolmaster, who had to be acceptable in point of religious doctrine, often read the lessons in church. His discipline was rigorous; children worked a ten hour day. When, as part of a general tightening of moral standards, the authorities tried to abolish the Christmas holidays, it is not surprising that the grammar school boys resisted with violence. Yet in his

stern way the 16th century educator was concerned for the welfare of the young. For example, at Anstruther in 1595, where "as many of the poor as has ingyne" were required to attend school at the expense of the kirk session, who paid the schoolmaster 5/- a quarter for each child, it was recognised that these poor children must be fed as well as instructed, and alms given them were conditional upon their attendance at school. (Grant, op. cit. p. 85 et seq.)

7) The Seventeenth Century.

It would be a mistake to regard the controversies of the 17th century in Scotland as purely or even mainly theological; they turned upon the rights of the individual man as opposed to the claims of authority. Constant argument on this political question made every intelligent Scot an able debater, accustomed to appeal to basic principles and to take an independent view. As for his formal education, the Church initiated such legal measures as applied to the schools, and constantly strove to supervise the teacher and even the parent, but the burghs with their financial resources were the executive power which made for progress.

The maintenance of schools by the burghs was purely voluntary, as were the kirk session bequests to individual scholars for fees or books. But thriving burghs took a pride in their schools and honoured their teachers. As a rule the towns co-operated happily enough with the Kirk, but "disputes sometimes arose, notably at Perth in 1631, when burgh and kirk supported different candidates for the rectorship of the grammar school. (Grant, op. cit. p. 95.) It is noteworthy that the town council carried its point, the citizen asserting the validity of his independent judgment in face of the only authority he willingly recognised.

While the burghs protected their schools and on the whole

maintained a monopoly for their teachers, and while kirk sessions and heritors provided education in some country districts, a few other schools were suffered to exist. These were mostly elementary schools conducted by women, though we hear of independent teachers of music and French in the cities. Crafts such as spinning as well as the elements were taught at the dame schools to little girls; boys were sometimes expressly forbidden to attend such schools. There was, in fact, a considerable popular demand for education, especially in the large towns; and in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen the magistrates were constantly engaged in sanctioning or prohibiting adventure schools. (Mackintosh, op. cit. III p. 377.)

The Church throughout this troubled century was aware of its failure fully to implement its promises of a comprehensive system of parish schools. By the Act of 1696, due co-operation was secured between the church which was to direct the school and the heritors who in each parish were to maintain it; and a national system of elementary education was at last properly instituted. It became reasonably effective in the populous parts of the country; but in the remote Highlands parishes were too large to make a workable unit for educational purposes.

After the Reformation, the Scottish Universities were hampered by the appropriation of their endowments. In this sphere too the municipalities came to the aid of the Kirk; it was under the auspices of the Town Council that Edinburgh University was founded in 1582. This was not one of the great periods of Scottish scholarship; the "regenting" system kept the standard of teaching low. But by the end of

the 17th century signs of revival were appearing. When the Commissioners of the Universities reported unfavourably on the text-books then in use (1695), each University was set the task of writing new guides to a branch of learning, an enterprise which illustrates yet once more the intellectual independence which is characteristic of the Scottish mind. (Mackintosh, III p. 388 et seq.)

8) The Eighteenth Century.

The troubles and setbacks of the 17th century were in fact to usher in a golden age for Scotland, a time when intellectual and material progress went hand in hand. Both these aspects of national development were of importance to education, but because of the natural inertia of any system of schooling it is not always easy to demonstrate this from the history of the schools of the time.

18th century Scotland shared the general European tendency to question accepted beliefs. A secular philosophy therefore sprang up which, instead of following the inductive method, proceeded along the lines of deductive reasoning which were already outmoded, but which seemed natural in a country where intellectual activity had for long been confined mainly to theology. Adam Smith derived both his philosophical and his economic theories from first principles which were assumed to be valid. A similar method was followed by Hume, and even by the great Scottish scientists, who arrived at their discoveries by deduction from hypotheses, rather than by induction from observed facts. To this extent they did not anticipate the trend of thought. But this flowering of pure intellect, which drove the argument home to its logical conclusion without regard to traditional beliefs, was remarkable in a nation which for two centuries had bound its best minds to the treadmill of theological disputation.

It illustrates the unpredictable resilience of the Scottish mind that a group of brilliant men could within a few decades capture the cultural leadership of Western Europe and rebuild Edinburgh into the Athens of the North.

~~But~~ The great secular thinkers of the 18th century, though they excited the intelligentsia and thus influenced University teaching, did not shake the power of the Kirk over the lives of most ordinary people. A minority of independent spirits in all walks of life, men like Burns and his circle, absorbed enough of the dangerous new ideas to question accepted beliefs, but they remained an unruly and stimulating minority. The leaders of thought, so far as they gave their minds to the practical problems of education, did not question the working efficiency of existing schools. Adam Smith's plan for educating the children of working men is based on the system already in operation in his native Scotland, with the exception of two points. a) His statement that the public should establish in every parish a little school where children may be taught for a fee that the common labourer can afford, suggests that he would replace the Church as controller of popular education by some secular authority. b) His other suggestion is that geometry and mechanics should be substituted for the elementary Latin sometimes taught in the parish schools along with the three R's. (Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, V, ch. I)

This proposed change in the curriculum was in line with actual developments in Scottish school life which followed upon the expansion of Scottish trade. The Union of 1707, although its value to Scotland is often questioned, did open up new possibilities to industry, leading to the growth of towns like Glasgow, a new importance for shipping,

and the improvement of communications within the country. Responsible citizens began to demand for their sons a secondary education which would fit them for commerce rather than for the learned professions. They found an example in the Academies which the English Dissenters had established on Baconian principles in the 17th century; and as early as 1729 we find mathematics being stressed at Ayr Grammar School as a principal part of a gentleman's education. Navigation, arithmetic, and book-keeping soon took as prominent a place in the curriculum of certain schools as Latin and Greek. In 1760 the first complete Academy was established at Perth, teaching arithmetic, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, mensuration, navigation, natural philosophy and well as geography, logic and English. Similar schools with a modern curriculum were set up in other Scottish towns in the next half century.

It is interesting to note that the Academies were managed by a directorate on which the town council might or might not be represented, and were supported by voluntary subscriptions and fees. The great variety of 18th century Scottish schools is comprehensively described in Knox's 250 Years of Scottish Education, pp. 12-14. There is no greater fallacy ~~than~~ than to suppose that the Church, or even the churches, had anything approaching a monopoly in education at this time. A new challenge to the supremacy of the Kirk came at the end of the century from the Court of Session, which in 1798 ruled that the power of the presbyteries to appoint schoolmasters was only a secular matter, and that final jurisdiction therefore lay with the civil court. Although this judgment was reversed by the House of Lords, and although the 1803 Education Act, in restating the position of the schoolmaster, fully confirmed the powers of the presbytery to make appointments, investigate complaints,

and suspend or dismiss the teacher, the Court of Session judgment is interesting because it suggests that the judges had no special reverence for the power of the Kirk, a conclusion amply borne out by other evidence. Were they in this representative of a professional class who had been subject to the liberalising influence of the 18th century University?

9) The Tradition --- a Retrospect.

We have now reached the point in time at which the present study properly begins. The foregoing historical retrospect, though the facts it summarises are familiar, was necessary to remind us of the past which 18th century men and women inherited. We see that already by the end of the 18th century Scotland had built up an impressive achievement in education, a tradition stretching back continuously to the Celtic Church and beyond. For centuries Scottish children had been better educated in general than their neighbours, and opportunities for further study had been offered to gifted boys from all ranks of society. Even by the narrow criterion of literacy, the democratic nature of Scottish education was no legend; while if we widen our definition of the educated man to include the powers of thought and of oral expression, the Scottish peasant would bear comparison with men of superior social class in wealthier countries. This was, of course, partly due to the poverty of the old Scotland, where the gulf between laird and tenant, between master and man, was seldom too wide to be bridged.

Like most educational systems, Scottish education began under the auspices of the church; but throughout its history the laity took an active part in conducting and remodelling the schooling of their sons and daughters. Despite the

strong authoritativian impulses of the Scottish clergy, the schools from an early period began to escape their ruling. This was because the theocratic views of the ministry were constantly at war with the determined individualism of the secular citizen; and because in a mixed race, from Celtic times onwards, an ascetic and puritanical cast of mind came repeatedly into conflict with the more worldly outlook of the man of affairs, or with the lively sensual attitude of the artist. The mediaeval craftsman took his own way in educating his apprentice; the 18th century merchant had strong views about a fit preparation for commerce. Throughout the centuries, the churchman had the last word on education, and theology remained the queen of sciences; but all the time the wandering Scot was bringing back from his travels queer heretical notions, the practical Scot was making new things with his hands, while the creative Scot turned aside from the narrow path of the religious dogmatist to evolve some independent system of thought, "or sing a song at least."

If we survey this whole historical period, its crisis is undoubtedly the Reformation; if we seek to associate with the tradition we have so far described the name of one man, then John Knox was its prophet. "It was then (at the Reformation)", writes Mackintosh, "that a real zeal for education was instilled into the Scottish mind, which ever since has been developing." But while Knox thought of education as a tidy scheme, safely enclosed within a wall of sound doctrine, paradoxically enough he himself was fostering the spirit of individual liberty which makes for variety in all human institutions. Buckle (op. cit. III p. 113) ascribes to the Scot "that inquisitive and democratic spirit which is the only effectual guarantee the people can ever possess against the tyranny of those who are set over them. This was the work of the Scottish clergy; and all

hail to them who did it!" Nevertheless, liveliness of mind in the laity militates against the unquestioned authority of the priesthood, in its educational as well as its theological function. The citizen who sees himself as responsible for the religious welfare of his family will wish some say in their schooling too.

It will clarify our thinking on the Scottish tradition in education if we bear in mind that the educational impulse has for long emanated from the individual within the family circle. This accounts for the great diversity of schools, which proliferated outwith the schemes laid down by early legislation; such legislation was seldom fully implemented because of financial and geographical difficulties, but educational experiment went on. The same individualism which made for religious schism and the setting up of many churches, led also to the establishment of many schools. But while the Scot is a born theologian, and while he sought book-learning for his family primarily as a means to Bible-study, the daily life of the ordinary citizen is of necessity taken up with a variety of practical concerns. From an early date Scottish education took cognisance of this side of life, so that schools and their curricula showed more flexibility than might have been expected from the predominance of theology in the thought of the times.

In assessing the tradition of the old pre-industrial Scotland, it is difficult to strike a fair balance between the sacred and the secular aspects of the national character, between the rugged insularity of the home-bred Calvinist and the adventurous, receptive spirit of the Scot abroad. What Marvell wittily called the "parti-coloured mind" of the Scot produces an irreducible paradox which was present in our ancestors even when a peasant civilisation, centred round a God-fearing family circle, made a life-pattern relatively unified and whole.

10) The Nineteenth Century -- a Prospect.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution all this was to change. Mass-movements of population were to break up the parish system, and undermine the individual's attachment to his native soil. Factory work under the nightmare conditions of laissez-faire enterprise was to attack the foundations of the family, altering for ever the relation between child and parent, between parent and school. Two problems in especial became prominent: the education of the city poor, and the education of the underpopulated districts. These problems had long existed; now the former assumed terrifying proportions. The Church, led by several notable men, struggled to meet the new challenges, but the Disruption weakened church life from within, and as the century went on it became increasingly obvious that the secular authorities must take over the responsibility for education.

Legislation at the beginning of the century (for example, the Schoolmaster's Act of 1803 which fixed a minimum salary for the teacher and laid more definite responsibility on the heritors to maintain the schoolhouse), soon looked miserably inadequate in face of an urgent situation. The administrative developments of the first half of the century can be seen in retrospect to pave the way towards the 1872 Act. We have the beginnings of grants, and such significant developments as the establishment in remote parishes of undenominational church schools, the so-called assembly schools. (Knox, op. cit., pp 25-7.) As time went on, the inevitability of compulsory state-aided elementary schooling became apparent. The great stock-taking of the Argyll Commission (1867) revealed an almost incredible diversity of elementary schools; but the statistics of non-attenders, (92,000 out of a school population of 510,000) were not really so discreditable when we remember the chaotic social conditions of the time, and the briefness of school life for many a child.

As for higher education, dissatisfaction with the grammar schools and academies was widespread amongst thinking people throughout the century. Their discontent was expressed officially in Harvey and Sellar's adverse report of 1868, but, long before this, found a practical vent in the establishment of private and endowed schools of a high standard. The Universities too were a target for criticism which was ventilated in the long-delayed Rosebery reforms and in the ultimate abolition of religious tests. It was not until the early twentieth century that secondary education became properly standardised and was brought within the framework of the national scheme, while in our own post-war period the Universities also have become part of a state-financed scheme of education for everybody. To the historian these developments seem to follow naturally from the trends of the 19th century, though the educational thinker of those days could not have foreseen them, nor would he have approved.

It is this significant period of flux and change that has been chosen for detailed study. The seventy or eighty years preceding the Education Act of 1872 were unique in Scottish educational history. Never before had events moved so rapidly, as a fixed traditional system of schooling strove and failed to keep pace with a changing world, and as the pupil strove and failed to apply his education to an environment for which it had not been designed. Never afterwards, while our legislative framework endures, can education show so much individual variation for the teacher and the taught. The 19th century educator inherited a great tradition, and was caught up in a mighty movement of history. He had to do his best to create something new, a modern educational pattern which is still in process of evolution in the fully industrialised society of today.

CHAPTER TWO.

Nineteenth Century Education and the Individual.

The case for an individual approach; -- the search for material; -- social origins of people studied, a) categories, b) marginal cases, c) conclusions -- the school and the pupil; a) variety of schools, b) standard of education achieved, c) irregularities, d) efforts at self-improvement; -- educational achievement; a) of the poor, b) of the comfortably-off, c) of children from superior homes; -- irregularities in schooling; a) non-attenders, b) school-life broken by poverty, c) unsatisfactory schools, d) schooling broken by illness, e) lack of co-operation between school and career, f) meaning of these irregularities; -- after-careers (success-stories): a) the group as a whole, b) the superior home, c) the comfortable home, d) the poor home, e) conclusions; -- after-careers (failure and frustration); -- the personal aim in education.

Chapter Two. Nineteenth Century Education and the Individual.

1) The Case for an Individual Approach.

The student who pursues the history of education through the legal language of statutes and the official records of schools must often pause in these essential studies to wonder if the essence of the educational process has not evaporated with the passage of time. The "history" of a school, while the facts it contains are indispensable, seldom succeeds in conveying much of the lively atmosphere which invariably pervades an institution for the young; and where "anecdotes" enliven the record they are sometimes sensational rather than typical.

To take an illustration from our own times, the reader of the future who may seek to reconstruct the problem of our junior secondary schools will find one sort of information in the appropriate Acts and schedules, another sort in school logs and records of work. If in addition the files of newspapers are available, he will read descriptions of new buildings, partisan speeches for and against by politicians and others, and accounts of court cases involving pupils, parents and staff. But all this will avail him little if he cannot enter to some extent into the mind of the pupil with his private thoughts and personal ambitions, most of which are related to the world outside school; of the parent preoccupied with problems of family budgeting; of the teacher, the measure of whose frustration is regulated by his background, his aims and his conditions of work.

The modern sociologist will of course reply that a contemporary problem can best be studied by modern methods -- the random sample, the questionnaire, the statistical analysis of results; and that if this is done properly, a new and better sort of historical material will be

available for the future. There is no way of doing this with the sporadic and fortuitous records of the past. But valuable material exists in the memories and descriptions of men and women who were the raw material of history.

In the succeeding chapters an attempt has been made to gather information of this kind, in an attempt to get inside the early nineteenth century period in education, and to find out how it felt to equip oneself for life at that time.

The limitations of what can be done along these lines are very obvious. The first-hand account is always coloured by personal prejudice, and the survival of such accounts, unless their authors are celebrities and therefore highly exceptional, is a matter of chance. Yet there is a case to be made out for the individual observer. Even in an age of scientific mass-observation the thoughtful and articulate observer who has first-hand experience of a given situation often throws more light upon its problems than the "subjects" of a survey, however meticulously prepared.

The writer believes that this point of view is greatly strengthened, in applying it to early 19th century Scottish education, by the fact that individual enterprise played so important a part in the life of the period. If it were true that the junior secondary pupil of today learned more from hobbies, from cinema and television and from spare-time work than from the teacher, the study of his school record would be of limited application. In the following pages we shall study the various ways in which 19th century Scotsmen picked up their education in relation to their origins and to their subsequent careers, in the hope of clarifying and amplifying the picture already drawn by historians; and we shall attempt, in a small way,

appear in this chapter are not "statistical results", and the chapter itself is only a sort of pilot survey of the field; more detail will follow. Nevertheless it was thought worthwhile to do a little adding up and analysing of the educational facts contained in the Appendix, not in order to base conclusions upon the findings, but with a view to mapping out the territory and discerning its main features.

Fifty individuals are not many to represent the school population of Scotland over seventy years. But the difficulty was in finding the sort of personal record which was sought, especially with reference to humble and unsuccessful folk, not in selecting from a mass of facts. Within a time-limit, the fifty subjects were the first-comers in a course of reading which aimed at variety, and strove constantly to throw some light on the obscure.

Even the selection within time presented difficulties. Dates are not always of first importance in following social changes which result from gradual, organic development, as distinct from changes imposed by some clear-cut historical event. The passing of the 1872 Act was such an event and made a clear upper limit. The latest birth-date in the chronological list is 1854; this boy had completed his Scottish education before 1872. At the other end of the table there was no such significant date, though the operative fact was that complex development known as the Industrial Revolution. The earliest birth-date noted is 1785: this child was entering manhood in 1800. Thus it will be seen that all the fifty subjects came within a life-span of seventy years; and indeed most of them were born within the half-century 1795-1845.

the difficult task of following the educational process out of its traditional habitat, the classroom, into the family circle, the private study and the world outside.

## 2) The Search for Material.

How was this to be done? Encouraged by a few stray scraps of self-revelation accidentally encountered, the writer began to cast about for more. An obvious source was the literature of the time, including realistic fiction and description as well as memoirs and autobiographies. 19th century writers, the forgotten as well as the celebrated, were consulted, and it was found that one reference led to another, and one line of enquiry opened up others. There were many disappointments, but eventually a reasonable amount of material had been gathered. Upon this the chapters which follow have been based; they may be regarded as an illustration of the main historical developments of the time rather than as a recapitulation of the comprehensive accounts which are to be found elsewhere in the appropriate authorities. From the personal thoughts, memories and experiences of contemporary witnesses, a new picture of the education of the time may, it is claimed, be drawn.

As a first step in analysing a somewhat chaotic mass of material, it seemed helpful to make a list of the educational facts about fifty individuals whose lives had come under review, and all of whom had completed their education before the 1872 Act became law. The histories of these fifty people, what may be termed their educational profiles, are arranged in tabular form in an Appendix, (pp. 266-7). There was no way known to the writer of obtaining this sort of information in the quantities and with the impartiality necessary for scientific treatment. The figures which

The main difficulty was, of course, in finding details of the education of ordinary people. Frankly, this was found insuperable. Not all of the fifty names on the list became famous; but all fifty individuals had some ability or potentiality, (in some cases totally frustrated), which to the modern mind would qualify him or her for the best education available. The sample must therefore be subtitled, "Fifty Individuals of Superior Intelligence."

There are other defects of selection. For one thing, it was not found possible to obtain details of the education of sufficient girls to make a balanced number. However, with regard to the education of girls in general a great deal of information came to light, which will be discussed in a separate chapter. <sup>(p. 142)</sup> Again, too many of the people studied were of a literary turn, though only five became professional men of letters, and not all of these are remembered today, except by the specialist. The reason for this is not that the writer sought out literary lions, but the obvious fact that such people leave interesting accounts of themselves, (and sometimes, incidentally, of others.) All the same, it would be good to have more first-hand accounts of the educational experiences of scientists and men of action. A curious feature of the group of professional men is the high percentage of doctors -- far higher than the professional ratio of the time. It can only be supposed that doctors are abnormally given to personal revelations.

In some other ways the fifty individuals were more representative than the foregoing paragraphs would suggest. For example, the geographical scatter was fairly satisfactory. The boys and girls on the list got their schooling in all parts of Scotland -- 16 in the four Scottish cities, 10 in the larger towns, 15 in Lowland country districts, and 10 in the Highlands and north.

## 3) Social Origins of People Studied.

### a) Categories.

The social origins of the fifty people studied were of a variety which also seemed reasonably satisfactory. Details of the home from which each child came will be found in the appended list. Homes were classified as poor or of superior status, the latter category including well-to-do homes and also those of professional standing. The homes of the clergy, for example, though not wealthy, were included in the superior group, because such homes offered in the 19th century cultural advantages. But this division was soon seen to be too clearcut; a third, or intermediate, class of home was distinguished, and classed as "comfortable." It was in this middle category that most of the debateable cases occurred. The criterion used was a very modest one, suited to the standards of a frugal people still close to their mainly peasant origins. Thus a shopkeeper, like J.Y. Simpson's father, who was a village baker, or a small farmer, like George Macdonald's father, or a skilled workman more or less his own master, like the elder Carlyle, may be regarded as occupying a middle station in life, and commanding a tiny financial margin which might be devoted to educational purposes.

### b) Marginal Cases.

Sometimes, however, these categories could not be rigorously applied. For example, David Livingston's father was a small grocer, but clearly he was in a very small way of business indeed, and his family must be classed as poor. In other cases the family fortunes fluctuated. The Bathgate baker's business which produced J.Y. Simpson is a case in point. At the time of James's birth the fortunes of this struggling concern were at their lowest ebb, but the

exertions of the capable mother, free, after the birth of her youngest child, to take a hand in things, and, later, the hard work of the elder brothers, effected such an improvement that the family achieved a modest prosperity. Such a background may be fairly described as comfortable on the whole, though poverty in the early days was not unknown. To take another example, the shopkeeper father of Thomas Guthrie, who rose to be Provost of Brechin and a commercial success, might almost qualify for the superior category; but the elder Guthrie's modest beginnings, not to mention his large family of thirteen children, are here held to keep him in the merely comfortable class.

### c) Conclusions.

When the home backgrounds had been classified according to this method, it was found that out of fifty individuals 19 came from poor homes, 19 from superior homes, and 12 from comfortable homes. In one way, of course, this result makes the sample far from representative; there were far more poor families than rich ones, then as now, and the comfortable homes, though fewer than the poor ones, outnumbered the rich or superior. But, as has already been indicated, it was difficult to reach down into the humbler ranks of society, and a comparatively easy matter to obtain information about persons of birth and distinction; so that the origins of the individuals studied might from another point of view be regarded as satisfactory, because they covered the range of 19th century society and provided a fair share of examples from its various ranks.

### 4) The School and the Pupil. a) The Variety of Schools.

Following the names of the subjects, arranged chronologically, the reader of the Appendix will find a note of the place from which each individual came, and the school he attended. Where the family moved from place to place

during the pre-school years, the place where childhood was spent is given in preference to the birthplace. Thus J.G. Lockhart, who was born at Cambusnethan but spent his childhood and youth in Glasgow, is described as coming from Glasgow. The details of schooling will in most cases be given more fully in the next chapter, for this list is intended merely as a useful summary.

Even so, to run the eye down the list of schools reveals a promising diversity. Our fifty individuals attended almost every kind of educational establishment -- dame schools, parish schools, factory schools, grammar schools, Subscription schools of varying standard, private schools for day pupils or for boarders; while some were educated at home by parents or tutors. These fifty biographies, it may reasonably be claimed, give a cross-section of the means of acquiring knowledge which were available in the Scotland of their day.

#### b) The Standard of Education Achieved.

An attempt was made at a rough classification of the educational standard which the fifty individuals achieved at school. A purely elementary schooling was distinguished from an adequate schooling, which meant grammar school or beyond. Several of the people studied achieved a high degree of culture or learning; these were not distinguished in the summary from the ordinary grammar-school product, but of course all these details will be more fully elucidated later on.

#### c) Irregularities.

In working over the material, the writer was impressed by the number of irregularities, breaks or defects in schooling which might be collected from the individual histories, and it was thought worthwhile to make a special note of such cases. These irregularities will be analysed presently. The term was not used simply to denote a change of school, but rather to indicate some failure in continuity.

A regular education is one which prepares the child for life by successive stages, and finally delivers him at the appropriate age, fully equipped, upon the threshold of his chosen career. Such an education is now more the rule than the exception; but in the 19th century the exceptions were so many and various as to amount to a criticism of the system. These irregularities will be found, when analysed, to open up several interesting topics.

d) Efforts at Self-Improvement.

In the appended list those individuals who received some part of their education at home have been marked, and so have those who made efforts at self-improvement outside the school system. These aspects of the education of the time proved so interesting that <sup>two</sup> whole chapters (Chapter ~~Four~~ <sup>Five</sup> ~~and Six, pp. 117-121~~) <sup>Informal Education</sup> have been devoted to them.

It had been intended to distinguish in a similar way those individuals who owed part of their educational advancement to books, (understanding by this, books read for private pleasure and enlightenment as distinct from books prescribed in class.) More or less everybody who was studied seemed to come into this category, and the place of private reading in a Scottish education will be discussed later on. (p. 146.)

Lastly, it may be noted in passing that about half the individuals expressed criticisms of the education they had received, -- a high proportion which suggests that sturdy Scottish individualism is stronger than loyalty to institutions. These criticisms will be taken up as we go along. Their presence in such numbers ~~xxx~~ is perhaps significant.

5) Educational Achievement a) of the poor.

When we come to analyse the standard of education achieved by our fifty individuals, we look first at the

group as a whole, and discover the encouraging fact that of fifty individuals of superior intelligence only 12 received an education confined to the elements. In a country still lacking a compulsory school system, a country where the idea of free education for all was still a revolutionary dream, and which moreover was undergoing an economic revolution bringing hardship at least to some, this proportion seems extremely high.

Even when we look more closely, and discover the scarcely surprising fact that all twelve children receiving the merely elementary education which, in view of their abilities, was inadequate, came from poor homes, the record is still not unfavourable. For of the 19 poor children, 7 received an adequate schooling, and of these three proceeded to the University, though two of these three (Livingstone and William Pirie Smith) suffered irregularities and hardships on the way.

These figures contradict only the sentimentalist's dream that an automatic ladder of promotion took the lad o' pairts from the gutter to "wag his pow in the pulpit." Even now, when maintenance grants are available, an extended education is less likely when the home is really poor. In the "dear years" of the 19th century, to spare the weekly coppers for school fees, and, still more serious, to forego the young worker's wages, was a sacrifice indeed. It is more surprising that the feat was ever attempted than that it was not always successfully carried through.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence of educational frustration at this humblest level, and of a touching belief in the power of book-learning somehow to transcend the common lot. John Younger's mother had to let the boy be apprenticed to his father as a shoemaker at the age of nine; but she was always "contriving how she should get me to school again by and by to learn arithmetic." To the end of his days this deficiency rankled with Younger.

"I wanted the requisite schooling," he tells us, "even to enable me to set out for a clerkship." It was a bitter disappointment, after winning second place in the National Sabbath School Essay Competition of 1847, to fail in a new career as a postmaster, attempted at the age of 63.

David Fairquhar, a younger man, also a prize-winner in this competition, describes the heroic efforts of his widowed mother to keep him at school to the age of eleven, and writes of the mind-starving effect of mechanical occupations. Alexander Somerville (Autobiography of a Working Man), cherishes the memory of his brother James, who was regarded as the bright boy of the family, and of whom the father would often say, "Ah, if I had siller, I would mak my Jamie a minister!" Although Jamie himself seems to have settled happily enough to a tradesman's life, cultivating his musical and other talents in his spare time, he remained, like many another, the family legend, one who was, from lack of education, "a loss to the world."

b) Educational Achievement of the Comfortably-off.

All twelve of the boys on our list who came from homes of modest comfort received an adequate education, 6 at grammar schools, 2 at subscription schools of similar standard to the grammar school, and 4 at parish schools. Of the twelve, eight reached the University, three from parish schools. We note the increasing proportion, as we ascend the social scale, who got their education at the grammar school rather than at some humbler establishment, and that more persevered to a higher education.

It would be wrong, of course, to generalise from these instances, and to draw the conclusion that every child from a home of modest comfort received an education beyond the elements. It would not even be true to say that every bright child from such a home enjoyed educational advantages.

But an effort was quite commonly made to give superior schooling to one child, often, as Dr. Duns points out in his Life of Sir J.Y. Simpson, the youngest. Such a child, if promising, was "separated to be a scholar", at the expense of common financial sacrifice throughout the family.

c) Children from Superior Homes.

Lastly we have a group of 19 children from superior homes, all of whom received the superior education which was their birthright, 13 proceeding to the University. Their schooling carries further the upward trend which we noted when the schools of the poor were compared with those attended by children from comfortable homes. Only two children in the superior category attended the parish school. Of these, Norman MacLeod, a son of the manse, had a somewhat irregular schooling, attending parish schools in two districts where his father was minister, (Campbeltown and Campsie, both country places,) and spending a time as a boarder with the parish schoolmaster of Morven, where his uncle was minister, before proceeding to Glasgow University at the age of fifteen. It may be noted in passing that the son of an earlier minister of Campbeltown, Edward Pinkerton, (b. 1798), was sent to the High School of Edinburgh. The other parish school boy, David Robertson, (b. 1799), attended the school kept by an original character, William Buchanan, who was dominie in the Kippen district ~~was~~ for fifty years; but although Robertson's father, a farmer, was a University man and his mother was of gentle blood, he himself did not go to a University.

Seven others went to a grammar school, five of these attending the famous High Schools of Glasgow or Edinburgh. The remaining ten were privately educated in a variety of ways. The two Smiths, brother and sister, were never at school, but their minister father took a few pupils as boarders to educate along with his own family. Two other

girls, Jemima Beveridge and Jane Welsh (Carlyle), attended both boarding and day schools, while Jane had tutors at home as well. R.L. Stevenson and John Nichol were at all sorts of private schools, including boarding-school. Robert McNish, a Glasgow boy, was sent to boarding-school at Hamilton. J. Clerk Maxwell and Andrew Lang were both at Edinburgh Academy, the former as a day-boy, the latter as both day-pupil and boarder. J. Stuart Blackie attended a private day school in Aberdeen.

From these facts it seems quite fair to conclude i) that a child of superior background might be educated in a great variety of ways, and ii) that there was no more than an even chance of his sharing a schoolroom with children of lowly origins. The child from a poor home might reach the grammar school or even the University if his parents considered his brains worthy of the sacrifices involved. The child from a home of modest comfort might expect, if he was the bright boy of the family, to be sent to the grammar school to prepare for the University, if such a school existed within tramping distance. In remoter places the parish dominie would do his best for him. But to schools intended for the sons of gentlemen such children could not aspire.

Meanwhile the child of superior background was learning the elements either at home or at some select small school, in preparation for a grammar or private school of good repute, which he would attend either as a day-pupil or as a boarder. Only the two parish-schoolboys in our superior group would encounter, in the course of their education, poor children who were not specially endowed with brains. Private school pupils would reach the University before they were thrown together even with bright lads from poor homes. This may be why R.L. Stevenson was so vividly impressed by the democratic character of the Scottish Universities, where "all classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The

raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain clever clownish laddie from the parish school." (Memoirs and Portraits.) Hitherto, Stevenson's acquaintance with "clowns" had been of the slightest.

6) Irregularities in Schooling. a) non-attenders.

It is well known that before the 1872 Act many children did not go to school at all. This problem will be considered more generally later on. Meanwhile in our list of fifty intelligent children we find a number of instances of failure to attend any school. A special case within this group is that of William and Mary Jane Smith who, with other members of their family, were educated up to University entrance standard at home by parents who were eminently qualified to give such an education. More typically, we find three cases where schooling was lacking because of the poverty of the home. Janet Hamilton, born in a shoemaker's cottage, was not at school at all, but was taught to read by a mother who meanwhile plied the loom; later she taught her own many children, each in turn as they reached the age of five, by the same method. Her education was from books obtained from libraries, and in middle life, in order to pursue a literary career of the humbler sort, she taught herself to write, evolving a curious script based on print. (Gilfillan, Memoir of Janet Hamilton.) James Macfarlan, (b. 1832), the son of a weaver turned pedlar, was brought up to a wandering life in which school could play little part, though he remembered being twice at school for short periods. He educated himself from books borrowed (or stolen?) from libraries in places he passed through. Another whose education was quite inadequate was William Thom, the weaver-poet, who, apart from a short time at a Dame-school, was self-taught. It is possible that one or two other poor boys in the

group, whose schooling did not extend beyond the elements, really had so little formal education that they should be classed with the above. With an education as defective as this, even an intelligent child's prospects in life were not rosy.

b) schooling broken by poverty.

Next come five boys whose education, though not defective, was interrupted because of poverty. Curiously enough, George Macdonald, who had a comfortable home background, finds his way into this group. At the time of the Corn Laws Macdonald's father, like all small farmers, was in difficulties, and George had to miss a session at Aberdeen University. He filled in the time with teaching, and the cataloguing of a library in the far north. Of two poor boys who made good, one, David Livingstone, earned his own schooling by a heroic effort which has become a Scottish legend, working by day, attending a factory evening-school at the end of fourteen hours of work, and studying thereafter far into the night, until his attainments and earnings were sufficient to allow him to spend the winter months at Glasgow University. The other success-story is that of William Pirie Smith who "laid the foundations of accurate and extensive scholarship on the scraps of Latin picked up from an acquaintance who was a Grammar School boy."

(Black and Chrystal, Life of W. Robertson Smith.) The winning of bursaries helped this exceptional student to Aberdeen University.

Still pursuing the fortunes of boys hampered by poverty, we must describe two less spectacular, but perhaps more typical careers. James Hyslop (b. 1798), the child of an unhappy marriage, was cared for in childhood by his maternal grandfather, who was very poor and could not manage without the "five shilling fee" which the boy could earn by herding cattle. To this period of Hyslop's life belongs the story

of his three mile walk over the hills in the dark to consult a "worthy old woman" about the letters in old books of sermons which looked like f's. (The letters, she explained, were "lang esses.") Tutored by one Jonathan Dawson, who felt an "enthusiastic interest" in the boy, Hyslop went at his suggestion to his other grandfather at Sanquhar to go to school there; but this was possible only in "the deid of the year." Thereafter he worked as a shepherd, continuing his efforts at self-education. (Mearns, Memoir of James Hyslop.) Here too we must mention George Donald, born of Highland ancestry in a poor district of Glasgow in 1800. He learned the elements at a dame-school, but was in a factory (at Thornliebank) by the age of eight. Here the manager, noticing his eager desire for reading, arranged for him to attend the village school for two hours a day. By this means Donald learned English, Geography and the rudiments of Latin.

c) irregularity due to unsatisfactory school.

A third group of five had schooling broken because of an unsatisfactory school or a bad teacher. Here we find Jane Carlyle who, as a girl of twelve was sent to acquire accomplishments from Mrs Henning, formerly governess to the family of the Chief of Coll. Under the care of this lady, the girls suffered "hardships, even to shortage of food," and Jane was brought home to resume attendance at the schools of Haddington. (L. & E. Hanson, Necessary Evil.) There followed a spell of home life before Jane went at sixteen to an Edinburgh boarding-school for girls.

Another well-cared-for youngster who could not settle to school was John Nichol. Some of his schools, in Glasgow and elsewhere, will be described later on. His schooldays were varied by spells of home life and of foreign travel. The case of James Clerk Maxwell is different; an unhappy experience with a clumsy young tutor divides his childish lessons with his mother from his years at Edinburgh Academy.

The remaining two in this group were the victims of teachers. Hugh Miller, having lived through many changes of master at the subscription school he attended, disagreed so violently with the last of these that his schooling came to an end, to the disappointment of his family; while the horrifying punishments undergone by Alexander Somerville at his first school may have had a permanent effect upon his subsequent stormy career. At the time they led to a break in schooling followed by a change of school.

d) Schooling broken by illnesses.

Three of our fifty individuals had interruptions in schooling caused by illness -- not a high proportion in an age of childish sickness and mortality. The case of William Miller (b. 1810) who gave up an ambition to train for medicine because of an illness in boyhood reminds us that the boy of modest background must have stamina as well as "parts" to pursue the arduous climb towards a professional career. The removal of J.G. Lockhart, heartbroken at eleven by a family bereavement, from Glasgow High School to study at the seaside with his clergyman father, indicates the relatively slight importance of school and its examinations in a career of the utmost academic brilliance; while the character of R.L. Stevenson was ~~marked~~ moulded by his irregular and home-centred boyhood, itself conditioned by his delicate health.

e) Lack of co-operation between school and career.

Five of those individuals who entered the professions had interruptions of education caused by the failure of schools to prepare pupils for their future careers. Both Edward Pinkerton and J.Y. Simpson finished their medical courses too young to practise. Pinkerton filled in the time with the traditional expedient, teaching, while Simpson went home to spend a restless year helping the local doctor and trying to get a post as a ship's surgeon.

Prospects were more assured for the young doctor who could train, as was still the custom, and as did Robert McNish, by apprenticeship to a family practice; yet although McNish began working with his father and grandfather at the early age of thirteen, he still had time to spend a year or so at home in the private study of French and other modern subjects, having completed the classical education which he afterwards regarded as a waste of time. (D.M. Moir, Memoir of R. McNish.)

At a later date, and at a more mature age, Patrick Geddes put in a spell of home-study between completing the traditional disciplines at Perth Academy and going to London to study with Huxley. For doctor or scientist there was still no clearly mapped and coherent course of study; higher education was the preserve of the humanist and the budding divine. Yet here too there was scope for irregularity; Robert Pollok (b. 1798) had been three years away from school and was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker when he and a brother resolved to enter divinity, and to that end spent two years at Fenwick School, presumably on a higher standard than Mearns Parish School where they had learned the elements, before proceeding to Glasgow University.

f) The meaning of these irregularities.

It seemed an interesting fact that out of fifty cases twenty-three, or nearly half, had breaks or irregularities in schooling for various reasons -- poverty, illhealth, badness of school or teacher, or failure of the school to prepare for a chosen career. These irregularities have therefore been described in some detail; they may be said to speak for themselves. They are symptoms of the upheaval in a society which was in many ways outgrowing its traditional education, where new schools were here and there trying to meet new needs, but where the young mind too often found itself "groping about in worlds half-realised." Meanwhile

in the economic sphere the unplanned effects of free enterprise were leading to appalling human wastage.

The bright side of the picture is the fact that a break in schooling, or failure to learn from one teacher or another, might matter very little. Nobody's educational doom was sealed by failure to pass some examination or reach some standard; given the will to proceed and the modest resources needed to maintain the student, there was no reason why an education broken off last year should not be resumed under different auspices next year and carried through to a triumphant conclusion. In the absence of the official guidance so lavishly provided today, the onus was on the pupil or his parents to map out a course of study; and on the whole this challenge was gallantly met. The optimist might conclude that, by and large, our fifty individuals learned in the end whatever they really wanted to know, if not by one means then by another.

7) After-careers -- success-stories.

We must now enquire what became of the fifty gifted children. Did their learning profit them in a worldly sense? did their superior intelligence lead them to the positions in society which they were <sup>admittedly</sup> fitted by nature to adorn? The following paragraphs are, ~~of course~~, greatly weakened by the fact that to be remembered our subjects had to achieve something, however limited, in life. There is no way of securing a control group of mute inglorious Miltons and village Hampdens. All the same, it is interesting to see how our fifty fared in the world. Their goal in pursuing their scholastic labours was usually a material one. The Scotsman of the time hoped to get on, and the theory that culture should be pursued solely as its own reward was not one that commanded his enthusiastic support.

a) The group as a whole.

Bearing in mind the selection of the sample and the

fact that the 19th century was a time of expansion, it is pleasing rather than surprising to discover that the group as a whole shows a decided upward trend. We began with 19 children from a superior social group, and although one early death (Mary Jane Smith) ~~diminishes~~ diminishes this number, the 18 survivors all maintained their superior status, and were joined by 9 born into comfortable homes, and 4 from poor homes, a total of 31.

Of these, 19 became professional men, and it is possible to show that others had cherished professional ambitions. Thus, of the men of letters, Carlyle was intended for the ministry, while Macdonald actually held a charge; Lockhart and Stevenson trained for the law, and Lang was as much scholar as author. W. Bell Scott, the artist, once thought of studying medicine, while David Stow, a business man, is, of course, better known for his voluntary work as an educator. It must be remembered, too, that the professions were not open to the two women, Mrs Carlyle and Mrs Beveridge, who might well have embarked upon professional careers had they lived at a later date. A fair conclusion is that our group of intelligent people regarded a career in the church, the law or medicine as the educational goal. This would not be nearly so evident in a similar group of English people at a comparable date. The learned professions do seem to be held in specially high regard by the typical Scot.

b) The superior home.

If we now take the social groups separately, we find, proceeding from 19 superior homes, 4 professors (Blackie and Nichol, Arts; Robertson Smith, Divinity; Clerk Maxwell, Science; ) 4 doctors, (Pinkerton, Moir, McNish, Brown); 1 minister, (Macleod); 1 engineer, (Stevenson); 3 authors, (Lockhart,

Lang and Stevenson,) 1 artist , (William Bell Scott), 2 business men, (David Stow, and the bookseller David Robertson, whose shop was the meeting-place of the Glasgow literati of the time), and two married women caring for cultured homes, (Mrs Beveridge and Mrs Carlyle.) Mary Jane Smith, who died too young to pursue any vocation in life, was preparing herself for the better sort of teaching.

c) - the comfortable home.

Of the twelve boys from comfortable homes, nine rose to a superior position in life, of whom six were professional men -- 3 professors, (Reid and Simpson, Medicine; Geddes, Botany and Sociology); 3 ministers, (Irving, Guthrie and Pollok, the last-named, who died young, a probationer only.) Three others who achieved superior status did so as men of letters; of these, Carlyle and Macdonald meant to be ministers, while Hugh Miller would under modern conditions have pursued a career as a geologist. The remaining three, who did not rise to the professions or achieve much commercial success, maintained their middle-class position, John Imlah as a piano-tuner, James Scott as a journalist in Scotland and Canada, and William Miller as a cabinetmaker; all three dabbled in literature.

d) the poor home.

For the 19 individuals from poor homes the prospects were naturally less favourable. It will be remembered that in this group seven obtained education of an adequate standard, while twelve had elementary schooling only. When we trace their after-careers, we find the over-all picture much the same: 11 remained manual workers, 4 improved their status to a modest degree, and 4 achieved superior status. Not every member of the group, however, owed his success in life, where such success was achieved, to educational advantages; conversely, not everyone who managed to obtain a fair standard of education made a success of his life.

Of the twelve who had elementary education only, three raised themselves from the ranks of the manual workers to occupations then held in higher esteem. Thus John Garrick, (b. 1787), having failed in business, became a journalist and minor writer; John Graeme, (b. 1797), having studied medicine in his spare time, practised in a humble way in the High Street of Glasgow; and Robert Gilfillan (b. 1798), rose from a very poor home and a childhood as a factory-worker to be a clerk and a rate-collector at Leith. One poor boy without educational advantages achieved superior status by his talents; this was James Ballantine (b. 1808), who, beginning as an apprentice-painter in Edinburgh, revived the craft of glass-staining in Scotland and founded his own business. The crowning glory of his career was the designing of windows for the House of Lords; he also enjoyed <sup>an</sup> a small contemporary reputation as a writer. (W. Bell Scott, Autobiographical Notes.)

Other three of the poor boys became professional men, but these naturally required an education, obtained in each case in the teeth of circumstance. They were Livingstone the missionary-explorer, William Pirie Smith, teacher and Free Church minister, and Thomas Davidson, the "Scottish Probationer." Another educated lad who at the time of his early death was struggling towards professional status was James Hyslop, a teacher in a small way and a writer of minor verse. The unfortunate Hyslop could not have been poorer in money if he had remained a shepherd, but he probably thought of himself as improving his status in life.

There remained eleven poor ~~boys~~ children, at least three of whom were better educated than was usual in their walk of life, and all of whom possessed some spark of talent, who failed to emerge from the toiling masses.

e) Conclusions.

It is not possible to reach from these life-histories any conclusion which could be expressed numerically. We may safely assume that for the bright lad born in a cultured or moneyed home prospects were bright; that the lad of humbler origin who could command a tiny margin of comfort was scarcely handicapped at all; while for the child born in real poverty the path to success was thorny and uphill all the way. A persistent fallacy in regard to the Scottish educational past is reached by arguing from the selected instances of the success-stories, to conclude that since a representative proportion of 19th century Scotsmen who attained eminence began in a small way, therefore the educational opportunities of the time were adequate.

8) After-careers -- failure and frustration.

On the contrary, it must always be borne in mind that when we look closer at the society of the time, we become aware of a great mass of frustration and of hopes unrealised. The case of James Hyslop, just mentioned, illustrates the point. When Hyslop was a boy, the minister, calling, saw an algebra book on the table, and asked about the young scholar's progress. "I dinna ken," replied the grandfather who had charge of him. "The lad has great pairts, but what can I do for him?" "Send him to the plough," replied the minister, "do not let him trouble himself with these things." The seeming harshness of this comment had its justification in the event. Hyslop's heroic persistence in educating himself, (see above, Irregularities in Schooling b), pp 38-9,) was rewarded only by financial failure in an attic schoolroom in Greenock. Still trying to improve his situation in order to marry the "Lydia" of his somewhat mediocre poems, poor Hyslop became a tutor on a naval vessel, and, later,

a charity-schoolmaster in London. This last expedient undermined his health, and on another sea-voyage, still in his early twenties, he died. (Mearns -- Memoir of James Hyslop.)

The question arises, was it worthwhile trying to rise in life against such odds? Some clever lads altogether failed to do so, and many must have settled down in relative contentment, finding outlet for their talents in the spare-time activities which, then as now, enlivened the Scottish scene. There is no denying, however, that a waste of potentiality did occur. For William Finlay, (b. 1792), who could "read and translate Caesar with facility" as a boy of nine, life as a Paisley weaver must have been frustrating; and it is not surprising that in spite of the command of Biblical language which impressed his friends, he became addicted to drink and the writing of satirical verses. (Biographical Notes to Whistlebinkie.)

Amongst the forgotten literary aspirants of the time many such cases are found, from William Thom, whose character could not support his brief spell of metropolitan fame, to George Donald, whose hard-won education (see p.39) led only to radical journalism, drink and destitution, not to mention the composition of saccharine verses in the subject of childhood. Alexander Smith, in A Summer in Skye, writes unkindly of a gathering, in the Glasgow of the 'fifties, of eighty such poets: "Each of these conceited himself of finer clay ~~wt~~ than ordinary mortals; each of these had composed verses, some few had even published small volumes...and drank the anticipated profits; each had his circle of admirers and flatterers, his small public and his shred of reputation."

Such was the maturity of the "lad o' pairts" for whom no occupational outlet was found; and when J.Y. Simpson,

pointing to a lime-slaker near Bathgate, commented, "When a boy he was the cleverest of our class and a great friend of mine. Love of whisky has been his ruin," it seems an open question whether intemperance caused failure in life, or whether failure in life, (compared with those bright stars of Bathgate, Professor Simpson and Professor Reid), led to intemperance and despair. (Duns, Life of Sir J.Y. Simpson.)

Certainly the inequalities of fortune rankled in many a mind. Alexander Somerville recalls in his autobiography a boyhood friendship with a farmer's son: "but he went to school and college and became a minister, while I continued at school three months in twelve till I became a farm-worker." Often a writer of humble origins seeks to commemorate some friend. Thus John Younger writes of Gavin Blythe, a natural artist who "never had means to get farther than a few penceworth of the very cheapest water-colours, and... fell deeply in love with a gill of whisky." Or again Hugh Miller describes his friend William Ross (b. 1803) -- "a poor friendless lad of genius, diluting his thin consumptive blood on bad potatoes and water," -- ending his account of Ross's artistic gifts, struggles for self-education and untimely death with the comment, "Poor William! his name must be wholly unfamiliar to the reader, and yet he had in him that which ought to have made it a known one... Ere his death I saw him resign in succession his flute and pencil, and yield up all the hopes he had once cherished of being known." (Hugh Miller - My Schools and Schoolmasters.)

Better equipped educationally was Carlyle's friend, "poor Frank Dickson in the valley of Dryfe amid his little stock of books and rustic phenomena." Finding no prospects in the kirk, Dickson went from teaching mathematics at Edinburgh

to Bermuda as a preacher; from there he returned a sceptic, and, having failed at farming, committed suicide in 1828 at the age of 35. Yet he was, says Carlyle in his Reminiscences, "a man richer in gifts than nine-tenths of the vocal and notable are."

There would appear to have been a feeling of despondency in the air of the time. Robert Pollok, a probationer minister, writes from his home near Barrhead early in 1826, "The coldness of the weather and the badness of the house, and the heavy pressure of pecuniary concerns...so overpowered my body and mind that for some weeks I stopped down and the billows passed over me." A correspondent of the "Scottish Probationer", similarly placed, voices in 1867 a dream of escape: "But Davidson, don't you think this country and its slides are tiresome and wearying -- wearing young brains old by the regular college-mills invented for that purpose? Would we not all be strong and well, healthy and happy, in some young uprising country?"

Other educated men who finally won through to good fortune were not strangers to this mood in youth. Thomas Guthrie, writing in old age as an honoured divine, counts up the fifteen years it took him to reach his first charge -- eight to finish the curriculum, two years' licentiate, followed by a five years' wait for a call. The market was in fact overstocked with the products of a conventional schooling; and for those with other talents the path was not clearly sign-posted. George Macdonald, unsure of his future and plagued by religious doubts, would say in youthful fits of depression, "I wis we war a' deid." (Greville Macdonald, with George Macdonald and His Wife.) Even the brilliant Lockhart, having gained an Oxford First at nineteen, was at a loose end and companionless for a time at his

Glasgow home, feeling "no sympathy with the mercantile souls here." (Lang, Life and Letters of Lockhart.)

9) The personal aim in education.

Examples need not further be multiplied, if enough has been said to counterbalance the success-story with the half-forgotten records of frustration and failure. There can be no doubt that, especially in the early years of the century, the disappointed ones were many in the ranks of the educated or self-educated young. A desire to escape from bad working-class conditions, combined with the legend cherished in every district of the local boy who, by means of a college education, had made good, had powerfully reinforced the traditional Scottish belief in learning as a thing not only good in itself but also likely to lead to social betterment. The fact that a good education could be obtained by determined and intelligent lads from all but the poorest homes had led to a supply of educated men in excess of the demand.

This situation, which gave rise to widespread frustration, eased as the advancing century brought new opportunities -- for the brilliant graduate, the competitive examination for Civil Service entry; for those willing to teach, subsidised training, more jobs and better pay; for the intelligent school-leaver, a greater variety of white-collar jobs and skilled technical occupations in the industrial world.

At the beginning of the century, however, there were numbers of eager young aspirants trying to climb a ladder in which some of the rungs were missing. Their faith in themselves and in the future was of great service to Scottish education, for school-mastering was the usual refuge of brilliant youths who had failed at something else. Thus it was possible for Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, giving evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons with regard to the supply of teachers in mid-century

Scotland, to say, "In Scotland peculiar facilities exist for procuring the services of such persons, because the Scottish Universities attract to them individuals from the middle and even from the humbler classes, who acquire a large amount of information by attendance upon the classes at the different colleges, and who afterwards are not successful in procuring situations as private tutors or in procuring a parochial charge under the Church of Scotland."

Upon the "services of such persons" was founded a system of public education of which every Scot is justly proud. In studying the period which precedes this system, we must balance the educational opportunities which existed against the circumstances which sometimes restricted their use, the successes of talented, persevering and lucky individuals against the frustrations of others less gifted or less determined.

In an age of careers-guidance it is hard to understand how entirely the educational efforts of individuals of the early 19th century were self-determined; yet our case-histories have already made this clear. The Scots youth went on learning in the blind faith that the chance to use his acquirements to advantage would somehow turn up. When luck went against him, or when he succeeded in spite of his schooling rather than because of it, he often became bitterly critical of his education. At all times he owed much, perhaps most of all, to his home and to his personal efforts at self-improvement; to this a later chapter will be devoted. But first let us study some first-hand accounts of schools, their pupils and their teachers.

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CHAPTER THREE.

Nineteenth Century Scottish Schools.

A diversity of types -- private elementary schools:  
a) demand and supply, b) schools for the poor, c) schools of a better sort; -- parish schools: a) material standards, b) standards of teaching; -- more advanced schools of a modern type: a) their founding, b) staffing the new schools, c) standard of the new schools; -- traditional grammar schools and their critics -- private schools for gentlemen: a) small schools, b) more ambitious projects; -- the Universities; a) curriculum, b) staff, c) standards of attainment; -- the under-privileged child: a) the problem, b) attempts to solve the problem; -- the work of Owen -- the work of Stow -- the work of Guthrie -- conclusions.

Chapter Three. Nineteenth Century Scottish Schools.

1) A Diversity of Types.

We have already seen in Chapter One that by the beginning of our chosen period a great diversity of schools great and small, good, bad and indifferent, had come to exist in Scotland, and that the traditional picture, vaguely cherished by so many, of a uniform system of parish schools, each with its dominie, where every child learned to read the Bible and the clever ones obtained a higher education up to University entrance, is a generalisation which does not correspond with the facts.

Parish schools there were, of varying standard and accessibility; there were also schools under the auspices of the various dissenting religious bodies. There were little amateur schools to teach the elements to the poor, and craft schools where spinning, lace-making or domestic work were taught, usually to girls. The traditional grammar schools were under the patronage of the burghs; but other good schools devoted to the higher branches of study owed their existence to private endowment by an individual or group of individuals. Many of these, for example the still flourishing fee-paying schools of Edinburgh or the Hutchesons' school in Glasgow, dated back to the 17th century. Other endowed schools of more recent date were offering a modern curriculum; this we think of as an 18th century development, but it continued throughout the first half of the 19th century.

In fact, the impulse to set up new schools wherever the existing provision seems in any way defective, would appear to be an essential part of the Scottish way of life. It has died down in the present century only because of the increasing cost and complexity of education. As recently as the

turn of the present century, in an industrial village known to the writer, a group of dissident parents engaged a teacher and set up an adventurous school which flourished for some time, because of the appointment of a head teacher who was not acceptable to all sections of the community.

In the period we are studying the most outstanding new development was the establishment of a number of private day and boarding schools which sought to maintain a higher standard than the grammar schools, both socially and academically. This was part of the expansion of the public school which was taking place in the south; for Scotland can now no longer be separated so clearly in aims and traditions from her neighbour across the border.

All the other types of school continued to flourish. At the end of our period of study we have the statistics of the Argyll Commission, who in 1867 divided Scottish elementary schools into statutory and voluntary. The 1035 statutory schools were divided into 917 parochial, 189 side, 29 parliamentary (see p. 21 ); while the more numerous voluntary schools comprised 880 undenominational, 900 private adventure, 519 Church of Scotland, 202 S.P.C.K., 617 Free Church, 74 Episcopalian, 61 Roman Catholic and 45 belonging to small denominations. Of 82 "middle class" schools reported on in the following year, 32 were burgh schools, 9 mixed burgh and parochial, 18 parochial, 23 academies; and the Commissioners also examined 11 private schools. (Knox, 250 Years of Scottish Education, pp 56, 69, 70.)

With all deference to the labours of the Argyll Commission, it must be pointed out that these schools were really very hard to classify. One academy, for example, might be ambitious in curriculum and modern in equipment; another might consist of two rooms where one teacher laboured

with the help of an untrained assistant. As for the private adventure schools, it must have been difficult indeed to track down the humblest of these, which might be held in the attic of some poor old woman, or the cottage of a disabled workman.

An attempt will be made in this chapter to describe a representative selection of these schools from contemporary records -- the informal description being preferred to the official account. Comparatively little will be said of the administration and financing of schools, for this information has been gathered together elsewhere, and is not apt to feature prominently in the more personal recollections of education. How many ordinary intelligent citizens of today could give a clear account of the governing bodies of their old schools, or the system of grants, national and local, which maintained them? yet everyone remembers his schooldays.

## 2) Private elementary schools: a) demand and supply.

We have seen that although in theory the educational needs of Scotland were met at an elementary level by the provision of a school under church auspices in every parish, a variety of small schools had been established to supplement this provision. There were many reasons for this. In a country district the parish school might well be too far away for a small child to attend; Alexander Somerville walked two miles to reach the weaver's cottage which was his first school (c. 1818), and the parish school was farther. In an industrial district of the growing cities, the parish system had failed to expand rapidly enough to meet the needs of the people; in such circumstances a convenient dame-school found a ready welcome, combining as it did the functions of school and day-nursery, where both parents had

to work. Also, the strong dissenting element in Scottish religious life cherished a prejudice against the established church and all its works, including its parish schools.

This last reason often caused children to be sent to schools the standard of which was not in keeping with their family's educational ambitions. Such was "Tom Donaldson's school at Ecclefechan" attended by Thomas Carlyle, (c. 1801), until at the age of seven "Sandie Beattie, subsequently a Burgher minister at Glasgow...examining me.. reported me complete in English, and that I must go to Latin or waste my time." The master of this small school did not know Latin himself, so that Carlyle was tutored by his (Burgher) minister until he was ready for Annan Academy at the age of eleven. (Froude, Life of Carlyle.)

A few years later, (1807), Thomas Guthrie, son of a prospering and ambitious Brechin shopkeeper, was sent at the age of four to a school kept by a weaver in his one-roomed home, partly, as he tells us in his autobiography, to be out of the way at home, and partly to help the teacher who was a good Christian man and an elder in the Seceder Church. Here he acquired the alphabet, the ability to read the Book of Proverbs, and a broad Doric pronunciation, which, he philosophically remarks, had to be beaten out of him later. Guthrie's next school was under the auspices of the Anti-burgher congregation, and aspired to a higher standard; but the discipline was poor, for it was here that the Guthrie brothers, with others, faced up to the young teacher and showed fight rather than be punished for truancy; in which emergency the unfortunate dominie gave in!

Sometimes children of tender years were sent to these little private schools because the parish school seemed too big and rough, or because the dominie had little time or patience for elementary teaching. James Y. Simpson was only

four when in 1815 he went to a school kept by a legless man appropriately nicknamed "Timmerleg"; the alphabet mastered, he proceeded to the parish school of Bathgate.

A similar course was followed by Hugh Miller, except that his was a dame-school. "During my sixth year, (1805)," he tells us, "I spelt my way, under the dame, through the Shorter Catechism, the Proverbs and the New Testament, and then entered upon her highest form as a member of the Bible class." Early Bible stories inspired in the boy a passion for reading which was to be life-long, and on the whole he seems to remember the dame with affection; but it was here that he too acquired the uncouth pronunciation which hampered his learning later on. "I had to carry on in my mind the double process of at once spelling the required word and translating the old sounds of the letters of which it was composed into the modern ones." (Hugh Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters.)

For all these reasons a demand for humble private schools existed, and numerous persons, most of them disabled by age or infirmity from more active employment, rushed in to supply the want.

b) private elementary schools for the poor.

We saw in Chapter One that traditionally these humblest of schools were intended for girls, who would combine practical training with the conquest of the alphabet. Some of the dame-schools continued to conform to this pattern. Such was Nanse Banks' school, described in Galt's Annals. "She learnt them reading and working stockings and how to sew the semplar...Her garret-room was a cordial of cleanliness, for she made the scholars set the house in order, time and time about, every morning; and it was a common remark for many a day that the lassies who had been at Nanse Banks's school were always well spoken of, both for their civility and the trigness of their houses, when they were married."

No mention here of writing or arithmetic; in compensation, credit must be given to the worthy Nanse for her modern conception of education as a preparation for life, and her sound working knowledge of the project method!

Although some were better than others, for the most part these private schools serving the needs of the poor were wretched places. They could not be otherwise; for whereas the heritors of the parish maintained the parish school and schoolhouse, and paid the master his basic salary, the poor person who "took up a teaching" had to maintain himself and keep a roof over the head of himself and his scholars on an income derived solely from the modest fees which were all he dared to ask.

In Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk, William Alexander gives an amusing description of the home of one Donald McGraw, a blind old pensioner, whose "industrious helpmeet occupied her leisure time in keeping a dame's school in the kitchen of their habitation. And while she energetically pursued her pedagogical duties among her noisy charge, the blind Donald was wont to sit in his armchair, a not uninterested listener to what was going on, and always ready at an emergency to come in full shout with his military word of command to enforce obedience or silence as the case might be."

This school, though unconventional, sounds a fair specimen of its lowly kind. The "poor thatched cottage" where Alexander Somerville went to school, a draughty and leaking building with a lame teacher addicted to savage punishments, was an example of the low level to which popular education sinks in the absence of inspection or subsidy. "So, having got a twopenny spelling-book, my education began," writes Somerville in his Autobiography. Thousands of Scottish children of his time had a schooling no better than his. The eventual disappearance of these poor schools, as the public system made them obsolete,

was no loss to Scottish education.

c) Private elementary schools of a better sort.

The social gradations amongst the schools were finely shaded. Galt in the Annals of the Parish records of the year 1800 that at Cayenneville, a growing industrial township, "a broken manufacturer's wife, an excellent teacher and a genteel and modernised woman, took the better order of children. Mrs M'Caffie, the widow of a custom-house officer, that was a native of the parish, set up another for plainer work. "

Small schools of a still more genteel description were set up where required to prepare for more advanced establishments those children of the upper classes who were not taught at home. (This practice still persists.) Too often in the record of an education which extended to University standard no details are given of these first steps. Thus D.M. Moir dismisses his preparation for Musselburgh Academy as "a school of minor note;" and of the four-year-old Lockhart we are told only that he "toddled to the English school, as it is called, and to the writing school, where he acquired elementary education." He was at Glasgow High School by the age of six (1800). (Lang, Life of Lockhart.)

It would be interesting to have more details of these genteel primary schools, for their methods seem to have been various. Barrie's "hanky school" is a fictional embroidery with some basis of fact. William Bell Scott (b. Edinburgh 1811), has a good word for his first school, which he attended up to the age of nine or ten, learning some Latin grammar as well as the elements. "My first Latin master," he tells us in his autobiography, "when I was sent to a little day-school kept by an excellent and kind elderly Quaker in the neighbourhood to get the rudiments, so that I might enter the second class at the High School, laboured in vain with cases and declensions."

Scott's parents were Baptist converts, and the choice of a Quaker as teacher may have had some connection with religious dissent. On its own merits it sounds a good and gentle school, free from the brutality which disfigured many a more pretentious establishment.

John Nichol, who first went to school in 1829 at the age of six, had some interesting experiences. "My first school," he tells us in his own memoir of his early years, "was a pretty good one, though three parts humbug. He taught us from the Moral Class Book and the Rudiments of Science, pretending to more science than he knew." A more traditional note was struck by the learning of paraphrases on Mondays. Nichol left this place after six months to travel in Germany. On his return he was sent to a school newly established in the fashionable west-end of Glasgow.

"Everything was to be taught here on a more philosophical plan, nothing was to be learned by rote, lessons in natural history were to assume a prominent place in the curriculum, no child was ever to be flogged or constrained, but marks were to be given for conduct, regularity and industry." Here one distinguishes the spirit of experiment and response to modern ideas which are supposed to be the chief justification for private schools; it is therefore disappointing when Nichol adds, "I wasted six years in this school." It was ill-health, not the alleged incompetence of the teachers which caused Nichol's withdrawal from the "West-end Academy", ~~but~~ but the school failed soon afterwards.

Incidentally, this West-end Academy must be distinguished from another Glasgow school of the same name, opened in St. George's Road in 1860 by Samuel Connell, a Free Church minister who had begun teaching twenty years earlier in a school kept by his uncle Robert Connell. The younger

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Connell's school was for girls, and devoted to the higher branches of learning; but Robert Connell should be mentioned here for his introduction of the phonetic system in teaching reading and spelling, and for the text-books which he wrote to illustrate his method. From the Connells an unbroken tradition descends to the excellent and progressive girls' private schools of Glasgow today.

### 3) Parish schools: a) material standards.

Leaving for the moment the experiments of pioneer teachers in private schools, we must return to the traditional fountainhead of Scottish education, the parish school. Here we meet with conflicting reports. Christison, a master in Edinburgh High School, writing in the Edinburgh Review in 1802, describes the parish school of his day as "suffered to sink into inefficiency, either from negligence, from a beggarly spirit of economy, or from motives of a still more illiberal description." But this sentence is extracted from a political article campaigning for higher salaries for teachers, and may not be without bias.

In the same way, the Disruption controversy had by the mid-century let loose a flood of criticisms upon the parish schools, which are described by Stow's supporters as poorly maintained, lacking in maps and other equipment, with untrained teachers who are impervious to advice because of "complacency." But Guthrie, a benign old man, cheerfully mentions the parish school of Brechin in the 1810's as teaching "the three R's, Algebra, Euclid, French, Latin and Greek for 5/- a quarter." (Guthrie did not himself attend this school.)

The truth may be looked for somewhere between the extremes of praise and criticism. Chalmers in his evidence to a House

of Commons Committee on the Poor Law stressed the lack of education in the Highlands and the large cities, but reported that an adequate provision of parish schools was "universal in Lowland country parishes." He gave the fees as 2/- a quarter for reading, 3/- for writing also, and 4/- for the three R's. Alexander's parish dominie in Johnnie Gibb taught the elements for 3/6 a quarter, plus 2/- extra for Latin; but perhaps the cost of living was lower in the north-east.

The schoolmaster had his fixed salary, augmented by fees, and his schoolhouse was maintained by the heritors. How well they performed this duty depended on the strength of local sentiment. Galt in his Annals is constantly reporting disputes about improvements to school and schoolhouse, the smaller lairds who sent their own children to the parish school proving more generous than those who could afford tutors.

In spite of legislation, the building of schools was still thought of as a standard work of philanthropy. In Susan Ferrier's Inheritance (1824), the heroine draws designs for a school on her estate, to incorporate all the latest ideas. "She must positively have it elegant if not expensive, and the children must all be prettily dressed." When this plan is held up for lack of money, a friend remarks realistically, "Then you will have no lean, gray, weeping-looking building, with its steep straight roof, and its little green glass windows, and its shoals of hoddy-doddy, white-haired, blubbered boys and girls."

This approach to buildings and maintenance led to a certain divergence of standard from place to place. Alexander Smith, describing in 1865 his tour of Skye, gives an account of a well-equipped school, "a plain substantial-

looking building", which has a map and an adequate supply of copy-books, because it has been provided by a progressive landlord who made money in India; but the young schoolmaster met on the ferry revealed in conversation that his school-house, on the other hand, "was a turf-cabin, his writing-table a trunk, on which his pupils wrote by turns."

b) standards of teaching.

As with the buildings, so with the teaching which went on within: the standard varied. In theory the teacher was expected to cope with the entire schooling of the children of the parish from the alphabet to University entrance; in practice his achievements depended upon his own tastes and energies and upon the pupils who offered themselves. In a sleepy country places, the need to teach beyond an elementary level might seldom arise.

For example, David Wilkie, the artist, born in the manse of Cults, Fife, in 1785, "attended the parish school in the village of Pitlessie, where the dominie combined the duties of teacher, session clerk, precentor in the kirk and hand-loom weaver. Education ran on easy lines, and the boy spent his time in making likenesses of his fellow-pupils and of the village characters. At the age of twelve he went to school at Kettle, about two miles westward, where he continued to cover the margins of his books with drawings." (Stanley Cursiter, Scottish Art) This boy's schooling went on to the age of fourteen, a long course for those days, but does not seem to have reached a high academic standard.

About the same date John Younger was introduced at the age of five (1790) into "a small schoolroom crowded with some threescore commoners of both sexes." Here he learned to read the Bible, to write and spell; and he recalled "great interest and emulation."

(64)

The core of the teaching in these country schools was reading, with, of course, catechism, as befitting the "people of a Book." Harvey's picture, "A Schule Skailin", (National Gallery of Scotland), shows the austere schoolroom with its window-bench for copy-writing. A few bare-footed little girls linger behind the other; in the doorway the wild lads of the village are engaged in a free fight; oblivious of the uproar, the dominie corrects the work of a solemn boy, probably the bright pupil. The writer's grandmother, (b. Fife, 1844) used to recall just such a schoolroom, where writing was done by turns for lack of desks.

Education for a country child was much interrupted by the needs of the farm; for girls in particular, the claims of the home had priority. (Somerville's sister Mary was spared for "one quarter at the school.") Yet it should not be too hastily assumed that these schools were inadequate to the simple needs of the people they served. The writer's great-uncles founded prosperous enough lives on this sort of schooling, nor did they suffer in maturity and old age from the lack of self-confidence, often over-compensated, which besets those who feel their educational background to be insecure.

In more forward-looking communities, ambition would spur the parish schoolmaster on to higher things. Since there is a limit to what one man, however indefatigable, can do, the desire to produce brilliant academic pupils often led to a falling-off in the general standard of the dominie's work. Such was the master of the parish school of Cromarty described by Hugh Miller, (as usual, a stickit minister). He was "a scholar and an honest man, and if a boy really wished to learn, he certainly could teach him." Usually there were a few grown-up lads under his tuition, but while he devoted himself to advanced instruction, two-thirds of

the younger pupils were not required to learn. Hugh himself peacefully pursued English studies during school-hours, to the detriment of his Latin; he became a good storyteller. Such too was the "Reverend Jonathan Tawse" in Johnny Gibb, with his class of two or three "Latiners" on whom he bestowed much pains and a good deal of chastisement. English grammar was one of the modern improvements on which he prided himself; but the practical Aberdeenshire parent saw little use in this, and wondered about "the coontin."

#### 4.) More advanced schools of a modern type; a) their founding

From parental criticisms of the academic studies there had arisen, as we have already seen, a widespread public feeling that every sizeable township should have what we would nowadays call a secondary school. Where a grammar school of ancient foundation did not fill this need, and sometimes where the existing grammar school was thought to be out of date, the efforts of the citizens were directed towards founding new schools, usually with a "modern" or mathematical bias. This evolutionary process is described by Galt in The Provost.

"In the year 1809 the bigging of the new school-house was under consideration. There was about that time a great sough throughout the country on the subject of education; and it was a fashion to call schools academies, and out of a delusion rising from the use of that term, to think it necessary to decry the good plain old places....Mr Plan... brought with him a fine castle in the air, representing that if we laid out two or three thousand more than we intended, and built a beautiful academy, and got a rector thereto, with a liberal salary and other suitable masters, opulent people at a distance -- yea, gentlemen in the East and the West Indies, -- would send their children to be educated among us, by which great fame and profit would redound to the town."

Galt based his fictions on the Irvine district, and it is interesting to note in passing that the idea of attracting pupils from overseas to this area was no idle dream. In 1815 Edgar Allan Poe was sent to Irvine from the States, along with a member of the Galt family, to attend Irvine Grammar School, his foster-father John Allan being a native of the burgh. Poe's American biographer, Hervey Allan, tells us that "discipline at the Academy, a school with mediaeval traditions, was strict, and probably corporeal; one exercise in writing was copying epitaphs from old graves in the kirkyard close by" -- a tale which, if not true, ought to be!

The rise of the new schools is illustrated by the story of Annan Academy, founded in 1806, where both Irving and Carlyle were among the first pupils. Irving had previously attended the town school kept by Adam Hope. When the new, and grander, school was opened, Hope became English master; it is his personality which comes down to us through his pupils, while the headmaster, the Rev. William Dalgleish, is forgotten. In this case there was a continuity between old and new.

b) Staffing the new schools.

That this was not always so we may see from the later career of Edward Irving. His first teaching post was at Haddington, where there were already two secondary teachers -- "the Grammar School under William Graham, and the English School under Richard Hay." (L. & E. Hanson, Necessary Evil.) These two schools were complementary rather than in opposition or succession, for it was possible for Jane Welsh (Carlyle) to attend classes in either by turns, an arrangement recalling the system, now going out of fashion, under which Galt had, in the Greenock of the 'nineties, attended "various classes held in the Royal Close," where he studied "penmanship, arithmetic, mathematics including geography and

astronomy, and French." ~~Still pursuing~~ (J. Aberdein, Life of Galt.) Still pursuing this separatist view of education, the citizens of Haddington obtained the services of the eighteen-year-old Irving, on a professorial recommendation, to set up a new school where the emphasis should be on mathematics.

Leaving Haddington following an unsuccessful attempt to get a rise in salary, Irving proceeded to found another Academy at Kirkcaldy. where Mrs Oliphant tells us that he gave lessons in mensuration and swimming, taught French and Italian as well as Latin and mathematics, and caused his class to learn by heart large portions of Paradise Lost. This progressive curriculum devised by a young enthusiast of exceptional gifts and energy need not be accepted as "typical" of the modern schools. But Irving lost favour, perhaps because of his severe discipline, with those leading citizens of Kirkcaldy whom Carlyle somewhat flatteringly describes as "fine frank wholesome-looking people of the burgher grandees", and presently we find them hatching a new plan, to "buy off the old parish head schoolmaster...let him have £25 salary and go." In pursuance of this scheme, they apply to the Edinburgh professors to send another "classical and mathematical" who can start fair. (Carlyle, Reminiscences.) This new teacher proved to be Carlyle; and although the two men were personal friends, both he and Irving reckoned the constant threat of an opposition school among the many disadvantages of teaching as a profession.

Bad for the teacher, this atmosphere of competitive free enterprise was unsettling for the pupil too. Hugh Miller describes in no very flattering terms the successive teachers of the subscription school established at Cromarty by the wealthier tradesmen who were dissatisfied with the parish

school. They "clubbed together and got a schoolmaster of their own; but he, though rather a clever young man, proved an unsteady one..." Getting rid of him, they procured another, a licentiate of the Church, who for some time promised well, but doubts induced by "zealous Baptists" affected his health of body and mind. The third schoolmaster "was always getting into pecuniary difficulties, and always courting wealthy ladies." (Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters.) Though Miller's uncles, as befitted men of a progressive turn of mind, sent the lad to this school in preference to the parish school at which his education began, there is no indication that the supposedly more modern curriculum offered by the new establishment was any better adapted than the old to the scientific bent of the pupil's mind. What Miller learned at school was principally a disrespect for formal education.

c) Standard of the new schools.

Sometimes new schools which public criticisms caused to be established were of a lower standard than those they replaced. Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk contains a description of a "side school" where those who held that Dominie Tawse "took up his heid ower muckly wi that Latin and Grammar and ither buik leernin," might have their children taught arithmetic and geography instead, by Sandy Peterkin. This worthy, a stickit doctor for a change instead of the usual stickit minister, set up school in the winter in a straw-thatched barn equipped with "desks and seats of a very plain sort for about forty pupils." In the summer he did odd jobs for neighbouring farmers; his Latin was, as he himself confessed, "a little rusted."

Other subscription schools were distinguished from their rivals by social superiority rather than by a more progressive curriculum. The school attended by Thomas Guthrie and

his brothers was, he tells us, not without family pride, more expensive than the other schools of Brechin. Like the other good schools, it had for teacher a University man. In Brechin before 1820 there were, according to Guthrie, besides his subscription school and the school kept by the Anti-burgher congregation, which he also attended, an endowed school with a history dating back to the Knights Templar, and the parish school. (This is to take no account of small schools for the poor, such as Guthrie's first school in the weaver's cottage.) Considering the size of Brechin, there would seem to have been too many schools; but public sentiment wished it so. The multiplying of schools is another example of the sectarian spirit which has left the average Scottish town of today with too many churches.

Guthrie, as we have seen, (p. 61) gave a highly optimistic account of the curriculum. An aspiring Brechin lad would be lucky if he could acquire a smattering of all these subjects by attending various schools by turns, a not impossible procedure. In the more efficient schools, despite public protests which grew in insistence as the century advanced, classical studies, with Scripture and some mathematics, continued to monopolise the schoolboy's time. As we shall presently see, budding scientists and literary men developed their inclinations outside the classroom; nor were modern languages better served, though smatterings were taught here and there by pioneers. Both Carlyle and George Macdonald pursued their German studies privately.

Still less was an answer found for those critics who envisaged an education adapted to vocational needs. This question had been in the air ever since Heriot's School in Edinburgh had been founded with the purpose of providing, not only University entrants, but apprentices for the skilled crafts of the capital; but it cannot be said that a fully satisfactory solution of the problem of the relationship

between school and work has been found even today.

5) Traditional grammar schools and their critics.

More or less impervious to criticism of their narrow curriculum, the grammar schools of the 19th century went on with their established tradition. The keynote of that tradition was struck by Cockburn when he described the famous Dr. Adam of Edinburgh High School as fitted to teach "Latin, some Greek and all virtue." The recollections of men who were boys in the early part of the century illustrate this theme, with few variations. Dr. Moir at Musselburgh Grammar School had studied "Latin, Greek, French and the elements of geometry and algebra " by the age of thirteen (1811) when his medical apprenticeship began. In the 'twenties, Thomas Stevenson was evading a classical education at Edinburgh High School. "He never had any Greek," his son tells us in Memoirs and Portraits; "Latin he happily re-taught himself after he had left school." Ten years later, at Aberdeen Grammar School, George Macdonald found Latin, mathematics and grammar the foundation of education, with due attention paid to religious training.

Besides the progressive objections already noted, the grammar school was under fire from more conservative critics who complained that its training was not classical enough. The Edinburgh Review pegs away at this theme through the first two decades of the century, not scrupling to stir up Scottish national pride by adverse comparisons with the south. Christison, writing in 1802, wishes Greek to be taught at Edinburgh High School, where he himself was a master: "There are few literary men in Scotland who do not come to regret that unclassical negligence which almost excludes Greek literature from our present system of education." In 1809, the reviewer of Taylor's Plato remarks, "Our system of education is arraigned by our neighbours as defective in regard to classical instruction; and in regard to

the Greek language, though not the Latin, the charge is just."

Writing of the period around 1820, John Stuart Blackie reports that "no man in Aberdeen dreamt of acquiring the elements of Greek at the Grammar School in those days or for many years afterwards." But he praises "that panoply of Latin for which the Aberdeen Grammar School has long been famous." And Lockhart in "Peter's Letters" expressed in his trenchant style the orthodox Tory condemnation of those who believed that "a facetious and rejoicing ignorance of Greek could be compensated for by a smattering of geology."

When Harvey and Sellar reported on secondary education in Scotland in 1868, they were still measuring by this classical yardstick in making their unfavourable findings. There were, they said, "but six schools in Scotland to which the designation of secondary schools is applicable," viz., ~~four~~ <sup>three</sup> grammar schools (Old and New Grammar Schools, Aberdeen, and Royal High School, Edinburgh); two public schools (Edinburgh Academy and Trinity College, Glenalmond); and one private school, (Aberdeen Gymnasium.) All the others they loftily condemned as presenting "a confusion of infant, primary and elementary schools combined in one."

About the same time, D.R. Fearon, representing H.M.I. from England, made a more enthusiastic report, and praised the co-educational system. (H.M. Knox, op. cit. pp69-70.) Scottish higher education cannot really have been so bad, or Scots would not have passed so high in, for example, the Civil Service examinations when competitive entry was instituted; and it seems a fair inference that a certain lack of polish and amenity in the Scottish school made a bad impression on the visitor who was used to an English system more selective socially and better provided financially. Even so, there was no room for complacency with regard to the Scottish secondary school.

6) Private schools for gentlemen: a) small schools.

Amongst the parents who joined in this chorus of criticism, there were some who felt that the trouble was due to the rough-and-ready democratic character of the grammar schools. Because of this, the sons of gentlemen were sent in increasing numbers to private schools. John Stuart Blackie, who completed his schooling in 1821, was educated "not at the Aberdeen Grammar School, but at a private subscription school supported by a few gentlemen who did not like the rough manners of the Burgh School." Unfortunately Blackie is not able to wax enthusiastic about this school, despite its able teacher. "I carried with me from a three years' course sufficient Latin to earn a small bursary, but no Greek at all...I believe this to be one of the bad effects of small private schools: there a boy does not learn to measure himself against a number." (Blackie, Notes of a Life.)

Other boys who went farther and fared no better were Robert McNish near the beginning of the century, and John Nichol in the 'forties. McNish, a Glasgow boy whose short schooling ended before 1815, was sent to Hamilton to board with the Rev. Alexander Easton, at whose school, "the principal, may, almost the exclusive attention of the pupil was directed to the acquisition of Greek and Latin." McNish's knowledge of French was acquired by private study after leaving school. (D.M. Moir, Memoir of McNish.) By a similar arrangement, Nichol went to Kelso to board with Mr Fergusson, master of the Grammar School. Presumably he would attend classes in the school, but his recollections are confined to his life with about twelve fellow-boarders, in whose company his lot was not a happy one.

b) More ambitious projects.

These experiences suggest that the small private school,

however exclusive, was not the ideal answer to the problem which confronted the parent of means. Small boarding-schools for girls, which will be discussed in due course, had a better record; but their aim differed from the boys' schools at a period before women had entered the professions. A more ambitious project, which may be taken as typical of others which followed, was the opening in 1824 of Edinburgh Academy. Cockburn describes the reasons which led Scottish gentlemen to subscribe £12,000 for this purpose.

"Leonard Horner and I had often discussed the causes and the remedies of the decline of classical education in Scotland; and we were at last satisfied that no adequate improvement could be effected so long as there was only one great classical school in Edinburgh, and this one placed under the town council, and lowered, perhaps necessarily, so as to suit the wants of a class of boys to more than two-thirds of whom classical accomplishment is foreseen to be useless." (Lord Cockburn, Memorials of His Time.)

In this statement, which has a curiously modern ring to the contemporary parent, perplexed by the rival claims of comprehensive and selective schools, Cockburn is making a debating point, so that his "two-thirds" may be a sweeping figure. Still, his assertion reinforces the conclusion that there was a great deal of wasted effort, at least in the worldly sense, in the education of the poor boys of the day.

That the new Edinburgh Academy set a high standard in classical studies is not disputed; but from the recollections of two clever boys who attended the school, Clerk Maxwell in the 'forties, and Andrew Lang a dozen years later, it does not appear that the curriculum was very flexible, or that much note was taken of individual aptitude.

Fresh from the secluded home-life of an only child, the ten-year-old Maxwell found himself in a class of sixty boys where the master, a good disciplinarian, gave class-places for accuracy and readiness. "Maxwell did not at once enter

into the spirit of this contest in which the chief requisites next to average talent and intelligence, were push and promptitude." Gradually he began to show ability in Scripture and English, subjects which his home life had fostered, but in arithmetic he was still handicapped by want of "readiness." Meanwhile he was discovering geometry for himself by self-taught experiments. It is not surprising that when in his fourteenth year he began school mathematics, "his companions felt no doubt as to his vast superiority from the first;" nor would the modern child guidance expert think it strange that from this time his school results improved, "latterly even in Latin." Boys were still leaving school very young, even when there was no economic pressure. Maxwell's biographers (Campbell and Garrett) seem a little surprised that he stayed on till he was sixteen, longer than some others in his year.

Andrew Lang, a future Snell Exhibitioner and Oxford scholar, was well adapted by nature to master the classical curriculum; but Edinburgh Academy did little to foster the literary gift for which he is remembered. He writes with gentle irony of the school's attempts to teach him English literature, (before 1858): "Like the rest I went to an English class till I was fourteen, after which I was supposed to know all about English literature and turned to higher things. Dismal handbooks about Gower and Lydgate were thrust into our reluctant and grubby little fists. My memory is not soiled with the recollection of the contents of any of these manuals." (R.L. Green - Andrew Lang.)

7) The Universities: a) Curriculum.

Even the best schools, we may conclude, were resistant to the changes which thinking people believed to be due. The good schools, then as now, looked to the Universities, and their teachers were University products. With the best will in the world, it was difficult for them to teach

otherwise than as they themselves had been taught. This problem is so perpetually with us that the wonder is that any progress in education is ever made at all.

Of the Universities little will be said here in detail, though student life will be described in the next chapter. They were Universities lacking in the amenities to which the modern student is accustomed, even if, in the case of Glasgow, we dismiss as prejudiced Andrew Lang's searing description: "Blackness, dirt, smoke, a selection of the countless smells of Glasgow, small, airless, crowded rooms -- these things make up a picture of the old College of Glasgow."

In these Universities the traditional subjects were taught by the lecture method unsupplemented by tutorial instruction. "The hungry young looked up to their spiritual nurses for food and were bidden eat the east wind," wrote Carlyle. "What vain jargon of controversial metaphysics, etymology and mechanical manipulation falsely named science was current there, I indeed learned perhaps better than most."

In his simpler way John Younger, the Border cobbler, objected that once a poor boy had been sent to college at a sacrifice, "the days of his prime are spent learning simply to convey his ideas in proper language without having acquired any ideas worth conveyance." This same plea for a widening of the field of interest and a bridging of the gap between learning and life was being brought to bear upon the secondary school; but only gradually can an educational system come into line with changes in society.

b) Staff.

The University professor of a century ago was less of a specialist than his successor today. Up to 1859 the classical professors of St. Andrews had been educated solely in Scotland; only from that date does the traditional link with Baliol

derive. Carlyle, as Lang points out in his Life of Lockhart, was equally ready for a Chair of Astronomy or of Rhetoric; and he dismisses this odd state of things with the frivolous remark, "Any Scot can be a professor of anything." Lang uses this argument again in defence of the notorious appointment in 1820 of John Wilson ("Christopher North",) to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, when "the election was a purely political fight between arrogant Tories and complacent Whigs," with the victory to the Tories.

Political domination was a bad thing for the University teacher, though good men usually succeeded in making their way. Blackie describes his appointment to the new Chair of Humanity at Marischal College as "a Whig job, but not a very bad one." As well as keeping an eye on the political weathercock, the scholar had to bear in mind that his freedom of thought operated within a framework of religious orthodoxy. "The heavens would have fallen on any Edinburgh

Town Council till 1858," writes Masson in Edinburgh Sketches, "if they had thought of choosing anyone but an ecclesiastic for the University Principalship." The date 1858 is that of the Universities (Scotland) Act. The reforms it embodied were long overdue, having been held back by pressure of other legislation since the Rosebery Commission of 1826-30.

c) standards of attainment.

When we bear in mind the oddities of professorial appointments, the size of the undisciplined classes, and the diverse educational backgrounds of the students, most of whom were mere schoolboys in years, we are not surprised to find that the standard of University education in 19th century Scotland left something to be desired. Though comparisons with Oxford and Cambridge, such as those persistently made by the Edinburgh Review, were then as now felt to be odious, the travelled Scot, if he were a sensible

man, soon became aware that there was room for improvement at home. "The scales fell from my eyes," wrote Blackie, "very soon after I arrived at Gottingen. I perceived that at Marischal College they had degraded the University pretty much into a school; that they drilled boys where they ought to have been stimulating young men; that our academical system was prominently puerile and our standard of attainment lamentably low." (Notes of a Life.)

8) The under-privileged child: a) the problem.

We must now remind ourselves of the existence of a submerged class of children for whom even the humblest of the schools we have described was out of reach. In the industrial confusion of the early century, child life was cheap. The mother of William Thom, who was maimed for life in a street accident in Aberdeen, was compensated with a down-payment of five shillings from the carriage-owner. As late as the 'thirties, children of the vagrant unemployed could die of exposure and exhaustion by the wayside without attracting public indignation; in the cities cases of starvation were not unknown. (Thom, Recollections of a Handloom Weaver.)

The chaos which the industrial revolution brought to the populous areas has often been described. "This course of degradation," wrote Hugh Miller, a contemporary observer, "is going on in all our larger towns in an ever-increasing ratio, and all that philanthropy and the Church are doing to counteract it is but as the discharge of a few squirts on a conflagration." There were rural areas too where the Church was failing in its traditional educational role: "Demand and supply were admirably well-balanced in the village of Niddry: there was no religious instruction, and no wish or desire for it." (Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters.)

Neglected children from poor homes were everywhere to be seen in country and town. Dorothy Wordsworth in 1803 met

2a little fellow about six years old, carrying a bundle over his shoulder; he seemed poor and half-starved, and was scratching his fingers which were covered with the itch. He was a miner's son and lived at Wanlockhead; did not go to school, but this was probably on account of his youth."

(Recollections of a Tour in Scotland.) Or more probably it was because the coppers for school fees and the decent clothing for school attendance could not be spared at home.

Alexander Somerville did not go to school till he was eight years old for this reason, and even then he set off in threadbare cast-offs, suffering mortification because of a ridiculous old hat. (Autobiography of a Working Man.)

Such children were the obvious target for the philanthropist, though it was not always easy for well-meaning but delicately-nurtured persons to see how to help them. The heiress in Susan Ferrier's Inheritance (1824), had an amusing encounter with "some coarse, lint-haired, mahogany-faced, half-naked urchins, with brown legs and black feet, dabbling in a gutter before the door." The scene was a rural district not far from Edinburgh.

"'What a pity these children are all so ugly,' thought Miss St. Clair. 'It would have been so delightful to have had them all nicely dressed and have taught them myself; but they are so frightful...Would you not like to be made nice and clean and have pretty new clothes?'" 'Aye,' answered one of them with a broad stare and still broader accent. 'And to go to school and be taught to read and write and work?' 'Naw!' answered the whole troop with one voice.

b) attempts to solve the problem.

Still, difficult as the problem was, there was a widespread feeling amongst men of good will that a solution should be attempted. As the Edinburgh Review condescendingly puts it in 1810, (the figures are national, not Scottish,) "If among 2,000,000 of persons in the lower ranks who now receive no

education at all there are a certain proportion of fine understandings...would it not be worthwhile to give all that brute matter a certain degree of attention, for the bare chance that in the mass some vein of exquisite lustre may be made to shine?" Thus the long political struggle for popular education went on, the tide of ignorance being stemmed meanwhile here and there by individuals or groups, whose motive was usually the Christian one.

Sometimes their efforts were on a small scale, like that of the lady founding an industrial school to teach sewing to poor girls in the Bathgate district, to whom Sir J.V. Simpson contributed a prize in memory of his mother. At other times great things were accomplished, as when Chalmers by a brilliant feat of organisation built four schools in St. John's Parish, Glasgow, within a very short space of time, on a budget of £500 for fabric, £500 to endow a salary. "The minister--autocrat," writes Mrs Oliphant, "had sworn that pauperism was to be no longer, and he made good his word."

Chalmer's was a valiant rear-guard action. He sought, in his own words, "to encourage self-reliance and preserve the old ways"; he strove by a supreme effort to make the old parochial system efficient in the performance of functions of which it was soon to be relieved. It is no disrespect to Chalmers, however, to point out that the work of others labouring in the same field contained more new ideas on which were to be laid the foundations of the schools of the future.

9) The Work of Owen.

First and most famous of these was Robert Owen, whose work in Scotland extends from his taking over the New Lanark mills in 1799 to his withdrawal in 1824, when his school came under the British and Foreign School Society. Owen was an Englishman and an agnostic; his work, though internationally admired, ran against the grain of the Scottish society of the times

the time; and he was opposed by the parish minister who "suspected him of trenching on his right, as minister of the parish, to the spiritual and moral supervision of the people." It is arguable that if he had been a Scotsman he might have been able to co-operate with progressive religious sentiment, and that thus his efforts might have been more influential locally and at the time. On the other hand, there is a fundamental cleavage between the view of human nature expressed in orthodox theology and Owen's combination of Locke's belief in the child-mind as tabula rasa with Rousseau's faith in the innate goodness of the individual. Perhaps these conflicts could never have been resolved.

The context of Owen's work was the factory-centred community: he thought of his pupils as likely to become his employees. He has not a good word to say for existing attempts to provide schooling for child-workers. "The ordinary plan," he writes in his Essays on the Formation of Character, "was to set up a small school somewhere in connection with the factory, and employ some old man or old woman to struggle as he or she could, enfeebled by age and ignorance, against the indisposition of the children to learn, wearied as they always were by the overwork of the factory."

We cannot dispute Owen's opinion of this pernicious system, especially when we recall that the moderate proposals of his 1815 Factory Bill, (a twelve-hour day, and knowledge of the three R's as condition of employment), were far in advance of the times. But Livingstone's factory evening-school at Blantyre (c. 1825) must have been better than those described by Owen, or the future explorer, a most purposeful youth, would not have troubled to attend it; and the benevolent employer did exist, as George Donald's story shows, (p.37).

However, Owen proposed to sweep away this makeshift provision, and to disregard the efforts of the home, which was likely to be bad. (Here again he was running counter to

the Scottish tradition.) He wished to remove the evil example of the old from before the young, and to shut out the contamination of their language and manners. To this end, children were received into his infant school, for a payment of 3d. per month, at one year, or as soon as they could walk. The teachers were never to threaten or beat a child, but were to instruct them by word and action how to make each other happy. Teaching followed the line of the child's curiosity, and was done in a classroom with pictures and maps on the walls. There was provision for play, and for lessons in singing, dancing and drill. After the age of ten, the boys and girls were employed in the mill, and continued their education at evening classes. The result was, it was claimed, a model factory population, "clean, healthy and sober," while the children exhibited "an unaffected grace and natural politeness which surprised and fascinated strangers." (Lloyd Jones, Times and Labours of Robert Owen.)

Points to notice in this revolutionary plan for a preparation for life are the disregard of the home, the absence of coercion and the emphasis on enjoyable activities or play. Small wonder that the religious objectors, whose real quarrel was with Owen's private beliefs, fastened on dancing, singing, drilling and the use of the Highland costume as "exceedingly improper."

10) The Work of Stow.

Some of Owen's ideas are present also in the work of David Stow, which began to take shape about 1824, after some years of Sabbath-school teaching. But Stow had the advantage, in promoting his reforms, that he shared the conventional religious background of those who might otherwise have been his critics. His desire to experiment in the day-school arose from dissatisfaction with Sunday-school work, and involved attracting the children away from bad or indifferent homes; but his acceptance of the necessity for this was

softened by his belief, which Owen did not share, in the home as the ideal centre of education.

"Let parents train their own children, it is said; we affirm the statement, with this addition -- at all times, on all occasions when they can, that is, when they are with them. But we have not a parentage at leisure for the continuous work. The keenness of commercial competition is drawing not only parents from their homes, but children from their play or school, into its insatiable vortex." And again, in the dialogues Granny and Leezie, by which he defended his theory and practice: "Infant Training Schools should be assistants for parents, and ought never to supersede their exertions at home."

Stow and Owen were in agreement, secondly, about the problem of discipline. Stow learned class-management the hard way, in voluntary classes of tough slum boys, and his conclusion was that "in gentleness, patience and reasoning there lay greater power than in the rod; he repudiated in the strongest way recourse to corporal punishment or expulsion." His methods were in keeping with the missionary impulse which lay behind his teaching, which sought to win over young hearts to righteousness, and regarded the Bible, not just as a lesson-book, but as the supreme authority.

Stow agreed with Owen, thirdly, about the importance of play and the need for an attractive curriculum. Wishing to reverse the training of the streets, he demanded not only schools but playgrounds, and in these playgrounds the teacher was to join in the pupils' games, and innovation which "Granny" found startling. In the first classes, the master explains to her, "the children use no books; but they are taught to read a little from the picture and printed boards, just as they are taught the meaning and use of many objects which they have not the opportunity of seeing at home... We use no catechism books at their early age."

11) The Work of Guthrie.

Even more potent than the play-way as a bait to attract the voluntary pupil was the provision of meals for the starving. With this work is associated the name of Thomas Guthrie, founder of the Edinburgh "ragged schools", a believer in the "allied powers of patience and porridge." Guthrie was not the first or the only social worker to hit upon this expedient. In Aberdeen, for example, in the terrible distress of the 'thirties and 'forties, Dr. John Kennedy organised beggar children into a School of Industry where 800 children received one meal a day along with their schooling. But Guthrie was a propagandist of outstanding gifts, who did as much as any man to bring home to the public conscience the shocking conditions in such districts as the Edinburgh Cowgate.

He too started with the advantage of conventional views on the sanctity of the home. His schools, he said rather harshly, in reply to criticisms, "were not intended for the children of decent parents." Guthrie was a man of practical ability, not a deep thinker; he had no theories about method, and in doing the task that came to his hand, his practice outran the social theories he believed himself to support. When at the end of his life he urged religious people to support the Education Bill of 1872 for the good that was in it, he was conscious that his own Ragged Schools had gone beyond any conception then current of the school as a centre of social welfare.

"Local Boards and ordinary teachers can never supply the place of those Christian men and women who, as directors, visitors, managers and teachers in our ragged schools are in loco parentis to those children -- orphans or worse than orphans." In recognising that a child must be fed before he can be taught, Guthrie and his friends opened the door

to the social services of today. Let the orphan girl speak his epitaph as she did at his funeral: "He was all the father I ever knew." (Memoir of Guthrie by his sons.)

12) Conclusions.

When we review these 19th century schools, we are impressed first by the extent to which private enterprise supplemented the official provision of Church or burgh. It cannot be said, however, that all this educational effort on the part of organised groups or of individuals resulted in an efficient system reaching the child population as a whole.

There were children who remained illiterate, and many more whose schooling was brief and inadequate. The more reputable elementary schools achieved their basic aim of literacy and Bible knowledge, but those who sought to pursue their education further had to pick their way amongst a confusion of schools, irregularly staffed, most of which were devoted to the traditional classical disciplines, but some of which professed a "modern" aim, not always clearly realised. "The outstanding characteristic of Scottish secondary education at the beginning of the 19th century," writes H.M. Knox, (op. cit. p. 37), "was a complete lack of direction. There was no uniformity or standard of aim."

These defects in the secondary schools hampered the work of Universities which were themselves struggling towards reform.

The most progressive work done in the schools of the period was accomplished by those who sought to improve the lot of the under-privileged child. Just as Montessori was later to work out methods for teaching normal children by studying the problem of the defective child, so the teachers who

descended into the inferno of the 19th century slums made discoveries there which were to bear fruit in the future for every child at school. Such pioneers as Owen, Stow and Guthrie recognised the problem of discipline, the difficulty of the relationship between home and school and between school and vocation, and the need for considering the physical well-being of the child. These men, all of whom were inspired amateurs rather than professional educators, took the theory and practice of education several steps farther along the road of progress; their work makes the daily routine of the schools of their day seem pedestrian and unimaginative indeed.

But before we attempt to evaluate the schools of 19th century Scotland, let us take a look at the children who learned and the teachers who imparted knowledge within their walls.

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CHAPTER FOUR.

School Children, Students and Teachers.

The school-child: a) the impression he made; b) the pupil's criticism of his schooling; c) life of the primary pupil; d) the "muckle scholar"; e) discipline; f) "the department of fun and fighting"; g) the school-child at play.

Student-life: a) living arrangements; b) student economics; c) character and attainments of the student.

The teacher: a) amateurs; b) professionals; c) financial rewards; d) social status; e) traditional virtues of the dominie.

Conclusion -- debits and credits.

## Chapter Four. School Children, Students and Teachers.

### 1) The school Child: a) The Impression he made.

We have now reviewed the diverse provision of schools in 19th. century Scotland, and have found an educational system with a hard core of tradition and a far-reaching fringe of experiment, expressing itself through a great diversity of schools. Before coming to conclusions, let us see how the pupil fared at these schools, and what he thought about it all.

On the casual observer the Scottish child made a good impression. This was true of Owen's model pupils at New Lanark, dressed alike in blue or grey, to impress an endless series of visitors; of Stow's Glasgow children travelling to Edinburgh to demonstrate the success of his methods; or merely of the boys and girls of a parish school facing up to their annual examination by the presbytery. Here traveller's tales help to fill out for us the details of a living picture.

Dorothy Wordsworth, for example, records in her "Recollections of a Tour in Scotland" that near Wanlockhead the party met "little boys on the road, all without shoes and stockings. ...They went to school and learned Latin, Virgil, and some of them Greek, Homer, but when Coleridge began to inquire further, off they ran, poor things! I suppose afraid of being examined." Indeed it was only prudent of the children to evade examination of their supposed knowledge of Greek, a neglected subject, as we have seen, even in the best schools of the time (1803). It is pleasant, however, to remember these Scottish pupils of long ago, standing up for their school and its curriculum, and not allowing it to lose in the telling. In Glasgow children hooted after the Wordsworth party, much as they might hoot after a similar troupe of exotic intellectuals today; and Dorothy noticed "a set of schoolboys with satchels over their shoulders, and, except

one or two, without shoes or stockings, yet very well dressed in jackets and trousers, like gentlemen's children."

At a much later date, about 1860, Alexander Smith visited a remote Highland school; here too the children were barefooted. For the benefit of the visitors, the master held an examination in Geography, for which, "six scholars, kilted, of various ages and sizes, but all shock-headed and ardent, were drawn up in line in front of the large map." A ruler was placed in the hand of a little fellow at the end, who, with his eyes fixed on the schoolmaster and his body bent forward eagerly, seemed as waiting the signal to start off in a race." Arithmetic and reading were also demonstrated by the six volunteers, who were, thought Smith, "the cream of the school."

This description, typical of many, shows Scottish education at its best and worst. The merit of the traditional type of school was the keenness it fostered in the pupil, and its properly serious attitude to serious subjects; but it "had the defect," as George Blake points out in Barrie and the Kailyard School, "of catering specially for the lad o' pairts only." Even within its limits, it catered only for those whose special ability was of a kind it recognised; those gifted in other ways must shift for themselves. These defects in the school system did not pass unnoticed at the time.

b) the pupil's criticism of his schooling.

Those who criticise the schooling they received during our period were usually those who were to develop along non-traditional lines. Thus Dr. Robert McNish looked back on his school years as a "dark season of drudgery and labour," lamenting the time spent on studies only (to him) secondarily useful. John Reid, another medical man, (b. 1809), had the same objection to classical learning, complaining that he was forced to learn the Latin language before he

had mastered his own; while his friend J.Y. Simpson, the star-pupil of a parish school (Bathgate) which was a model of its kind, rather surprisingly joined the critics of the old régime when, in a lecture of education (1867) he supported the claims of modern languages and natural science as rivals to the classics. As well as attacking the curriculum, he had the medicalist's objection to the long hours of study demanded by conventional schools. "Many," he remarked, "were spending more time on mental work than the government allowed in a factory" -- a criticism perhaps more apposite today than when it was uttered!

Fortunately, in view of the narrowness of the curriculum, escape was easier then than now for the boy who did not like what he was taught. A poor lad would simply be withdrawn; a child from the educated classes might devote himself to "the department of fun and fighting," as did Thomas Guthrie, (Breachin, c. 1815), or might absent himself in spirit from the distasteful proceedings. Thomas Stevenson, the gifted father of the novelist, did no work at Edinburgh High School (c. 1830). "It is an illustration," says Graham Balfour, "of how carelessly a class was then taught in spite of the many stripes." With a reaction which is characteristically Scottish, he despised teachers and all their works for the rest of his life. "Tutor was ever a by-word with him," his son recalls. "'Positively tutorial', he would say of people or manners he despised."

In the same spirit Hugh Miller expresses no regret for the classical education which, for one reason or another, he failed to complete (Cromarty c. 1810). "In that common-sense which reasons but does not argue, and which enables men to pick their stepping prudently through the journey of life, I found that the classical education gave no superiority whatever." The classical education, however, survived these attacks, retaining its prestige throughout

our period.

c) Life of the primary pupil.

A child is a happy creature; and, though not uncritical of what was set before him, the average Scottish pupil was contented enough. Even the humblest schools had their redeeming features. William Thom's description of the "wifie's squeel" in Aberdeen, where for a five-year old the weekly fee was three bawbees and a peat, but where infants too young to talk paid more because, paradoxically, they made the most noise, is not the work of a satisfied former pupil. ~~It~~ All the same, he is not unkind to the memory of "Elspet Gillespie's ragamuffin college," nor are his stock references to the "sunny scenes of infancy" entirely a literary decoration. He remembers the pupils emerging at the end of the week, each with a three-legged stool carried on the head, and of Candlemas day (c. 1805), when the poorest child had a clean pinafore, and when the teacher recognised the money-payment traditionally made her by a gift in return of sweeties and an orange to each child. (Recollections of a Hand-loom Weaver.)

At better schools, the pupil responded to the spirit of emulation which was in the air. There is an engaging complacency about this account of a Scottish schooling from Noir's Mansie Wauch: "I was sent to school where I learned to read and spell, making great progress with the Single and Mother's Carritch. No, what is more, few could fickle me in the Bible, being mostly able to spell it all over, save the second of Ezra and the seventh of Nehemiah, which the Dominie himself could never read through twice in the same way." Much higher in the social scale, J. Stuart Blackie records of his Aberdeen Schooldays (c. 1820) "a determination to be first, a burning shame of being beaten, I can recall as an early instinct in my breast, and ambitious, I have remained." (Notes of a Life.)

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All this accords well with the "spirit of push and promptitude" already noted by Clerk Maxwell's biographer. Without a will to learn on the part of the pupil, or at least the brightest pupil, the teacher's task would have been impossible. As it was, he struggled with large classes which in country schools were quite ungraded. Stow reckoned the arranging of classes according to age and attainment among his progressive ideas. As for the country dominie, he might arrange his pupils as he pleased; he had to teach them all.

d) The Muckle Scholar.

The teacher's work was further complicated by the re-entry into the schoolroom of boys of mature age who had decided to equip themselves for some calling with more education. In the Highlands in mid-century when, as a result of surveys made by the Church, the state of education was improved, "old men in some cases went to school to learn to read and write," and amusing instances occurred of rivalry between grand sire and grandson for places in class. (Norman Macleod, Reminiscences of a Highland Parish.) These were special circumstances. In any parish school, however, the presence of a grown lad or two in the schoolroom where beginners were also present, was not thought unusual. From our fifty life-stories we recall ~~Nystrup~~ <sup>Pollok</sup> and his brother who went back to school in their late 'teens, (c. 1815), to prepare for the University.

Often the muckle scholar's ambitions were of a humbler order. In Johnnie Gibb, Alexander describes two such pupils, lads equipped with a schooling which went as far as writing but stopped short of composition. ("It was not the mere writing that dismayed him, it was the composition -- fix foo to begin, and the backin (address).") Thus grounded,

the farm-servant who cherished an ambition to become a mole-catcher, went to Sandy Peterkin's side-school for a quarter, armed with "a slate, a pennywörth of long sheet paper, and two quills for pens, with a copy of Gray's arithmetic." He had a clear idea of what he wanted from the school -- arithmetic and writing for accounts, and maybe for land-mensuration. In view of these practical ambitions, he would resist firmly any offer of the more theoretical branches of knowledge: "It's nae for common fowk ava, that gremmer. Is't ony eese to the like o me, that geography? I wanna lickly be gyaun to forrin pairts...The like o me's nae needin to read like the minister, and it wad gar's loss a hantle o time fae the coontin."

The obscure and complicated task of the country teacher included not only the instruction of all-comers in the elements, not only the preparations of bright boys for the University, but also special problems in adult education such as the above. Even in good town schools, where the elements were not taught, the master still had to cope with large and unruly classes (sixty boys in the lower forms of Edinburgh Academy when Clerk Maxwell was a pupil in the 'forties.) We must bear this in mind as we approach the subject, in every way a painful one, of discipline.

e) Discipline.

Traditionally Scottish discipline was harsh. Cockburn, who went "with trembling" to Edinburgh High School in 1787, rather early for our period, makes this clear in his Memorials. "Out of four years there were probably not ten days on which I was not flogged at least once. I was driven stupid...nor did I ever fancy that Latin was of any use except to torture boys...Two of the masters in particular were so savage that any master doing now what they did every hour would certainly be transported." The effect of this "hated school" upon a clever and spirited lad might be

foreseen: "I doubt if I ever read a single book or even fifty pages voluntarily while I was at the High School."

Cockburn implies that time has changed all this, but forty years later in the schooldays of Thomas Stevenson (b. 1818) it is the same old story. Stevenson "had his education at a private school kept by a capable but very cruel man called Brown, and then at the High School of Edinburgh. Piper was his master, a fellow much given to thrashing." He reacted against this treatment by becoming what would nowadays be called an educational problem, refusing to learn the Latin which later became his favourite private reading. "My father's life and the truly formative parts of his education lay entirely in his hours of play." (R.L. Stevenson, A Family of Engineers.)

Such a tradition produces, if the rightness of the punishment is not accepted either at the time or afterwards, an attitude to authority which can colour whole lives, and indeed whole societies. We have heard what Thomas Stevenson thought of teachers. "It is good for boys," wrote R.L.S., not himself a victim of severe punishments, "to be violent and unruly and to hate all constituted authority, for it is of such boys that good citizens are made." Here we see the rebellion of the father coming out in the attitude, copied or inherited, of his son.

Country or town, famous school or obscure, the theme repeats itself. The new Annan Academy attended by Irving and Carlyle in the early years of the century is described by Dr. Whitley as "a place of wrath and tears." Alexander Somerville was savagely thrashed at a poor Berwickshire school in 1819, to the great distress of his family. But his father insisted that the boy must return to school: "If the laddie lives to be a man, he will need his education, and more of it than we can give him." So the luckless eight-year-old in his rags and patches returned to buy at the price of many beatings this priceless possession, an elementary

education. "I made but little progress in arithmetic or writing," he tells us in his autobiography, "either at this school or elsewhere, but in reading and catechising and in learning psalms and hymns, I may be said to have rushed up, ragged radical that I was, like a weed." One can but wonder whether this lad's progress would have been more even under a more humane regime, and whether he would have grown up without the scapegoat attitude which is part of his make-up .

The horrifying story told by J.M. Barrie in The Greenwood Hat of James Carlyle, a brother of the writer, illustrates violent resistance to barbarous authority. "My brother was school-inspecting at Ecclefechan when I first met James Carlyle in a comparatively talkative mood, and he said to me with a grand burr: You make a terrible to do nowadays about education by what was the case in my young days. One day when I was a nine-year-old, my teacher was hearing me say my catchers, and I said he believes instead of he believeth. He knocked me down, and pulled my lugs and banged me on the desks: I ran out and lay at the foot of the hedge among dockens and nettles for three whole days. -- Three whole days seems a long time for a nine-year-old, but they were queer ones the Carlyles." Whether it was James Carlyle who adorned this somewhat suspect anecdote or J.M.B. himself, one aspect of the Scottish tradition shines clearly through it.

For if harsh forms of discipline are good for boys, as their defenders contend, they do not seem to be good for Scots boys. Hugh Miller at sixteen (1816) ended his school-career in a wrestling match with the master which began in a dispute over spelling. "All I could do at this time was to take down my cap from off the pin, when the affair had ended, and march straight out of school." Young or old, the typical Scot is not designed by nature to profit from this kind of correction. William Sharp, arriving in the early

'sixties as an eight-year-old pupil at "what was then one of the chief boarding-schools in Scotland, Blair Lodge, in Polmont Woods," found himself at once embroiled in a school rebellion. "By natural instinct I was like the Irishman the moment he arrived in America, agin the government. I insulted a big boy...and forthwith experienced my first school thrashing...I ran away three times." (Elizabeth Sharp, Life of William Sharp.)

From the many references to the tawse which abound in reminiscences of the time, the present writer has been able to extract only one favourable comment. This comes from Thomas Guthrie, who at his private subscription school at Brechin had a teacher given to terrible explosions of temper, and unmerciful beatings of stupid boys. Guthrie himself, for a mood of true Scottish dourness, was "beaten black and blue on the skull with a ruler", and left school that day vowing never to return. But when he proposed to tell his father, his mother said, "You had better not; he will lick you next." Alone among the homes we have been studying, the Guthries had formal physical correction, deferred to an appointed hour. The "mental horrors" of this whipping are described.

Yet Guthrie, the good divine, writing in his old age, comments only, "We were brought up hardier louns than the present generation, and did not get on any the worse in life for that." A corresponding study of English life in the 19th century would bring to light far more reasoned defences of the practice of corporal punishment, from pedagogue and parent alike.

In Scotland, the Noes have it. The Scottish child, true to his independent race, objected strongly to the beatings which were part of his schooling, and many a child carried the scars on his personality into manhood. Parents and adult onlookers also condemned this practice. John Younger, the St. Boswell's cobbler, gives a plain man's view in

condemning beating and coercion because, "a slave can get acted only a slavish part." Ironically enough, the factory offspring of New Lanark and Stow's slum-children in the Brygate of Glasgow were under modern discipline, with physical violence forbidden, at dates when the sons of gentlemen still took their daily dose of the stick.

This topic has been discussed at some length because it seems to show up a radical weakness in the traditional education of the time. The classical training cannot have been a living thing in the hands of those who found so much violence necessary; the teacher who relied so constantly upon anger and force cannot have been properly adjusted to his job. As we propose to show later, the Scottish home of the time was a much gentler and more humane place than the school, while remaining a source of enlightenment and moral training. Here, surely, there is food for thought.

f) The "department of fun and fighting."

On the other hand, it would be unjustifiable to fly to an extreme of compassion for the hapless schoolboy's lot. School was a rough place, and the boys were as cruel to each other as was the harshest master to the dullest pupil. Here again Cockburn sets the scene for us in his description of Edinburgh High School around 1790: "The general tone of the school was vulgar and harsh. Among the boys coarseness of language and manners was the only fashion. An English boy was so rare that his accent was openly laughed at. No lady could be seen within the walls. Nothing evidently civilised was safe." Cockburn's is the most sweeping condemnation of Scottish education to be found in the annals of the times, nor were there in his case the personal reasons for dislike of his schoolfellows for which allowances must be made when we read Carlyle's account of his Annan schooldays, and of bullying by "coarse unguided tyrannous cubs." Young Carlyle

was a prickly outlander from Ecclefechan, and no schoolboy in any generation has much tolerance of eccentricity.

But the modern schoolboy in persecuting the exceptional is restrained by certain codes and sanctions. No law human or divine restrained the 19th century boy in the hours of recreation which saw him released from the bondage of a narrow curriculum enforced by a harsh discipline. The fighting games of the time were all very well for the healthy and equable Thomas Guthrie, who describes his boyish ambition to be "the best fighter" as an outcome of the martial spirit of the Napoleonic wars. In the account which Alexander Somerville gives us of the game of "soldiers and radicals" played by the boys of the next decade (c. 1820), we see these manly sports from the victim's point of view. Cast by nature and circumstance for the radical's part, the poor boy had his wretched garments torn to ribbons by the "soldiers", who were well-dressed farmers' sons, until rescued from the violence of schoolfellows and teachers by neighbouring weavers, his natural allies. (Autobiography of a Working Man.)

Somerville's queer clothes, over the mending of which his mother shed tears, were the result of poverty; but the outlandish garments and uncouth home-made shoes in which Clerk Maxwell went to Edinburgh Academy in 1841 were chosen by an eccentric well-to-do father. Maxwell had also a broad rural accent, acquired on his father's estate at Penicuik. In his case too, the other boys took the shortest way of dealing with the exceptional: Maxwell returned from his first day at school with clothes in rags, and the nickname "Dafty", which stuck to him for years. His biographers, (Campbell and Garnett) tell us that "he took no pains to get rid of it", but wandered alone in the playground, amusing himself with bumble-bees, or climbing the few town trees. Another boy with an odd home background was William Bell Scott, whose parents were religious fanatics. Practically

all that he tells us in his autobiography of his schooldays at Edinburgh High School (c. 1820) is that on his first day there he was in a fight and lost it.

School was really no place for a sensitive child. John Nichol, privately schooled in the 'forties, comments, "My associations with the playground are mostly painful." while of a stay as a boarder with the schoolmaster of Kelso he writes, "There is no limit to the torment which may be inflicted upon a sensitive child in a small boarding-school." Or in a larger boarding-school either, we are tempted to add, when we recall Andrew Lang's description of the bullying practised by boys of Edinburgh Academy in the 'fifties. "Tall stools were piled up in a pyramid, and the victim was seated on the top, near the roof of the room. The other savages brought him down from this bad eminence by hurling other stools at those which supported him." Another pastime was knife-throwing through the fingers of smaller boys. (Green, Life of Andrew Lang.)

g) The school-child at play.

Obviously when these things could happen there was little or no supervision of the recreation hours, and no outlet for youthful barbarism through strenuous sports. The punishments so easily incurred for minor scholastic lapses seem scarcely ever to have applied to the wildest enormities of the playground. At the co-educational schools, such as those attended at Dunfermline by Jemima Beveridge or at Haddington by Jane Carlyle, a certain natural restraint must have operated, or girls from good homes could not have been permitted to attend. Various harmless tomboyish exploits are recorded by Jane's biographers, but nowhere is it suggested that girl pupils were not respected by their male playmates. A story from Barrie's time at Dumfries Academy strikes a softer note: the girls "took a plebiscite about which boy had the sweetest smile," and Barrie won; but this was later,

about 1873. (J.M. Barrie, The Greenwood Hat.)

Only upon the experimental minds of Owen and Stow had it dawned in Scotland that play has an educational value. Owen's school had rooms set apart for play and recreative lessons such as drill and dancing, while Stow's teachers joined in playground games. To conventional people it still seemed a virtue to hold aloof from play. The eulogistic biographer of Stow himself, the Rev. William Fraser, notes with pride that his hero "rarely joined in the more boisterous games of the playground"; and no contemporary account of Livingstone would dream of criticising his habit of spending his scanty leisure in solitary walks devoted to studying the botany and geology of the countryside.

Meanwhile by more gregarious mortals the traditional school customs of the old Scotland were still observed; Cock-fighting on Fastern's Ben, for example, as described by Hoir in Mansie Wauch: "The victor, as he was called, treated the other scholars to a football. Many a dust I have seen rise out of the business -- broken shins and broken heads, sore bones and sound duckings." The custom of Candlemas gifts practised at William Thom's dame-school in the early years of the century was still kept up at a Highland school attended by Neil Munro in the 'seventies, though the cock-fighting had gone. The dominie received a gift of money, while the pupils got from him a present of money and a "scatter" of sweets. (The Brave Days.)

The school playground was close both geographically and in spirit to the community which surrounded it. George Macdonald describes Aberdeen Grammar School in Robert Falconer: "If that academy had no sweetly shadowing trees, beyond still was the sea and the sky; and that court, morning and afternoon, was filled with the shouts of eager boys, kicking the football with mad rushings to and fro, and sometimes with wounds and faintings."

Hugh Miller tells of a school-life still better integrated with its surroundings. From the windows of the grammar school of Cromarty, (attended by 120 boys and 30 lassies), the pupils could study the slaughter-yard, the shipping, the fish-curing and so on, and might sally forth, by permission of the dominie, to fight the Highland boatmen for the school perquisite of peat. Cock-fighting was still practised at Cromarty (before 1820), and boys used to assist at pig-sticking, though Hugh disliked both these diversions. Right at the end of our period, we read in the life of Patrick Geddes, (Boardman), of the great snow-battles on the Inches of Perth, and of boyish pranks upon the citizenry, some pretty daring, on which the comment is made, "If he had been less lucky or the police smarter, he would certainly have been sent to the reformatory and there educated as a professional criminal."

It is significant that Geddes was quite easily diverted from his questionable pastimes by an introduction (at home) to "the new and frightful joys of experimental chemistry." Some of the roughness of the playground was due to the failure of the curriculum to absorb the energies either of exceptional minds or of the ordinary non-academic temperament. Many diversions practised by quite normal boys a century ago would set them apart today for special study as juvenile delinquents. At the time the community gave special indulgence to the schoolboy, similar to that still claimed by University students today; though in the modern world even student escapades are less readily excused by the non-academic majority.

2) Student Life: a) living arrangements.

If the recreations of the 19th century schoolboy were uncontrolled by authority, when he came to be a student at a Scottish University his whole life was characterised by a

freedom which amounted to anarchy. J.G. Robertson, writing in the Cambridge History of English Literature, describes the Universities of the time as "veritable bear-gardens where the youth of the land drawn from every rank were let loose to browse as they listed." Here the class-distinctions which earlier educational stages recognised had no longer any official existence; the modest fees once paid, all attended the same lectures and learned from them as best they could. But it was only natural that the students should arrange themselves in groups, sometimes, one suspects, exclusive groups. There was no "corporate life" to break down barriers. At Glasgow in 1805, when Lockhart had just matriculated at the age of twelve, "Lockhart, Rainy and Cooper had determined to keep their bench sacred to the sons of the ministry. On finding that Master Smith's father was a minister, Master Rainy received him with open arms, and the bench retained its unbroken character." (Andrew Lang, Life of Lockhart.)

More commonly, the country boys kept together with others from their district. In view of the tender years of many students, it was natural that older boys should take younger fellow-townsmen under their wing. A boy who had been at the University for a year or two could cut quite a figure in his home town: Irving at eighteen on a visit to Annan Academy dazzled the young Carlyle with his fine manly appearance and stylish costume, (1810). In the same way, J.Y. Simpson, still a pupil at Bathgate parish school, was awestruck by the change in John Reid, who preceded him by two years at the University (c. 1825): "for the rough country schoolboy who had left us two short months before had become suddenly changed into a sharpish college student, wearing an actual long-tailed coat and sporting a small cane." (Duns, Life.)

At Edinburgh, Simpson lodged with Reid and Macarthur, formerly an assistant teacher at Bathgate, now a student of medicine. Similar arrangements were common; for example, Davidson, (the Scottish Probationer), a student at Edinburgh in the 'fifties, shared lodgings with his former teacher and friend, Scott, who was a few years his senior, and was now attending Moray House Training School. Sometimes a family group formed the unit. Sharing lodgings in Aberdeen in 1861, there were of the Smith family two brothers and a sister aged 14, 15 and 17; later a second sister joined them. The elder sister, Mary Jane, was sent to the city to study music and other subjects, and to mother the boys. (Black and Chrystal, Life of W. Robertson Smith.)

These family or village groupings must have led to a certain clannishness, but they were the only protection which students who were still, after all, only children, had against the hazards of independence in unaccustomed urban surroundings. Guthrie in his autobiography, after describing a few student escapades, remarks that the University should have a roll of lodging-houses, and adds cautiously, "My father was prudent enough to keep me very short of money." Shortage of cash is a great aid to virtue and industry; this truth was recognised even in prosperous households. Simpson was a most economical student, though his father's business was prospering by the time he attended the University; and R.L. Stevenson up to the age of 23 was allowed only £12 a year.

Singly or in groups, the students made their way to the University cities and found lodgings of the most modest kind near the college. Hard-up students commonly lodged in slums, and in those days slums were slums indeed. Norman Macleod vividly describes in his Reminiscences the surroundings of the old College of Glasgow:

"There is still the same old gate in the dingy yet solemn-looking walls, entering into the quiet courts out of the bustle of the High Street, with its filthy crowds of squalid men and women, its ragged children and besotted drunken creatures with their idiotic looks, and whatever else combine to give it a look of vice and poverty unsurpassed by any street in Europe."

b) Student economics.

Once installed, the student's mode of life was austere and simple. A bursary of £10 or £12 would cover the fees and some of the expenses of a five-months' winter session. Norman Macleod, a student at Glasgow in the 'twenties, reckoned a session's total expenses, including some new clothes, at £25 to £30; no doubt many a poor lad managed on far less. Lodgings, we are told by Guthrie, who went to Edinburgh University about 1815, cost five or six shillings a week; for this the landlady provided a diet of porridge, herring and potatoes. The poorest students rented accommodation only, and brought their food from home.

Guthrie has a horrifying story of a poor fellow who tried to live in slum lodgings on cold-water brose, his sole resource the meal kist, into which, with Scottish pride, he allowed no one to look. This experiment in the simple life ended in madness. More cheerful tales are told by Macleod of the expedients by which Highland students made ends meet, helped by the kindness of Gaelic-speaking servant-lasses, and the gifts of seafaring kinsfolk -- the clan spirit again. But he too remembers a tragedy -- that of the poor student from Lismore, "an excellent scholar and very superior in every way."

This Highland student's Glasgow home is described as "a small apartment at the back of a place where they baked oatcakes. It was a very small room, containing a bed, a

small table and stool, but without any fireplace. Here he contracted disease of the lungs, of which he soon after died." Macleod recounts the attempts made by fellow-Highlanders in slightly better circumstances to assist their starving friend without wounding his pride, recalling a touching attempt made by the man from Lismore to return hospitality by a treat of halfpenny rolls -- "handing me one, he took the other greedily himself." The closing sentence of Macleod's story might serve as epitaph for many a luckless youth: "In the course of a year I visited his grave on the Island of Lismore, meditating with mournful reflection on the struggle that this most promising young man had made to obtain education enough to become a minister of the gospel." (Reminiscences.)

In this Spartan atmosphere the student who was not in danger of starving still ran the risk of undermining his health by overwork, an obsession more prevalent then than now. Stevenson in Memoirs and Portraits describes various such tragedies, adding, "I am sorry indeed that I have no Greek, but I should be sorrier still if I were dead, nor do I know the name of that branch of knowledge which is worth acquiring at the price of a brain-fever."

In the annals of the Smith family, we read of the appalling toll taken by disease amongst Aberdeen students in the severe winter 1863-4. Too many of these northern students were in the words of the student song, "attempting six men's cramming on a mean and scanty fare." Of the four Smiths who studied at Aberdeen together, (Mary Jane not, of course, at the University), two died of rapid consumption, and the brilliant survivor, William Robertson Smith, suffered from spinal tuberculosis throughout his life. It was nobody's business to prevent ardent adolescents from overtaxing their strength. "Alas, poor fellow," said Professor Bain of George Smith, "his bodily frame is not equal to the indwelling mind." But neither family nor faculty intervened in the

meteoric career of this outstanding scholar, who left Aberdeen in April 1866, with every honour his University could confer, and was dead before the end of the month. (Black & Chrystal, Life of William Robertson Smith.)

c) Character and attainments of the student.

In assessing the standard achieved by these Scottish students, it would be misleading to dwell too much upon the Smiths, who had exceptional minds exceptionally well-trained. Blackie describes the Aberdeen student body as consisting of "juvenile and pedantic raw country lads and little boys escaped from school." He nowhere suggests that their exceptional earnestness went hand-in-hand with exceptional proficiency. The standard could not, <sup>but</sup> be uneven when, as we have seen, the schools which prepared boys for the University were such a varied assortment.

Many country-bred lads besides Reid and Simpson, the bright boys from Bathgate, made the humbling discovery that their preparation did not fit them to compete with "the quickness and ready precision in class-work which distinguished city-bred and city-educated boys." (Duns, Life of J.Y. Simpson.) The student's efforts to remedy his deficiencies made for a prevailing atmosphere of hard work and gloom rather than for liberal enlightenment. Blackie complained that Scottish students were too poor to buy books. "They are not a singing generation, poor devils! and have no jollity in their souls." Meanwhile his friend Robert Buchanan discouraged his efforts to mitigate the Calvinistic austerities of student life: "You are flinging pearls before swine to write songs for Scottish students. They are a meagre hard-working generation, who will grind their nose down to any amount of grammar, and thrust their eyes into any amount of theological thorns, but they do not sing."

Life was discouraging for Blackie: his Greek translations and other works of scholarship had no sale. "It was as unnatural for a fine lady to take the fashion of her dress from Kirkwall instead of Paris, as for an English Hellenist to look for any scholarly enlightenment from a professor in a Scottish University." This was the professor's point of view; for the ambitious student the deduction was obvious. Clerk Maxwell's biographers (Campbell & Garnett) regard his three years at Edinburgh University as "not unfruitful", but regret that he did not go to Cambridge at least one year earlier. "He suffered less from isolation than most human beings, yet the freedom of working by himself during the summer months had manifestly some drawbacks." Mental isolation became a habit with Maxwell; of his short spell as an Aberdeen professor we are told, "Between his students' ignorance and his vast knowledge it was difficult to find a common measure."

In fact, for a Scotsman whose potentialities were of the highest order and whose means permitted, the wisest course was to seek contact as early as possible with educational institutions which enjoyed a more benign climate. Andrew Lang who studied in the 'sixties at both St Andrews and Glasgow, supplemented his teaching by reading Greek with a Loretto master fresh from Cambridge. Especially in the humanities, the southward path was still as clearly marked for the brilliant boy as it had been in 1809, when Lockhart went to Balliol in "a round schoolboy's jacket."

3) The Teacher: a) amateurs.

From the student to the teacher is but a step. Tutoring or school-teaching was the recognised expedient for filling in the gaps and delays which beset a 19th century professional career. Sometimes the student failed to achieve his ambition of becoming a minister, doctor or lawyer, and remained a teacher. Sometimes a teacher tired of the class-

room and took up some other occupation, like Mr. Scudmyloof, master of the grammar school in Galt's Provost, who applied for a place as a gauger. How many teachers chose the school as their life-work with no thought of another calling cannot be estimated, but until the training system gathered strength in the latter half of the century they must have been few. Guthrie sums it up in his anecdote of the old Scotsman who brought to the dominie a not very promising "halflin". Asked what he proposed to make of the boy, the worthy replied, "If he gets grace, we'll make a minister o him. If he disna get grace, we'll just mak a dominie o him."

Guthrie himself, writing his autobiography in 1872, looks back to the days of his youth with regret. He thinks it a pity that boys of good family are now sent to boarding-school instead of being tutored at home by divinity students who could learn much from a sojourn in a polite home. (As an alternative method of acquiring social polish, Guthrie surprisingly quotes the kind old Divinity professor, who made a money present to an uncouth but promising student, with the advice: "You will be much the better of a quarter at the dancing.") To regard tutorial employment principally as a convenience for students seems like putting the cart before the horse; yet it is so that Carlyle's biographers tend to regard his sojourn with the Buller family. Certainly the philosopher from Ecclefechan must have been one of the oddest private tutors ever engaged. On his work here and in schools he himself comments that he had "no wish to teach and little aptitude."

The student-tutors must have been a mixed bunch. No favourable report survives of the tutors who "cast a gloom" over Thomas Stevenson's boyhood, while his favourite epithet, "positively tutorial" rings in the memory. On the tutor who pulled nine-year-old Clerk Maxwell's ears and reported him "slow at learning", Campbell and Garnett comment: "He was probably

probably a raw lad who, having been drilled by harsh methods, had no conception of any other, and had failed to present the Latin grammar in such a way as to interest the pupil." This episode is blamed for a hesitation in manner which afflicted Maxwell throughout his school life.

The extensive employment of tutors continued, less because it was a good system, than because of mutual convenience. Parents in outlying districts were glad to engage "a good tutor...a student lately down from college", as Norman Macleod puts it; while the student welcomed the chance to make a little money. The job was not a specially good one, if we take as typical the description of a tutor's life given by George Macdonald in David Elginbrod. "The laird's family consisted only of two boys, of the ages of eleven and fourteen, to whom he was giving a classical and mathematical education, in view of the University, by means of private tutors -- the changes were not few, seeing the salary was of the smallest."

Those who continued to give private tuition in their maturity were probably not numbered among life's successes. William Bell Scott used as a boy to visit his father's business where "the book-keeper of the establishment, the mildest snuff-coloured old creature, having been a stickit minister," was able to coach children in Latin.

Students also undertook school-teaching, as we have seen, while waiting for something to turn up. Edward Pinkerton (b. 1798), and, a decade or so later, Simpson's friend Macarthur, took up teaching to fill up gaps in a medical training, while in Johnnie Gibb "Sandy Peterkin" was a stickit doctor. Most temporary teachers, however, hoped to become ministers. Such was Thomas Davidson (b. 1838), who taught at Forres, and did not live to receive his "call". Irving was a good teacher with original ideas, but neither he nor his friends meant to stay on at the job.

George Macdonald, in temporary financial difficulties during his University course, taught arithmetic "with great spirit and skill" at an Aberdeen school. But professional standards are not founded on the sporadic efforts of brilliant amateurs, and many of the casual teachers of the time measured up to no standard at all.

b) Professionals.

By contrast, the teachers recruited by Robert Owen to staff his schools would not have the high standard of scholarship which was the redeeming feature of the ragged regiment we have been describing. Owen followed the practical methods of Lancaster and Bell, though his theory far outran their utilitarian views. His teachers, it is important to notice, belonged to a nation-wide rather than a peculiarly Scottish tradition; they were part of the movement for popular education which gathered strength as the century went on, and which tackled a far more grievous deficiency of schools in the south. One of Owen's teachers, as early as the 'twenties, was seconded to help in a London school founded by Henry Brougham, who himself founded his career as a protagonist of popular education upon ideas absorbed during a Scottish youth.

In the same way, Stow's work in teacher-training and in the exploration of method in the primary school, where his work was parallel to that of Wilderspin in England, is part of a national pattern. A gradual extension of government grants in aid of education preceded in both England and Scotland the establishment of a compulsory system. From 1835 onwards, money was allocated by Parliament, at first grudgingly, later on a more generous scale, for training the teachers who would obviously be needed in considerable numbers once compulsory elementary education for all became a reality. In this context, the training of teachers was regarded as an ad hoc process, which had nothing to do with the

liberal culture of the Universities. To this day, well-informed people south of the border are surprised to find that in Scotland graduates teach in public elementary schools.

In Scotland, however, there was, as we have seen (p.51) an ample, indeed an excessive supply of University men who were potential teachers; and thus a happy compromise between the two traditions -- the academic tradition, whereby the well-educated teacher was insufficiently trained for his work, and the training-college tradition, in which for a time the pupil-teacher system played a part -- combined to staff the schools with trained teachers, a high proportion of whom were graduates. The divorce, social and practical, between the University and the training college has never been complete in Scotland; and it is to be hoped that ~~as~~ if the proportion of graduates in the teaching profession falls, new means will be devised of drawing the ranks of the teachers together into a united body.

Before state-aided popular education made the teacher an important figure and improved his pay and prospects, too many of those who made the schools their life-work suffered from the stigma of being "stickit." Alexander comments drily of Dominie Tawse in Johnnie Gibb, "I don't think the church lost much." The characteristics of the dominie as he appears in contemporary description are those of disappointed men. (By contrast, the new non-University type of teacher, working with pioneers such as Stow, no doubt felt a sense of vocation and fulfilled ambition.) Feelings of frustration in the traditional teacher account for some of the violent punishments we have deplored, and also for a certain pretentiousness.

For example, William Bell Scott in his autobiography

describes a teacher breakfasting with his (Scott's) uncle, a Stirlingshire minister: "A pompous man he was beside the modest minister, who allowed him with a gentle smile to outshine in long words and figures of speech." It is never an easy experience to be relegated, perhaps unjustly, among the failures. Norman Macleod assigns to the typical rural schoolmaster a slightly soured disposition: "He had missed a church for want of a patron, and, it must be acknowledged, for want of the gift of preaching, which he bitterly termed the gift of the gab."

### c) Financial rewards.

At the beginning of the 19th century the rewards of teaching were not great, and the teacher's finances improved only slowly as the century went on. Christison in the Edinburgh Review of 1802 exposes the "wretched income of some established teachers, particularly parish schoolmasters," many of whom, he claims, "do not earn half so much as a journeyman mason." He says that the average of 427 parishes is £23, and that one dominie is receiving only £6.18.6. (This was basic salary, excluding fees and perquisites.) The Schoolmaster's Act of 1803 compelled heritors to build houses for schoolmasters, but prescribed that the house need not contain more than two rooms and kitchen. On this Cockburn comments in his Memorials, "But Hope told me that he had considerable difficulty in getting even the two rooms, and that a great majority of the lairds and Scotch members were indignant at being obliged to erect palaces for dominies."

Norman Macleod, remembering a Highland parish at about 1820, thus computes the income of a teacher who had 20-60 elementary pupils, plus two or three studying Latin and mathematics: £15 as schoolmaster, £5 in fees, £7 as postmaster, £1 as session clerk, £1 as leader of psalmody, £1 as catechist -- total, £34, with house and garden.

Against the simple mode of life enjoined by these modest finances, we must balance the social importance in the community enjoyed by the holder of all these offices.

If the means of an established teacher were straitened, the private teachers in a humble way eked out an existence of real penury, and indeed usually took up teaching only because illness or disability unfitted them for a trade. The schoolmistress relatives of William Ross (b. 1803) could not on the proceeds of their little school give this talented lad the most modest start in life. Another who died in poverty was the genteel Miss Elizabeth Bond, schoolmistress at Fortrose, who in 1808 was writing not uncheerfully to Sir Walter Scott, "About a month ago a Lady, well pleased with the progress her daughters are making under my tuition, sent an offering of Meal and gweed strong ale, and, to crown all, the perusal of Scott's Minstrelsy." This popularity waned after the publication of an indiscreet "fictional" portrait of Fortrose and its inhabitants; Miss Bond removed perforce to Cromarty, where Hugh Miller knew her. He describes her, (My Schools and Schoolmasters), as poor but proud. "She refused £10 because the wolf had not yet come to the door. Poor lady! I suspect he came to the door at last."

d) social status.

In these circumstances, the social status of the teacher could not be high. Mrs Oliphant writes of Irving at Haddington: "The humble position of dominie did not give him a very high place in the social scale." In her novel Lilliesleaf, she repeats this estimate of the teacher's standing: "Will you tell me there is nothing better than learning bairns their lessons that a man in this world can do?" This view was shared by Robert Pollok who, in 1823, being then a probationer of the Church, was offered a school at Coupar Angus: "I did debate whether or not to take the school,

but my health, my inclination and an ardent desire to attempt something, spoke loudly against it."

In 1816 a correspondent of Mrs Grant of Laggan was enjoying the social life of Forres in the company of "three clever young men" who read books and periodicals. "One is the doctor, the other, I think, a young preacher, and the third, though nature meant him for something very superior, condescends to teach a school." Still, Mrs Grant concedes a certain standing to the teacher where his culture justifies it. To a description of the society in Dunblane she adds, "In such a humble aristocracy I should have included the schoolmaster, who is a man of letters, and the collector."

On the whole, young men of talent felt lonely and misplaced in the schoolroom, and thought mostly of escape. "There is no room for imagination in teaching," wrote Davidson in 1859 from Forres, where he was teaching in the Academy, and tutoring boarders in the Rector's house. "You must only speak of things that are as material and plain and palpable as the proverbial pike-staff, or rather the penitential strap...A man's always in harness; he can never lay aside the pedagogue." Carlyle too, in his Reminiscences, complains of social isolation during his teaching years, though some of this must have been due to his personality. He describes the diverse after-careers of his teacher-friends: Douglas became a Radical editor, Brown a minister in India, Piers a professor or preacher at the Cape of Good Hope. "In the space of two years we had all got tired of school-mastering and its mean contradictions and poor results."

One of the "mean contradictions" which discouraged Carlyle and his friends was, as we have seen, the capricious control of the new secondary schools by groups of burghers. If the teacher of a subscription school was at the mercy of the whims of the citizenry, the parish schoolmaster was

subservient to the minister; and the Church tried hard to retain control over teachers in other schools as well. This is clearly illustrated at the time of the Disruption. At Campbeltown Grammar School, for example, the burgh schoolmaster was deposed in 1843 for joining the Free Church; and similar action was taken against two masters at Elgin Academy in 1850. Eventually such attempts at interference had to be controlled by legislation, in the Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters' Act of 1861. (H.M. Knox, op. cit. p. 42.)

Sometimes it was political rather than religious persecution which afflicted the teacher. Cockburn describes the famous Dr Adam of Edinburgh High School as "watched and traduced" for alleged republican views, and writes of the later election of James Pillans to the rectorship of the same school, "It seemed hopeless, but he tried, and his character carried him through. His superiority to the other candidates was never doubted; but the black spot of Whiggism was upon him." Between the upper and nether millstones of religion and politics, wretchedly paid and little regarded in society, the teacher's lot was not a happy one.

e) traditional virtues of the dominie.

Contending with all these difficulties, the schoolmasters who stayed the course had in common certain Spartan virtues. Dr Adam, just mentioned, influenced a generation of notable Scotsmen, "not only by his fabulous stores of Latinity, but by the excellent example he set them of industry and hard work. He spent his life for the school," writes Henderson in his Life of Erskine of Linlathen, "and in his death-struggles raved about it." A similar portrait is drawn of old Adam Hope, the schoolmaster of Annan, immortalised by his pupil Carlyle; "What he did profess or imagine himself to know he knew in every fibre and to the very bottom." Carlyle finds his tradition embodied in a whole generation of Annanites.

Too much can be made of the standard of scholarship, in the broad sense, set by these traditional schoolmasters. To find a mind deeply imbued with the spirit of the classics we must go to men like Andrew Lang who were not solely the product of Scottish education. The average product of the Scottish school, as exemplified, say, by the sermons of 19th century Scottish divines, does not display a wide culture, making few references to the ancient languages on which so many youthful hours had been spent. A similar criticism might be made of the Bible-teaching of the old schools, a thing more of the letter than the spirit. What the good teacher actually instilled was a habit of hard work, accuracy and clearness of thought and expression -- qualities which can be applied in many walks of life.

Of the parish schoolmaster, who was the average man of the profession, more skilful and better qualified than the amateur teacher of the side-school, less specialised and of humbler status than the grammar-school master, Norman Macleod in his Reminiscences gives a fair assessment: He concedes that the typical dominie had "no long-spun theories about education, nor ever tried his hand at adjusting the fine mechanism of boys' motives. His strength was in teaching the elements and in forming habits of industry. "He hated all shams, and placed little value on what was acquired without labour." Macleod concludes his summing-up with the following tribute: "Take them all in all, they were a singular body of men, their humble homes, poor salaries and hard work presenting a remarkable contrast to their manners, abilities and literary culture. Scotland owed to them a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid."

#### 4) Conclusion -- debits and credits.

It would be pleasant to take leave of the schools of 19th century Scotland on this note of praise. The merits of the traditional Scottish education have often been stressed: it was cheap, democratic and well diffused over the whole country, with the exception of very remote districts and new industrial areas. It conserved the traditional values, religion and the humanities, enabling the ordinary folk of Scotland to rise above straitened material circumstances by means of cultural pursuits and intellectual interests, and at the same time helping the clever lad whose strength lay in the accepted disciplines -- classics, mathematics, divinity -- to achieve a professional career.

Unfortunately there are certain items on the debit side of the account. The schools, which varied in efficiency, did not reach all the children, despite the efforts of those who combated with educational weapons the bad social conditions of industrialism, working out as they did so the most progressive teaching methods and basic principles of their day. The conventional educator took little thought for the physical and material welfare of the pupil, which was not held to be the concern of any outsider; here again a few pioneers sought to change things, from motives religious, charitable or humanitarian. The extreme example of this lack of concern for material welfare is the living conditions of the 19th century University student.

Lastly, the typical educator of the time was no psychologist. His disciplinary methods were crude, nor did he seek to fan the spark of interest in the backward, or indeed in the average pupil. The child whose talents lay in some new direction, away from the accepted subjects, was likely

to pass through the school without any recognition of his abilities.

This was a system which encouraged self-reliance, and maintained what was good in accepted values. It had, however, the defects of these qualities: a tendency to do less than justice to the weak or unfortunate individual, and a certain resistance to change. That the system worked so well, and produced so many worthy citizens, is a tribute to those who made intelligent use of it, the ordinary Scottish pupils and parents. In exploring the course of the Scottish tradition in education, we must therefore look beyond the school to the home, on which the onus was conventionally laid. Here, as we shall see in the following chapters, parental influence and personal effort were potent forces for good.

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## CHAPTER FIVE.

### Home Education.

The early years;-- sacred and secular, a compromise; -- home teaching of the elements -- the home as the source of moral training -- the child-centred home -- the home as schoolroom -- spare-time studies -- a complete home education -- parental criticism of schools -- the influence of the mother -- the influence of the father -- the influence of the family group -- a humane family atmosphere --conclusions.

1) The Early Years.

Education begins at birth. This fact, a discovery of philosophers such as Froebel or Freud, has always been instinctively recognised by mothers everywhere. So it was in the Scotland of the early 19th century. For the minister examining the parish school, education might begin with the catechism; for the grammarian, with the "rudiments": in the home the intuitive wisdom of the unlearned began laying the foundations of education from the early weeks of life.

A working mother in our period gave articulate expression to the truth about the earliest years. Janet Hamilton, the self-taught Lanarkshire writer, in her essay on The Mental Training of Children, expressed the modern view that the first influence in life is the mother's handling of her baby. She urged the mother to stay in the home, working at a cottage industry, or simply practising economy, rather than go out to the factory. The poor mother, she argued, had no substitute such as tutor or governess to whom to delegate her duties; she must therefore, all the more, have a deep sense of the important trust committed to her. Mrs Hamilton's advice was practical, based on what she had learned in teaching her own ten children. The baby should be fed sensibly, and should learn right and wrong from the very beginning. (Don't, for example, let the younger take the elder child's toys, or the latter will feel "a rankling sense of injustice.") Early religious teaching should never invoke superstition or fear.

The problems encountered in rearing young children do not change so very much from one generation to another, and sensible women will come to much the same conclusions in any age. This accounts for the surprisingly modern ring

of much that Mrs. Hamilton has to say. The working mother, the child's place in the family -- these topics for discussion have, it seems always been with us. Her precepts incline more heavily than those of today on the side of serious and conscious moral training; but Janet Hamilton was herself the product of a typical God-fearing Scottish home. In that home the mother, who taught her to read, did not approve of poetry, novels, or any non-religious reading; but the grannie taught the children old Scots ballads, which Mrs Hamilton could still recite in her own old age. These two strands, the sacred and the secular, typically intertwine to make the Scottish nursery tradition.

## 2) Sacred and secular -- a compromise.

Seemingly irreconcilable elements had been subsisting side by side in the Scottish national consciousness ever since the Reformation. Of the childhood of Lady Nairne (b. 1766), Masson remarks, "The laird of Gask had those liberal and anti-morose views of education which belonged especially to Scottish non-juring or Episcopalian families. A wide range of reading was permitted to the boys and girls; dancing, especially reel-dancing, was incessant among them -- at home, in the houses of neighbouring lairds or at county balls; in music, especially in Scottish song, they were all expert, so that the rumour of a coming visit of Neil Gow and his violin to Strathearn with the prospect it brought them of a week extraordinary of combined music and reel-dancing, would set them all madly astir."

Whatever the influence of Calvinism, this tradition has remained strong in Scotland; the Scots are still great dancers, devoting more time to this pastime than their southern neighbours, and still great lovers of folk-music for dancing. At a humbler level than Lady Nairne's, the same spirit was expressed in the hedonistic philosophy of Burns, whose influence

upon the Scottish mind has been greater than that of any other individual. Many a song of his breathes the very essence of Scottish this-worldliness.

This pagan heritage was the very antithesis of the puritanical tenets of the Covenanters; yet somehow the typical Scottish family managed to cherish both traditions. Thus in the Livingstone family, the stern father who countenanced no reading apart from works of divinity was balanced by a grandfather who knew all the old Scots legends, and a grandmother who sang Gaelic songs. Alexander Somerville describes in his autobiography an intensely religious home atmosphere, with family prayers both morning and evening. (Laxer households contented themselves with evening prayers.) His earliest taste of the joys of story-telling was his mother's version of Joseph and his brethren; but as a small boy at the herding he learned Scottish history from the tales of an old blind man.

Fanatical gloom surrounded the childhood of William Bell Scott; yet even in this home a lame uncle played with the children and taught them rhymes. We find this dichotomy well illustrated in the early recollections of R.L. Stevenson. The "Covenanting childhood" he describes took its colour from his nurse Alison Cunningham, who struggled to reconcile a stern theology with a natural tendency to "life and merriment." Stevenson's mother, however, was less strict, and not above a "pleasant maternal casuistry" about Sunday play; while in the Stevenson family as a whole, religion in the narrower sense tended to be left to the distaff side. "Not only were the women extremely pious, but the men were in reality a trifle worldly...They had got on so far, to get on further was their next ambition."

In one way or another, the Scottish child was likely to be offered ample food for the imagination. Thomas Davidson, a Border shepherd's son, had, before he could read, "a mind

filled with a mass of Border traditions and ballads." As a grown man, he thought that children should be brought up on "the Shorter Catechism, the Psalms of David and plenty of Border ballads," with due attention to training in music.

(Brown, Memoir of Thomas Davidson.) In Perth around 1860 Patrick Geddes would spend the evenings either reading the Bible aloud to his family or reciting old Scottish ballads.

Charles Mackay, whose later education was in England and abroad, spent his childhood near Newhaven with a nurse who sang Scottish songs -- "their melodies haunt me still".

(Mackay, Memorials of a Literary Life.)

Another literary man who owed much to his nurse's story-telling was Andrew Lang, who wrote, "It was worth while to be a boy then in the South of Scotland, and to fish waters haunted by old legends, musical with old songs." Even the child who had but a poor start in life was not likely to miss a share in this heritage. James Macfarlan, the pedlar-poet, (b. 1832), who was hardly ever at school, writes of his nomadic childhood, "My mother, who was a delightful singer, very frequently chanted these old strains of love and chivalry, which to my boyish fancy formed all that was desirable on earth."

In many a poor family, harassed by "dear years" and the hardships of industrial change, the secular heritage far outweighed such religious instruction as was given. "Poets were our priests," writes William Thom defiantly, describing the weaver's life. A boy like Robert Gilfillan, (b. 1798), who, as described in the autobiographical notes to Whistle-binkie, was brought up in extreme poverty caused by his father's ill-health, and who, as a child-worker, sang his own songs for "bawbees and blauds of cheese", had little religious training and was restrained by relatively few moral prohibitions. His youth was a preparation for a musical,

poetic and convivial future, in which reverence for the Kirk would not play any conspicuous part.

At the other extreme, the earnest middle-class home, turned in on itself in conscious virtue, might have a tendency to repress the natural kindly instincts of humanity. The Beveridge family, for example, (b. Fife 1829-57) had a fine intellectual and religious tradition, but no social life, nor any recreation apart from walks in the country. Henry Beveridge had to overcome the personal problems which such an upbringing is likely to create. In a letter to his wife (1884) he wrote, "I was keenly alive to beauty and to the influence of women, and the fact that I had never learned to dance or otherwise make myself agreeable to women, and that all mention of beauty etc. was suppressed in our house, only added fuel to the flames which consumed me." (Sir W. Beveridge, India Called Them.)

But although the extremes existed, the typical Scottish family represented a happy compromise between sacred and secular interests. The writer's great-grandparents, (b. before 1820) were in this tradition -- the mother a stern upholder of moral principle and unremitting industry, the father a teller of tales and singer of old songs. Even the wise churchman saw no reason why the vernacular literature -- songs, ballads, and bairn-rhymes -- should be incompatible with strict attention to religious instruction.

Thus Norman Macleod in The Home School took the highest possible view of parental responsibility: "The true idea of Home Education is to be in all things to our child as like as possible to what God is to us -- to be in one word godly or godlike parents." Yet he has a kindly outlook on nursery teaching, counselling the parent to interfere as little as possible with the child under five; and in praising the practice of family music-making, he has a good word, not only for hymns but also for "our dear old Scottish songs."

### 3) Home teaching of the elements.

The nursery years with their songs and stories were soon over in the traditional Scotland. By the time the child had reached the age of five, his parents had begun to think about instruction in the elements, and especially about teaching him to read, as part of his introduction to the faith. What sort of schools awaited him we have already seen; we have seen also that very commonly the child of self-respecting parents had some teaching at home before going to school. This was perhaps more usual in poor homes, where the most modest school fee was an obstacle, especially if the family was large. In such circumstances the child could scarcely hope to remain long at school. But all sorts of parents, rich and poor, cheerfully devoted time to teaching their children at home.

Clerk Maxwell, for example, an only child of good family, (b. 1831), was entirely taught by his mother until her death when he was nine. To her he owed his "extraordinary knowledge of Scripture." With the somewhat feminine indoor recreations -- reading, drawing and woolwork -- which she encouraged, the lad combined country pursuits and mechanical "ploys," shared with his eccentric, but lively and intelligent father. Patrick Geddes (b. 1854), the youngest child of a retired Army Captain, was taught the elements by his father, and did not go to school till he was eight. In the pre-school years, gardening and the care of animals laid the foundations in his mind of a life-long habit of scientific observation.

(Boardman, Life of Patrick Geddes.)

Such parents had the leisure to instruct their families; indeed, in the simpler life of the past, when amusements were few, there was ample leisure in middle- and upper-class homes. In the working-class household, where long hours of labour were shared by all active members of the family,

it was often difficult to find the time to teach. Janet Hamilton regarded the Sabbath as divinely appointed for educational purposes. "Working father, this is not only God's day, but it is most peculiarly yours." In her view the morning's church-going and afternoon walk should be followed by an evening of lessons and family prayers. Sometimes an older member of the family could take over the teacher's role. James Scott (b. 1801) was taught by his grandmother before going to Lanark Grammar School at the age of eight (biographical notes to Whistlebinkie); and James Hyslop (b. 1798) was taught his letters by his maternal grandfather, a weaver. (Later he passed into the care of his other grandfather, for family solidarity was a feature of the old Scottish way of life.)

It was a matter of pride that those who were able should lay the foundations of education for their children. Alexander Somerville, in describing the wretchedly poor circumstances of his home, does not forget to mention that he was taught to read before going to school. Even in the difficult conditions of the industrial cities some remnants of this old tradition was here and there preserved. In the Dialogue between Granny and Leezie which Stow composed in defence of his Infant School, he wisely chose for the basis of his argument a moderately good home, -- one that now required the help of the school, but not one where every vestige of parental responsibility had been shed in the struggle for existence. Leezie explained to Grannie why she had to send her two-year-old Geordie to school:

"Deed, his faither learns him to Mother's Carritch every Sabbath night afore brose time; but what wi' keepin the wean, cawin the pirns and ae thing and anither, I have na muckle time to look after him through the week, let alane instruct him." When the bairns, having had a taste of Stow's school

demanded "siller just to let them gang, for they got sic grand fun, they said, marchin and swingin and singin and I canna tell ye what a," this average mother responded to the master's request to have them sent with clean faces, and the children themselves co-operated. It was part of Stow's policy to work, whenever possible, through and with the home: "The way to the parent's heart is through the child."

When Granny, a strong character, made of the very stuff of the Scottish tradition, and surely country-bred, was sceptical about this new-fangled school, because it was so enjoyable, without salutary boredom or punishments, the master reassured her by stressing the common purpose of school and home: "Infant Training Schools should be assistants for parents, and ought never to supersede their exertions at home."

#### 4) The home as the source of moral training.

It cannot be too often repeated that the motive behind this home teaching was religious. Literacy was understood in the God-fearing family as a means to Bible-reading and catechism-learning, which all self-respecting households regarded as a domestic responsibility. Hugh Miller, a fatherless lad, was catechised on Sabbath evenings by his uncles; he comments, in My Schools and Schoolmasters, "There was a Sabbath class taught in the parish church at the time by one of the elders, but Sabbath schools my uncles regarded as merely compensatory institutions, highly creditable to the teachers, but very discreditable indeed to the pupils, and so they of course never thought of sending me there."

The same point is made by Norman Macleod in The Home School, though he as a clergyman might have been expected to prefer that the young should be instructed in religion under Church auspices: "The best Sabbath class can be an aid only to the

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parent. A child may be positively injured in a Sabbath school... may be every Sabbath trained to habits of inattention, irreverence, disobedience, rudeness, even though taught to learn lessons." In his concern for the deterioration under industrialism of the home as a social environment, Macleod never loses sight of his traditional ideal -- "every home a temple, every fireside an altar, and every head of a family a priest."

No doubt the humble home of the early 19th century often failed the child, as the break-up of the old village and family ties and the inhuman demands of factory life sapped parental pride. Nevertheless the conception of home responsibility as the basis of education, is especially to be associated with the poorer classes: higher in the social scale responsibility could be delegated. Janet Hamilton regarded the short school-life of the working-class child as a challenge to the parents, on whom a double obligation was laid. "But if you cannot, or will not -- which amount to much the same thing," she scornfully concludes, "there is no want of evening classes everywhere."

##### 5) The child-centred home.

The home of the peasant, and even of the respectable factory-worker, was child-centred; the hopes of the family in a time of expansion and change were centred upon the young. By contrast, a genteel viewpoint is expressed by the well-bred Susan Ferrier in her novel Inheritance: "The children of this happy family always dined at table, and their food and manner of eating were the only subjects of conversation... Eliza's sampler was shown, and Henry and Alexander's copybooks were handed round the table, and Andrew Waddell stood up and repeated 'My name is Norval' from beginning to end, and William Pitt was prevailed upon to sing the whole of God Save The King... There is much enjoyment sometimes in making acquaintance with the little beings... but when a

tiresome mother, instead of allowing the company to notice her child, torments everyone to death in forcing or coaxing her child to notice the company, the charm is gone and we experience only disgust or ennui."

Miss Ferrier had the typical celibate's view of the "Little beings." Obviously even in the good society with which she mingled there were child-centred homes, distasteful to those who preferred an adult atmosphere. As one descended the social scale, such homes became commoner. In an ordinary well-doing Scottish household a child might expect to be taken very seriously indeed; a receptive child would respond by developing a serious attitude to serious subjects which was typically Scottish. Parent and child were "bound each to each by natural piety."

In a letter of James Hyslop's, dated 1820, there is a description to illustrate this, almost classical in its pastoral simplicity. He tells of a meeting with a little herd-laddie "happet aneath his grey plaid in the bield of a green rash-buss. He had been reading, for when I came up he closed a wee pocket Bible... 'That was my father's Bible; there the psalm they sang the night he deed. I'm aye vext when I read the Psalms; I used to say them to my father on the Sabbath nights."

6) The home as schoolroom.

The modern parent has been superseded as an educator by the trained teacher, whose changing methods, so we are encouraged to believe, must not be contradicted by the amateur teaching of the home. Parents of the early 19th century were not troubled by any such misgivings; this could not be expected when anyone with a modicum of knowledge felt himself qualified to teach. So fathers and mothers tackled the three R's with confidence, solving the problems of method as they went along.

The educational efforts of the Carlyle family illustrate this as well as any. Carlyle's mother taught him to read at some early age -- "I never remember when." Yet she herself could not write, until she taught herself in middle life, in order to write to Tom. Harder studies, such as arithmetic, were the father's province -- this is often still the case!

-- and Carlyle recalled being taught division by his father in his fifth year. Under the influence of this strong-minded parent who surrounded his family with "an inflexible element of authority", the whole atmosphere of the household was one of self-improvement and educational endeavour. At Main-hill Farm one might find "the brothers and sisters down to the lowest all hard at work, the little ones at school, the elders ploughing, reaping, tending cattle or minding the dairy, and in the intervals reading history, reading Scott's novels, or even trying at geometry." (Froude, Life of Carlyle.) In a continuous system of education such as this, school might well play only a subsidiary part.

For a detailed account of the home as schoolroom we turn to Janet Hamilton, whose experience amply qualified her as an authority on home-teaching. Herself taught to spin and to read by an industrious mother, she married at fourteen and had ten children, all of whom she educated in the intervals of domestic work and cottage industry. She began with the alphabet and the shorter words from the beginning of the Catechism, going on to St. John's Gospel and Genesis -- primers which might well be thought strong meat for babes. "The whole of the lessons were given by me when busy at the tambour frame, and the little urchin standing with book in hand beside me, and oftentimes his clothes had many patches and some rents in them, and perhaps not over clean a face, being recently employed in doing some of the duties of the housemaid, for the boys as well as the girls had to perform

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these duties as they grew up till they were old enough to commence to learn trades."

This was the most elementary of all educations -- reading only, to which was added moral training and instruction in the domestic arts and crafts. Still, the mother who had been able to impart so much felt a modest satisfaction in having opened the door to secular as well as sacred knowledge, to all the means of self-improvement as well as to the most reputable of pleasures. Those parents who had something more to teach -- a work-skill or a spare-time interest -- laboured to share this knowledge also with their children. Here we would include the apprenticeship which a son might serve with his father or a daughter with her mother. The girl might learn a cottage industry, the boy his father's trade; or, at a higher level, a doctor's son like McNish pursued his professional studies within the family circle.

#### 7) Spare-time studies.

Apprenticeships apart, the pursuit of knowledge in general by family groups was a common feature of the time. The range of interests was expanding, and many branches of knowledge which now appear as "subjects" on school time-tables were then chiefly pursued in the spare time of youngsters working under the guidance of non-academic adults. This was especially true of the sciences, which would have fared ill but for the enthusiasm of amateurs, the home-teaching of fathers who were presently to be outdistanced by their sons.

Hugh Miller, for example, although he lost his sailor father at an early age, was fortunate in two uncles, one of whom was an amateur antiquary, while the other had "a decided turn for natural history." With the latter, the boy, who had little taste for school, ( see pp. 49, 68 ) began to study marine biology and rocks on the seashore. "I owed more to

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the habit of observation which he assisted me in forming than even to his facts, and yet some of these were of high value." (My Schools and Schoolmasters.) The efforts of this excellent man, a harness-maker to trade, to some extent compensated the future geologist for the absence of science-teaching from the school of his day.

The education of Clerk Maxwell, a misunderstood school-boy, (see pp. 137-4) might easily have turned out a total loss, but for the close companionship which this only child enjoyed with a highly original father. The elder Maxwell imparted to his son almost from babyhood his own passion for machinery and for scientific enquiry in general; he was always ready to supplement the lad's schooling with Saturday-afternoon outings which were at once a joy and a source of enlightenment to both. In these activities the father took the lead till the son "took hardly less delight in explaining Nature's mechanism to the father." (Campbell, ~~Rowan~~ & Garnett, op. cit.)

Another maladjusted pupil, John Nichol, (see p. 98) bowed far more educationally to familiarity with his father's Observatory, and to geologizing holidays, than to his various schools. He shared foreign travel with both parents, and his mother entranced him with her music and singing. The College of Glasgow was no bad place for an intelligent boy, with an adored younger sister for companion, to pick up an education. Nichol was happy enough crossing with his sister on the Clyde ferry to read Latin with William Fulton, teacher of the parish school of Govan, or browsing around his father's library. He was invariably wretched at school.

Only a very progressive or eccentric teacher in the early 19th century would take up much school time with experimental science, for which the facilities were in any case absent. Luckily there was often some enthusiast at hand to awaken youthful curiosity. John Stuart Blackie recalls that in

his case a neighbouring minister filled this role, teaching him by means of field geology "the first lesson in all really valuable knowledge of God's beautiful world -- the lesson to use my eyes." Even parents who were not specially skilled were sometimes receptive to the new ideas brought into the home by youngsters of a scientific turn of mind. Patrick Geddes' father provided every facility for his son's hobbies of geology and botanical gardening, and built a shed where he could practise carpentry or do chemical experiments as the fancy took him. No such premises were available in any school building of the time. When at twenty Geddes insisted on going to London to study with that "notorious pagan" Huxley, his deeply, even narrowly religious parents were grieved, but they let him have his way; difference of opinion on this vital matter put only a passing cloud between parent and child. (Boardman, Life of Patrick Geddes.)

8) A complete home education.

An example of a complete home education is found in the history of the Smith family, who grew up in the remote parish of Kieg and Tough. The Smith parents were ~~prax~~ skilled and experienced teachers, for William Pirie Smith had been a headmaster in Aberdeen before the upheaval of the Disruption brought him into the Free Church ministry, and Mrs Smith, a schoolmaster's daughter, was an accomplished woman of a serious and improving turn of mind. The elder Smith took a few boarders to educate along with his own boys, setting out to do better for his family than the best schools of the district. Even when urged to send his brilliant sons for a short time to Aberdeen Grammar School, that notable centre of Latin scholarship, Pirie Smith preferred his own system as a preparation for the University; and events justified him.

In the family atmosphere of the Smith home, there was no compulsion to learn. "All their education," the father reported, "was got at home, and mostly by their own exertions. Their lessons were regularly prescribed, and then the boys were left to their own resources, and they uniformly did their best." Recreation took the form of country walks, in which the mother and the girls, who had meanwhile been pursuing their studies in the intervals of domestic occupations, sometimes joined the male members of the household. During exercise, learning continued. Geology was studied, and passages from the Latin, Greek and English poets were committed to memory. At the tea-table, Mrs Smith read aloud to the family, and there was a quiet time for meditation in the evening. Visitors spoke of the "patriarchal dignity and simplicity of the household," as well as of the unusual efficiency of the education there imparted.

The modern educator would consider that Smith developed his children's intellect at the expense of their social life, and possibly even of their bodily health. We must beware, however, of drawing conclusions from their subsequent poor record of health; (see p. 104); the destruction of whole families by tuberculous infection was a sadly common happening in mid-century Scotland. Poor Mary Jane Smith, when she sent away her article to Chamber's Journal, was not destined to have a literary, or any other sort of career; but no doubt she herself would have chosen the years of study which preceded her untimely death.

Nevertheless, in the Smith brothers' letters home from Aberdeen University, with their details of class marks and places, there may be detected a certain lack of the broader sympathies which the ideal student should have in mind. It is recorded of William Robertson Smith as a very small boy that when visitors at last went home, he exclaimed with

evident relief, "And now, papa, let us have some rational conversation." Neither of these excellent parents, with all their experience of young people, seems to have felt any danger in precocity, or any desire for change from the plain living and high thinking of the isolated manse. William survived, though with impaired health, and in the words of his biographers, Black and Chrystal, "realised the ideal of a scholar's life."

The story of the Smiths, besides representing a complete home education, shows up the strength and weakness of family educational projects of the time. Both father and mother imparted knowledge; both brothers and sisters received instruction; and there was great affection in the home. ("Mama," exclaimed William, meeting his mother at the station after the Ferguson examination, "you'll go first class, for I've got the scholarship!") The teaching methods awakened the interest of those taught, so that high standards were achieved with a minimum of drudgery. To the training of his early years is directly traceable that fearless independence of mind which carried Robertson Smith through the great crisis of his career, his expulsion from the Free Church for advanced views on the higher criticism. In fact, so great is one's admiration for the Smith family that one would prefer to ignore a certain narrowness in their educational aims, an element of isolationism in their way of life; yet such faults they undoubtedly had.

9) Parental criticism of schools.

Pirie Smith had obtained his schooling largely by his own efforts (see p.38); he preferred to teach his own children in his own way. In this he was one of a group of notable 19th century Scotsmen who cared a great deal about education but thought little of the schools.

It will be recalled that Thomas Stevenson's own educational experiences had been unfortunate. (see p.93) In later life he became a devoted parent, but one who cared nothing for schools and schoolmasters. "With rare consistency," wrote his son, "he positively encouraged me to neglect my lessons, and never so much as asked me my place in school."

(On the other hand, "Smout's" doting mother regularly noted his class-place in her pocket-diary.)

Another product of the traditional schooling who, when he came to be man, departed from it, was George Macdonald; and in his case no special traumatic experience has been recorded. Nevertheless his mystical philosophy led him to a belief in the child's innate wisdom which was incompatible with respect for man-made systems of training, but upon which might be founded an ideal family life. "A parent," he writes in The Deaboard Parish, "must respect the spiritual person of his child, and approach it with reverence, for that too looks the Father in the face and has an audience with Him into which no earthly parent can enter, even if he dared to desire it."

Out of Macdonald's reverence for the child there evolved a system of home education which, if we are to accept the testimony of his son, Greville Macdonald, had its imperfections. "I had no schooling till I was eleven, and could then barely read. But my father would from time to time give me and my sister Grace lessons in Latin and Euclid. They were not successful. In spite of wonderful patience, his theory that we should be more interested in Aeneas and Dido than in the five declensions, and ought to pick up a dead language as an infant learns its speech, without grammar and dictionary, had its limitations."

Macdonald was conscious, Greville remarks, of no time-urgency in education, and had no ambition for his children.

He "feared for us vulgar success and position." One feels that for lack of time or inclination to devote himself to the humdrum problems of method, George Macdonald missed becoming a notable educator. What had become of the student who taught arithmetic with such skill and spirit? But although Macdonald did not achieve a fusion of his practical and theoretical powers, together with his understanding wife he did build up a memorable home life for their large family, where communal pursuits such as the acting of plays developed the creative personality, so that his children grew up gracious in body and mind.

Patrick Geddes, another neglected educational thinker, also reacted against the formal schooling which had failed to satisfy him. His theory of work revolted against "that separation of the school of industry from the school of science which produces pedants in the University and philistines in the workshop;" while his valuation of the child-mind was so high that he regarded great artists or scientists as "forgotten children" who remained at the windows of life, looking out while others turned away to study or workshop.

From such basic concepts a robust distrust of the school and all its works follows almost axiomatically. The best way to avoid being mis-educated was, according to Geddes, to stay away from school. "Play hooky, be a truant!" He had been himself, as we have seen, (p.100) no docile model pupil. For his own children he planned a home education which combined formal lessons in the mornings with afternoons spent in gardening, nature-rambles or creative pursuits such as the arrangement of "beauty-feasts" from flowers and shells.

Of his right to educate he had no doubt; he asserted the primary right of the home to guide the young. (Boardman, Life of Geddes.)

Such theories seem out of keeping with the formal tradition of Scottish education; but they did evolve, whether logically or as a reaction. The poet Campbell, Dr. Madden recalled, believed that young children still bore the impress of their divine origin. Hewitt would not have the child "tormented with senseless teaching", believing on the contrary in what he called the "right way" of teaching, which in practice meant "uproarious fun." At a later date, Kenneth Grahame, who was a product of 19th century Scotland though he lived and worked in the south, believed that "children are not merely people; they are the only really living people that have been left to us."

Macdonald, Grahame and Barrie expressed in their writings for or about children different aspects of the same attitude to childhood, an attitude which may be expressed in the grave mysticism of Macdonald seeking in infancy a clue to the Creator, or in the escapism of Peter Pan who wanted "always to be a little boy and have fun." The proverbial Scottish humourlessness and high seriousness were not all-pervasive. Macdonald teaching Latin, not very efficiently, by the direct method, or Stevenson drawing for Lloyd Osborne the map of Treasure Island -- either had travelled a long way from the dominie with his grammar book, catechism and tawse.

10) The influence of the mother.

So far we have thought of family life mainly in its narrowly educational context, of the home as a place where teaching went on. But every child is powerfully influenced by his home environment, whether he gets lessons there or not. As we search for home influences amongst the life-histories of the early 19th century, we are impressed, not unexpectedly, by the great power for good of the mother.

In the hard-working Scottish communities of the time, the position of the woman in the home, as helpmeet, educator and partner in the practical concerns of life, was high; the Scottish mother was not only capable, but, as we shall see later, fairly well-educated for her day and generation.

Now, it is a truism that every eminent man owes his success to a notable mother. Where women maintain high standards, this truism becomes doubly true; and certainly the Scots lad o' pairts was no exception to the general rule.

If there were any bad mothers, filial piety has suppressed them; but good mothers, and especially pious mothers, abound. Robert Pollok refers to "my mother's divinity, the divinity she taught me when I was a boy;" Stow's character was moulded by a mother of exceptional piety; and John Younger's mother exclaimed dramatically, "Praise the Lord while you have a tongue to speak!" immediately before being herself struck speechless by an apoplexy.

In the intellectual sphere, McNish's mother was noted for wit, and Moir's for literary taste, while Nichol's and Stevenson's were great story-tellers. Macdonald's mother was well-educated, with good brains; Carrick and Gilfillan place on record their mothers' superior powers of mind. We have already noted (pp. 33, 34, 97) amongst the poor families, the notable efforts made by the mothers of Younger, Somerville and Farquhar to get their sons some schooling. Amidst all this galaxy of intellectual brilliance and deep religious feeling, it is something of a relief to remember J.Y. Simpson's mother, who, although she, too, frequently fell on her knees in private prayer, was distinguished for practical and business ability, and asked her son to "remember when your mother's away that she was a grand danner."

11) Influence of the father.

11) Influence of the father. as were good. The father in Reginald Dalton who "did not wish to have any better companion than his son" is thought to be a portrait drawn from Lockhart's own father. The elder Simpson, a village baker, treated his sons as equals as they grew up, and shared with them a common purse. Though some typical fathers were stern and authoritarian, the homes they ruled over were humane in atmosphere. Of our fifty individuals, only Guthrie recorded the formal giving of corporal punishment by the father, and he no longer resented it. (See p. 95).

The strict father could become a hex-figure, as in the case of Carlyle: "He was among the last of the true men which Scotland on the old system produced or can produce; a man healthy in body and mind, fearing God and diligently working on God's earth with contentment, hope and unwearied resolution." Livingstone, on the other hand, had little understanding or encouragement in youth from his stern and somewhat narrow-minded father, and was more in sympathy with the gentle, kindly mother, whose perpetual struggle to make ends meet he watched with compassion. Yet when news reached him in Africa of his father's death, he said that he had expected "no greater pleasure than sitting by our cottage fire telling him my travels. I revere his memory."

The bond between an intelligent girl and her father is often close. It was to Dr. Welsh that Jane owed the thorough and comprehensive education, a boy's education rather than a girl's, which helped to make her one of the most memorable women of her time. This exceptional father, who evidently put his only daughter in the place of the son he never had, saw to it by the provision of a succession of tutors, (one of them Edward Irving,) that his home was an educational centre which attendance at various schools only supplemented. At the age of ten Jane was studying with Irving for two

hours before and two hours after school; he taught her, among other things, the names of the stars and planets, and the rudiments of logic. (Hanson, Necessary Evil.)

What Dr. Welsh had in mind in planning this strenuous regime for Jane, somewhat to the detriment of her health, is not very clear. He certainly made her too good for Haddington, and dissatisfied with the sort of life most women lived in her generation. More often, however, parents provided the necessary link between the school and the world outside, which keeps an educational system alive. Those parents who, in their simpler communities, could foresee more accurately than the parents of today what their children's future was likely to be, decided for themselves how long the young people should stay at school, and whether what they were learning there was relevant to the demands of life.

In Alexander's account of education in the north-east, thinly disguised as fiction in Johnnie Gibb of Gushetneuk, a critical commentary on the traditional parish school is expressed through the commonsense outlook of the ordinary parent: "He (Dominie Tawse) took up his heid owre muckle wi' that Latin an gremmer an ither buik leernin -- a mixter-maxter o figures wi the letter o the A.B.C., eneuch to turn the creaturs' heids." As we saw in Chapter Three, groups of parents often took matters into their own hands, providing by their own efforts and at their own expense alternative, and usually more "modern", schools for their children. They were not always wise in their criticisms, or successful in their efforts to put matters right; yet their onlooker's point of view provided an invaluable safeguard, without which the school might have become divorced from the community which it served.

12) Influence of the family group.

Not only did father and mother watch carefully over the

development of their children, but other members of the family also played their part. We have seen, for example, how Hyslop's grandfathers, (p. 37), Hugh Miller's uncles, (p. 130), William Ross's aunt and grandmother (p. 12), stepped in to take the place of dead or negligent parents. Brothers and sisters also helped each other on. Barrie's education was supervised by his brilliant elder brother, a sister also helping. J.Y. Simpson, a youngest child, was devotedly cared for after the mother's death by a grown-up sister, and throughout life had a specially close relationship with one of his brothers, a mutual love which the great doctor's learning and fame did not diminish. (Duns, Life.) Pollok and Macdonald were also linked to their brothers by a bond of unusual strength. "Such perfect understanding as these men's," writes Dr. Greville Macdonald, "is perhaps only found on the rich soil of a mutual poverty."

The typical 19th. century Scottish family was a large one where discipline, based upon common recognition of a moral law, was maintained without effort. "A large family," wrote Mrs Grant of Laggan, "is a little community in itself... Respect and submission to the elder branches of a family, tenderness and forbearance to the younger, all tend more to moral improvement, if properly managed, than volumes of maxims and rules of conduct."

Mrs <sup>Grant</sup>~~Laggan~~ is thinking of the family which enjoys modest comfort in material things and a fair standard of culture. In humble homes a frugal mode of life drew the bonds of family affection closer still. A later writer, J.M. Barrie, whose attitude to his humble Scottish origins is a most curious blend of romance and realism, and whose mother-obsession was such that he wrote almost always of the Scotland of her generation rather than his own, describes the Scottish family thus: "Anon never had a nursery. The children of six he had met were, if boys, helping their father to

pit the potatoes, and if girls they were nurses to someone smaller than themselves. He came of parents who could not afford nurseries, but who could by dint of struggle send their daughters to boarding-schools and their sons to Universities."

Hard work varied by intellectual effort for diversion was the order of the day in many an ambitious Scottish family. Growing up in Fife around the middle of the century, the Beveridge children, (see also p. 123), "saw almost no society and had scarcely any social intercourse except with a few intimate friends. Our chief amusement was walking exercise, in which, indeed, whether we would or not, we were most systematically drilled; whilst indoors our principal recreation was books, of which the house contained a plethora of all kinds." (Beveridge, India Called Them.) This is a similar routine to that practised a few years later by the Smith family (p. 133). Henry Beveridge, who was also a brilliant student, passing high in one of the first competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service, declared that till manhood he owed little to any other teachers than his parents; but he owed much also to his membership of a closely knit group of brothers and sisters.

### 13. A Humane Family atmosphere.

Within the family an understanding of the individual and his problems was possible of which the schools as yet had no inkling. Although Scottish families were hard-working and keen to get on in the world, a humane and even indulgent attitude to the child was quite common. Mrs Grant of Laggan disapproved of educational forging. She wrote to a friend in 1804, "You have all too great avidity for teaching your boys everything early. I wish you saw what a fine boy I have, that can talk of plants from the oak to the mushroom, and yet has little more than his alphabet."

The great Sir Walter too was a light taskmaster to the

young. (One remembers his kindly thought for schoolboy readers in the envoi to Marmion.) Writing to Lockhart in 1826, he expressed concern for the cherished but doomed little grandson, now five years old and starting lessons: "I hope Mrs Mactavish...will be mild in her rule, and let him listen to reading a good deal without cramming the alphabet and grammar down the poor child's throat. I cannot at this moment tell how and when I learned to read, but it was by fits and snatches, as one aunt or another in the old rumble-tumble farmhouses could give me a lesson, and I am sure it increased my love and habit of reading more than the austerities of a school could have done."

Thus it became the child's pleasure to learn, as it was the parent's duty to teach. Resistance to the parent-teacher was far less common than dislike of the schoolmaster. One startling anecdote stands alone in the memoirs of the time amidst many expressions, conventional or heart-felt, of filial love and loyalty. It occurs in William Bell Scott's autobiography, where he comments adversely on lessons given by his father, a sickly man and a religious fanatic:

"Though he set great store by our precise knowledge of Bible and catechism, he never appeared to think any explanation necessary, so that we learned by rote." William was backward at school lessons (see p.57), and when his father publicly mocked him for inability to translate a Latin inscription, the nine-year-old boy, furiously angry, went home and swore on the Bible "that when I was old enough and strong enough I would be the death of him." But even Scott had his compensations within the family circle -- the teaching of the "amiable uncle", (p.121), the companionship of an elder brother (David) who shared his artistic gifts, and the fact that his father's passion for collecting prints and engravings filled the home with the materials of an education in art.

14) Conclusions.

By and large, the old Scottish home was a good place -- self-centred and austere in some ways, but with a saving grace of strong mutual affection and human understanding vital enough to overleap the barriers between one generation and another. Amongst its responsibilities it accepted education, especially religious and moral education which, in its widest interpretation, embraces the training of the whole man.

In the homes of the well-to-do, cultural standards were maintained which nurtured the talents of imaginative children. Books abounded, as we shall later see; lively conversation was sometimes available; musical and artistic experiences enriched the lives of some. Andrew Lang described such an environment with the magic which was his special property: "Memory holds a picture, more vivid than most, of a small boy reading A Midsummer Night's Dream by firelight in a room where candles were lit, and someone touched the piano, and a young man and a girl were playing chess...At that moment I think that I was happy; it seemed an enchanted glimpse of eternity in Paradise; nothing resembling it remains to me out of all the years." (Green, Life of Andrew Lang.)

The achievement of the humbler home was perhaps even more remarkable. Here although material comforts were lacking, and standards of nutrition and hygiene were far below those of today, a cultural level was maintained in all but the most wretchedly underprivileged households, which it would be hard to match in modern times. The economic changes which brought confusion and sometimes distress also provided a stimulus to effort. If it was a time of hardship, it was also a time of hope; and such a climate is favourable to the young.

Life was simpler: there were few amusements, not many

possessions to care for, so that the time taken up by the chores and ordinary distractions of daily living was cut to a minimum. Even at the end of the long working day, there was time for education. School life, on the other hand, was short, and the compulsive power of the educational system not yet effective. This gave the parent freedom to experiment, and confidence in his efforts.

Under these conditions, the family circle preserved in the care of young children that heritage of national folklore and song which is now artificially preserved by such agencies as school and radio. The elements were often taught at home, while religious and moral instruction were given by all decent parents. The parent as instructor had his deficiencies, but redeemed them by a care and understanding of the individual which the class teacher could not rival.

As the intelligent child grew up, his family supported him, both materially and morally, in his studies; there was often a relative to share in leisure-activities which might point the way to some future sphere of action. The typical Scottish child responded to his home-life with love and gratitude. On the whole he looked to his home and parents, rather than to his school and teachers, as the focus of his education and the fountainhead of wisdom to guide him in the conduct of his life.

CHAPTER SIX.

Reading and Self-Improvement.

A. Reading

Books in the home--- the exceptional reader--- libraries  
---library addicts ---newspapers --- the reading of children  
---the high prestige of literary studies --- private study  
and the development of the tradition --- a comprehensive  
culture --- the reader's distractions.

B. Self-Improvement.

Private enterprise in education --- the mixed motives of  
the adult student --- society and the self-educated man  
---moral purpose in adult education --- the pleasures of  
debate --- the high value placed on self-culture ---  
conclusions.

A. Reading.1) Books in the Home.

Lang's description (see p.144) of the child reading by the fire while family life pursued its peaceful course around him, or Hyslop's account (p.128) of the herd-laddie whiling away the hours with a book -- these are characteristic of an age when the young were left much to their own devices, and outside or organised diversions were few. The educational influence of early reading is strong in any intelligent mind, strongest when reading is the main source of contact with a larger world. What books, we must therefore ask, would a Scottish youngster be likely to lay hands on, and what was the preferred reading at different ages?

At the beginning of the century, books were to be found in most self-respecting Scottish homes. Dorothy Wordsworth, touring Scotland in 1803, had an eye for this, and noticed, for example, in a kitchen at Leadhills that "there were two beds in recesses in the wall; above one of them I noticed a shelf with some books." In a turnpike house by the With she talked with an old man reading a newspaper. "On the shelf lay a volume of the Scotch Encyclopedia, a History of England and some other books." Coleridge found the man of this house very intelligent, well acquainted with Burns' poems, and by way of adding to the variety of his library, he gave him a pamphlet, The Crisis of the Sugar Colonies. At Lanark, Dorothy found an eight-year-old girl in possession of "the Collection, a book which all the Scotch children whom I have questioned read in. I found it was a collection of hymns; she could repeat several of Dr. Watts'"

Watts and the Pilgrim's Progress are described by Janet Hamilton as books commonly found in humble homes at the beginning of the century; she also describes the early substitutes for the modern magazine, "penny pamphlets of 24 pages

each, "hawked around the doors, and containing stories and jokes. John Younger, who was a boy in the 1790's, and who knew the "tragicall ballads then afloat on the surface of village society," found Burns' songs, then contemporary, in "halfpenny collections."

In a desperately poor home such as Younger describes in his autobiography, it was a struggle to get any books apart from the Bible, which was a household necessity. Presently Younger ~~again~~ acquired Thomson's Seasons, but by this "was at first nearly beaten, finding it neither prose nor rhyme, till at last, by resting at the lines, I found a Harmony." But where the desire for reading existed, even the poorest and most isolated homes contrived to have some books. David Farquhar in Brechin, the child of a poor widow, (p. 34), had "a few good books and the Bible"; Hugh Miller writes of the collections of books treasured by "several mechanics and tradesfolk in Cromarty"; and an anonymous Border shepherd, writing to Scott in 1820, describes how, over a period of twenty years, he has contrived to read several of the Waverley novels, getting some as presents and borrowing others from friends: "My fancy has been strongly excited by reading these books."

In these home libraries there was a preponderance of religious works; many devout families possessed no others. Livingstone's father thought reading a waste of time; the books in Somerville's house were "all divinity", while in William Bell Scott's family, where religion and health were twin obsessions, the two standard works were the Bible and Buchan's Domestic Medicine, which "was consulted every day." Whatever other books a family possessed, the literature of piety was likely to be represented on the shelves. Stuart Blackie says carelessly of his prosperous Aberdeen home, "Of course the current religious books of the country were lying about."

The well-educated had sometimes outgrown traditional reverence for these effusions. Thus Lockhart, a son of the manse, writes irreverently of his travels in Lochaber, in a letter dated 1815, (he was then twenty-one): "And then at night a rushlight illuminating the smoke-dried pages of Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Song of Solomon, the Crook in the Lot, the Cloud of Witnesses, or the Martyrs' Monument, wherein are the speeches and last words of all the Presbyterian saints, burnt, hanged and drowned for the glory of God.

And lastly, but almost universally, the Light and Supple Whang for the Brecks of Declining Faith."

## 2) The Exceptional Reader.

Piety made up the staple Sunday reading of the average Scotsman of the time; but in homes which, though not necessarily well-to-do, were able to maintain a superior cultural standard, the books were likely to reflect a much wider range of interests. Norman Macleod in his Reminiscences quotes a father's letter to his son describing a New Year early in the century: "Had you popped in unnoticed, you would have seen us all grave, quiet and studious. You would have seen your father reading the Seasons, your mother Porteous Lectures, your sister Anne the Lady of the Lake, and Archy, Tom Thumb." Note the general enthusiasm for poetry, and contemporary poetry at that, in the educated home of the time. This was not the reading prescribed by the schools.

Meanwhile exceptional people were here and there building up exceptional libraries. Such was Dr. John Brown's uncle at Riggart, described in a letter to Dr. John Cairns: "A shopkeeper in that remote little town, he not only inter-meddled fearlessly with all knowledge, but mastered more than many practised and University men do in their own lines. Mathematics, astronomy and the higher geometry and physics;

Hebrew

Hebrew, Sanscrit, Greek and Latin, to the veriest rigours of prosody and metre; Spanish and Italian, German, French and any odd language that came his way; all these he knew more or less thoroughly...He sat in the corner under the gallery every Sabbath day, and knew his Greek testament better than his minister."

When all allowances have been made for family partiality, this account still speaks of a man whose range of reading was altogether out of the ordinary. As a well-ordered system of education creams off such intellects as this, and recruits them for professional work, wastage of man-power is diminished, but the loss to the ordinary community is considerable. There were women, too, whose education exceeded their opportunities, and who found satisfaction in pursuing private courses of reading for no ulterior motive: such was Jemima Beveridge (b. 1795), to whom the Greek Testament was as daily bread.

Others in a humbler way of life not only read, but inwardly digested such books as came their way, the more so because extended reading was not available. Poetry was popular, especially poetry such as Milton's which embroidered a sacred theme. In Macdonald's novel David Elginbrod, the tutor took volumes of poetry to his lass as love-tokens, and family and guest together read The Ancient Mariner round a peat-fire, while David made penetrating comments "about the crossbow and the birdie." The simple wise old man, based on originals whom Macdonald had known in the rural life of the north-east, had "read auld John Milton ower an ower, though I dinna believe the half o't."

We have written already (PP. 120-23) of the interdependence of sacred and secular influences in a Scotland which was less

intolerant than has sometimes been supposed. In the same way, sacred and secular literature were suffered to live side by side. Even Livingstone in his narrow-minded home (see p. 121) was suffered to read the pagan classics. The boy R.L. Stevenson, in an interval of absorbing strict ~~pure~~ Puritan teaching from his nurse, attempted to raise the devil with the help of Joanna Baillie's plays; "I supposed these books to be forbidden, and took every sly opportunity of reading them." He was engrossed in the Arabian Nights when "my clergyman grandfather came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might." And while he attributes his first vivid impression of literature to his mother's reading aloud of Macbeth on a day of storm, he can write elsewhere, "My style is from the Covenanting writers."

No one who seeks to understand the Scottish mind can afford to ignore the contradictory influences which helped to form it. The Scots family of the past had more than its share of intellectual curiosity, and readers of strong opinions, even of marked prejudices, were not easily put off by books which presented an unfamiliar point of view. Froude brings this out well when he describes the Carlyle family reading their gifted son's translation of Wilhelm Meister: "Never had Goethe's novel found its way into a stranger circle than this rugged, unletter Calvinist household. But they all had strong natural understandings. Young and old alike read it, and in their way appreciated it, the mother most of all."

### 3) Libraries.

The private collections of books treasured by many families were supplemented by library facilities, widespread by our period. Dorothy Wordsworth was astonished by the excellence of the library at Leadhills, which was founded by the Earl of Hopetoun in 1741; and this library was

also described by John Brown, who wrote in his essay, The Enterkin, "The miners at Leadhills are a reading, a hard-reading people; and to anyone looking into the catalogue of their Reading Society, selected by the men themselves for their own uses and tastes, this will be manifest."

The Leadhills library was well-endowed. Subscription libraries lacking this advantage might be an expensive item in a working-man's budget. Janet Hamilton in her Sketches of a Scottish Village describes a subscription library used by working men together with farmers and village- and parish-schoolmasters, as costing half-a-guinea entrance money, with an annual fee of two shillings. The St. Boswells' library founded in 1800 was dearer than this, with a subscription of 14/-, which John Younger, as he tells us in his autobiography, could not afford. His friends did not dare lend him the books, on penalty of a five shilling fine.

These libraries, though expensive, were high-class affairs setting a serious standard. Janet Hamilton thus describes the books: "Full half of them works of divinity; then biography, travel, voyages and several sets of the British Essayist; a fair proportion of history and geography; no poetry, nothing of the drama and but one novel." Somerville, on the other hand, who used the parish library at Innerwick, says that it contained "a few useful volumes of divinity, history and biography" amidst a preponderance of the then popular religious fiction. Libraries which owed their existence to a charitable impulse were probably on a lower average standard than the subscription libraries which reflected the tastes of serious readers. "I am forming," says the parish minister of Cromarty, in Miller's My Schools and Schoolmasters, "a small library for our Sabbath scholars and teachers; most of the books are simple enough little things, but it contains a few works of the intellectual class."

#### 4) Library addicts.

The libraries found enthusiastic patrons. Janet Hamilton, a born reader, got from the village library such books as Plutarch's Lives, the Spectator, Ferguson, Burns and works of history and geography. She read Shakespeare by stealth because of family prejudice. As a young married woman, she read with the baby on her lap. When the nearest library was used up, her "ain gudeman" John went to another at some distance and brought home books by armfuls. In old age, when Mrs Hamilton became blind, a fate often prophesied for one so phenomenally addicted to the printed word, the faithful husband wore his voice "doon to a deid hairseness" in reading to her. (Gilfillan and Wallace, Memoirs of J. Hamilton.)

Another book-lover in humble circumstances, James Macfarlan, the pedlar-poet, claimed to have educated himself from library books. "By leaving a small deposit," he states in the autobiographical preface to his poems, "I borrowed books in almost every town where there was a public library." (This would be in the 'forties; it will be remembered that this boy had no regular schooling --see p. 37) He does not mention if he returned the books, but boasts, "On reaching the age of twenty, there was scarcely a standard work in the language which I had not perused."

Carlyle was a library addict from his early years. One of the few redeeming features, for him, of schooldays at Annan was access to the circulating library kept by John Maconachie, a cooper to trade, which contained such works as the novels of Smollett and Robertson's History of Charles V. A severe critic, as has been noticed, (p. 75) of the University teaching of his day, Carlyle placed the private reading of the student above all other agencies in his famous dictum that the true University is a collection of books. The modern University teacher and student value quite as highly the oral interchange of ideas or the individual experiment. To this

rugged individualist, however, the library of Edinburgh University was practically its only good point.

Masson took the trouble to extract from the archives a list of the books borrowed by Carlyle in 1809-10, and the following session. Carlyle was about fourteen when he took out volumes of Shakespeare, of history, (Robertson, Hume and Gibbon,) travel books, the Spectator, plays by Congreve, novels by Fielding, foreign classics such as Gil Blas and Don Quixote, and the Arabian Nights. "What is remarkable," writes Masson in his Edinburgh Sketches, "is the run upon books of voyages and travels, and on classic books of English literature, or books of mere literary amusement, rather than on academic books."

But this sort of general reading, pursued on a personal plan with a view to the mental enlargement of the individual, is very much in line with the tradition of Carlyle's home, and the homes of his intelligent contemporaries of humble birth. In the absence of tutorial guidance, it seemed more important to get on with one's education than to "do the set books." Later in life, Carlyle kept up his interest in libraries, giving evidence in 1849 for the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the administration of the British Museum. (Symons, Life of Carlyle.)

The omnivorous young reader was everywhere to be found in the old Scotland; his type may be dying out in the age of the visual aid. From Carlyle's library explorations at the beginning of the century we may pass to Patrick Geddes, whose name stands last on our list of fifty individuals. As soon as Geddes could read well, (not long after 1860), his father (see p.132) "took him one day to Perth and let him join the Mechanics' Library. He...began to read at the rate of nine or ten books a week until, in his own expression, he had devoured the home library and soaked up the public one." (Boardman, Life of Patrick Geddes.)

Not much later, Barrie and his mother were obtaining from a library, (a penny for three days,) such childhood classics as Robinson Crusoe. "The Pilgrim's Progress we had in the house; it was as common a possession as a dresser-head. Besides reading every book we could hire or borrow, I also bought one now and then, and while buying, (it was the occupation of weeks,) I read, standing at the counter, most of the other books in the shop." (Margaret Ogilvy.) These words of Barrie's, together with the account of the schooling of John Shand in What Every Woman Knows, give a fair idea of how the aspiring Scottish lad came by the books he read -- he begged, borrowed, and all but stole them.

It need not, however, be supposed that the libraries catered exclusively, or even mainly, for those whose tastes were serious. On the contrary, many heads were shaken over the frivolity of the reading encouraged by these institutions. "Uncle Adam" in Susan Ferrier's Inheritance fears for his reputation, should his passion for Scott's novels lead him astray: "True, there were libraries in Barnford; but to have recourse to a circulating library! to have it through the town that he was a nouvelle reader -- there was distraction in the thought."

Nevertheless, with due respect to the misgivings of the good and godly, the influence of libraries on the Scottish community was almost wholly beneficial. Carlyle makes this point with unaccustomed tolerance in The Hero as Man of Letters: "Not the wretchedest circulating library novel which foolish girls thumb and con in remote villages, but will help to regulate the actual practical weddings and households of those foolish girls."

##### 5) Newspapers.

If we add the newspaper to the books found at home and the books borrowed from the library, our picture of the reading-habits of the early 19th. century will be complete.

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The newspaper of those days was not the popular entertainer it has since become, nor was its information so new, since copies were shared by friends and passed from hand to hand. But it provided solid reading for the thoughtful student of current affairs, and since the local press still flourished, and the practice of syndicating articles by well-known personalities was as yet unknown, the hospitable columns of many a paper welcomed the literary aspirant.

William Thom describes in his Recollections the stratagems by which a writer too poor to buy a newspaper tried to find out if his contribution to it had been accepted; this reminds us that throughout our period the Poets' Corners and similar features in popular newspapers were providing an outlet and a consolation for the frustrated talents of those intelligent members of the working-class who had failed to make literacy a stepping-stone to success. (See also p.47)

In the days before the sports edition, however, the reading of newspapers was most keenly practised by the politically minded, especially those ardent debaters, the radical industrial workers. Poor Mr. Balwhidder in Galt's Annals had reason to regret the interest in current affairs shown by the cotton-spinners of Cayenneville, where "several unsatisfied and ambitious spirits clubbed together and got a London newspaper to the Crosskeys, where they were nightly in the habit of meeting and debating about the affairs of the French...they did not like my manner of preaching...they confounded me with their objections...so that I was troubled."

On young people whose political interests were as yet undeveloped, such newspapers as came their way had a more general influence. The age of the comic, "horror" or otherwise, was not yet, and there was no special periodical literature for children in those homes of the past.

Barrie remembers a penny children's magazine from the 'sixties, but even this was only a monthly. A child at the reading age will devour every scrap of print he can lay hands on. At an early age, Thomas Davidson (b. 1838) used to read every line of the Kelso Chronicle weekly, intercepting the family copy before it was delivered at his lonely Border home. (Brown, Memoir of Thomas Davidson.) From these random excursions into current affairs, and from the conversations of his elders around the family hearth, the young Scot must have derived first impressions of the political concerns of the greater world, topics which were not the affair of the school.

#### 6) The Reading of Children.

Although in the ordinary Scottish home of the early 19th. century there were no new children's storybooks, a few tried favourites were likely to be available, supplementing the oral tradition of ballad and legend. (cf. pp. 12, 12) Besides Bible stories and the Pilgrim's Progress, most children knew the standard nursery tales which appeared in cheap collections --- Jack the Giant Killer, Dick Whittington and the rest of the pantomime heroes, who survive to this day. Hugh Miller, as soon as he could read, "began to collect a library in a box of birch-bark about nine inches square, which I found quite large enough to contain a great many immortal works... Those intolerable nuisances, the useful knowledge books," he adds, "had not yet arisen." (My Schools and School Masters.)

This preference for the old staple diet of the nursery against modern improvements was shared by Lockhart, who defended Robinson Crusoe and the other classics from the "tame milk-and-water diet" for children which was coming into fashion before the middle of the century. But it is only fair to point out that the "useful knowledge books" had their supporters amongst the young, just as some contemporary

children actually enjoy reading encyclopedias almost as much as the advertisements would have us believe. Thus J.Y. Simpson as a boy thought that the three most important books in the world were the Bible, Shakespeare and Oliver & Boyd's Almanac; while William Robertson Smith "nourished a passion for universal knowledge on a copious study of the Penny Cyclopaedia." (Black & Chrystal, Life of W. Robertson Smith.)

Once fairly launched upon a reading career, a Scots child was likely to find his way to some Scottish history, especially the stories of Bruce and Wallace; some stories of travel, usually Cook's Voyages; and perhaps Gulliver and the Arabian Nights. Hugh Miller read Homer in translation at an early age, and John Nichol had Grimm's fairy tales by 1840, but his was a home of exceptional culture where books were many. There was a great deal of common ground between young readers, and little novelty. Only at the very end of our period do we find Barrie reading stories of English school life. The American invasion was yet to come.

Exhausting the limited nursery bookshelf, the young reader went on to books written for grown-ups. He read what came his way, not disdaining Boston's Fourfold State and the like, if dry works of divinity were all he could find. By modern standards his precocity was astonishing. Before he was into his 'teens, Charles Mackay, with his tutor, a Gaelic-speaking minister, had read the poetry of Blake, Campbell and Byron; Davidson was reading Knox's History of the Reformation as a schoolboy, and by sixteen had graduated to Reid's philosophy and Lockhart's Life of Scott.

The poems of Burns made an early appeal to most readers, though Somerville had trouble with the dialect at first, having been taught to read English only; and the youthful Nichol exclaimed priggishly, "Do you think that vulgar swearing man a great poet?" Nichol, whose schooling was irregular, (see p. 60), made free of his father's library, and became

the most widely read of our schoolboys. He knew all the standard English poets, the Stories of Scott and Miss Edgeworth, some American writers and the novels of Dumas, besides reading legends of the Rhine on a trip to Germany. (Knight, Memoir of John Nichol.) But Clerk Maxwell had more solid tastes, reading in his aunt's Edinburgh library the works of Swift, Dryden, Hobbes and Butler; while Robertson Smith, who took the Lays of Ancient Rome as a recreation, was delighted to receive a set of celestial maps as a Christmas present, and a copy of the Vulgate on his twelfth birthday.

### 7) The high prestige of literary studies.

All this, it must be emphasised, was reading for pleasure as distinct from the schoolboy's task. English literature was taken seriously as a "subject" only at progressive schools such as Edinburgh Academy; we have already seen (p. 73, 74) that the teaching methods there were not at first inspiring. Of his own free will, however, the young reader drank deep at the fountain of English and Scottish literature.

His preoccupation with belles-lettres -- poetry, history and the novel -- is what chiefly distinguishes him from the young readers of today, a fair percentage of whom are of a non-literary turn of mind, and for whom a whole new library of scientific fantasy is now being written. Such elaborate sugaring of the pill of "useful knowledge" was unknown to the child of the 19th. century in Scotland. In any case, he preferred the humanities.

Amongst the intelligent members of the working-classes, whose way of life was being changed by the industrial revolution, a not unnatural resistance greeted the new scientific studies. There is something rather touching in William Thom's account in his Recollections of the weavers' passion for poetry, especially for the verses of Tannahill, who was one of themselves, and whom they felt to have transcended their common lot. The modern working-class youth, more

practical, extricates himself from a blind-alley by means of a correspondence course leading to some well-paid vocation.

For the hand-loom weavers who were Thom's friends, however, prosperity was a memory and the future held nothing but uncertainty. They had no love for the machine; the power of applied science to give them, in a still distant future, more leisure and a higher standard of living, was something they could not grasp. From their poetry-reading and versifying they expected no material betterment, but rather some sort of spiritual consolation which, for them, the Church did not provide. (cf. p.122)

In those whose thought-processes were better trained and farther-reaching, a resistance to the new machine age was often conscious and deliberate. George Macdonald, born in 1824 to the traditional mode of life of the crofters of Strathbogie, saw the industrial revolution run its course in his lifetime. He found nothing in new inventions to inspire a coming generation as nature had inspired his country boyhood. "There may be great pleasure in watching machine operations, but surely none to equal the pleasure we had." Yet Macdonald was no woolly idealist; as a student he had a flair for mathematics and a keen interest in science.

Scotsmen were quick to master the new techniques; their skill in engineering, for example, soon became proverbial. But tradition was strong, and in the Scottish mind, literature and divinity kept pride of place for a long time. J.Y. Simpson, who was to be one of the great medical men of his century, thought of a literary career when his success at Edinburgh University was not at first as great as he had hoped; (see p.105); and, on the strength of some schoolboy versifying, his friend and mentor, the young doctor Macarthur encouraged him in this. Simpson said in after years that attendance at Arts classes had been of great use to him. (Duns, Life of Sir J.Y. Simpson.)

The fact that fortunes were being made in industry, while preferment in the Church came slowly and literary success might never come at all, did not, during the period we are discussing, impair the traditional prestige of humanistic studies. Thomas Davidson, the "Scottish Probationer", died in his early thirties without having held a ministerial charge, but he did not waver in his allegiance to divinity and the liberal arts. In 1869 he wrote to his friend Scott asking for books: "None of your scientific stuff for me, for I don't care a rap for information. I hate facts -- what this Philistine, positivist, turnipy, electric-machine era calls 'facts.' Send books with ideas -- histories or poems or stories."

### 8) Private study and the development of the tradition.

Davidson was one of a group of German-readers among those we have studied; Macdonald, and, of course, Carlyle, were others. But they did not learn German, as the modern student often must, to keep in touch with scientific and technical developments. The German language attracted them as lovers of poetry and metaphysics. George Macdonald in particular, during a somewhat mysterious summer vacation spent cataloguing a gentleman's library in the north of Scotland, passed beyond the confines of academic studies. From reading the German mystics, new light broke upon a mind already inclined to abstract speculation, and he evolved an original philosophy, founded upon the time-hallowed country life with its crafts and legends, of which the spinning-wheel was a fitting symbol.

It is thus that a creative mind takes the tradition, absorbs it, and makes something new. Lesser men are tied to traditions. Robert Pollok (b. 1798), whose epic poetry in the Miltonic manner was much admired in his short lifetime, but is now forgotten, represents the talented young man entirely conditioned by the accepted values.

His mind was formed by his "mother's divinity"; (p. 138); while writing, he read little English, but Latin or Greek for relaxation, with the Bible constantly by him. His literary work was entirely derivative and bore no relation to the contemporary scene.

Cleverish young men of less education commonly turned to the Scottish past for inspiration; so John Garrick made a study of Scottish history in order to write his Life of Sir William Wallace. As the century proceeds, we see the original lyrical impulse of the old Scots folk-poetry gradually wearing thinner and thinner, until the sentimentalism of the "kailyard school" at last provokes a reaction.

To cling too closely to tradition is to arrest development; those who break with tradition too suddenly run the risk of losing their sense of values. In 19th century Scotland, with its strong traditions and its ferments of change, a happy compromise was often reached. Men of science were usually so well-grounded in religion and humanity that they went on giving these values pride of place in their scheme of the universe, and often in their leisure pursuits.

Thus Livingstone was not primarily a geographer but a man of God. Simpson, whose interest in the problem of pain went back to the vivid disgust felt by a sensitive boy at his first sight of the operating-theatre, practised medicine from motives of compassion, and not in the cold-blooded spirit of the "pure scientist." Thomas Stevenson, as a relaxation from lighthouse engineering, re-taught himself Latin in order to read Lactantius, Vossius and Cardinal Bona. (cf. p. 93.) His contributions to the defence of Christianity apart, the position of a man who reads for his private pleasure old theologians as well as the novels of Scott, can never be in doubt. Such a man in his scientific work sees material progress as a means to spiritual ends.

## 9) A Comprehensive Culture.

A persuasive, though somewhat reactionary, advocate of the marriage of arts and sciences is Dr. John Brown, who, in Horae Subsecivae, gives his vote for "going back to the old manly intellectual and literary culture of the days of Sydenham, Arbuthnot and Gregory; when a physician fed, enlarged and quickened his entire nature; when he lived in the world of letters as a freeholder and revered the ancients, while at the same time he pushed on among his fellows and lived in the present." To this end, he drew up a formidable curriculum for the medical student, who should, in his opinion, learn modern as well as ancient languages and know how to use his own; pursue experimental science as well as keeping up his reading of the ancient and the English classics, "not to mention authors on deeper and more sacred subjects." Sustained by this varied mental diet, medical students would have "Happier and healthier minds, and make none the worse doctors."

Masson describes Brown as "protesting against the run upon science, ever new science, in the medicine of his day, and trying to hark back the profession to the good old virtues of vigorous rule of thumb." Noting Brown's dislike of the purely speculative spirit, Masson thinks this was "rooted to some degree in the fine devoutness of his nature, his unswerving fidelity to his inherited religion." Brown was, in short, a traditionalist. His professional views are so old-fashioned as to have become, in an age of psycho-somatic medicine, positively avant-garde; his educational principles set an ideal which may be impossible, but remains an ideal.

If Brown lived today, he might not make a success of a general practice; it is fitting that he is remembered by his Horae Subsecivae, his leisure hours, for it was on his spare-time pursuits that he placed most value. With all his blind-spots, easily pointed out today, Brown would have

preserved if he could the whole man in the scientific specialist. His wisdom anticipated the conclusion, reached today by every thinking person, that science and the humanities become divorced at peril to the whole human race.

The 19th. century was probably the last period in our history in which a gifted student could aspire to take all knowledge for his province. An interest in science could still go hand in hand with a passion for poetry or philosophy, without giving up hope of achieving distinction in both spheres. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the books which our forefathers chose to influence them.

The young Patrick Geddes, for example, who had to study art and science by himself for want of appropriate career-guidance in his school (p. 132 ), was wide in his sympathies from the beginning; he was to seek to be a reconciler of specialist interests to the end. In youth he had two heroes: "for him the Lay Sermons of Huxley and Sartor Resartus of Carlyle represented the supreme examples, the contrasted poles of literature. The Sermons he took as scientific writing at its clearest and keenest, Sartor as the expression of moral passion at its deepest."

Arriving in London, he chose his place of study and his lodgings so that he could work with Huxley and gaze upon Carlyle.

#### 10) The reader's distractions.

All this reading, it must be repeated, was accomplished against the background of a society simpler than ours. The poor child worked hard on the farm or in the factory from an early age, and had few amusements apart from fair-days and Hallowe'en or Hogmanay junketings. Dancing and sport were outdoor pastimes; in the cramped and often overcrowded home, story-telling round the fire, or a book by candle-

light made a diversion highly esteemed by young and old.

In the recollections even of well-to-do children we hear far less of leisure-time pursuits other than reading than we would today. Clerk Maxwell had a relatively carefree childhood, sharing in the life and amusements of the countryside, so that his letters, a few of which have been preserved, (Campbell & Garnett, Life.) are more boy-like and natural than most juvenile writings of his time. At the age of ten, just before the shades of the prison-house closed round him, he was experimenting with sailing in a tub, and helping with potato-lifting, encouraged in these outdoor diversions by his unconventional father. Later, at Edinburgh, he learned to swim, and went to a dancing-class, where he excelled. Round about the same time he writes home describing a visit to the "Virginian minstrels."

In Glasgow, also in the 'forties, John Nichol too attended dancing-lessons, and was entertained by plays with marionettes. Twenty years later, Barrie saw a puppet-show over a booksellers' shop at Kirriemuir, and fell in love with the theatre on being taken behind the scenes at the Dumfrie pantomime. "Such doings," he writes in The Greenwood Hat, "inevitably led to the forming of a dramatic club at school, for which I wrote my first play, Bandalero the Bandit."

Although Barrie (b. 1860) is on the late side for our period, his isolated and therefore significant experiences of entertainment throw into relief the absence of outside amusement in the life of the child a century ago. A certain austerity, a certain propensity, inherited or acquired, for staying at home in the evenings and getting on with the serious concerns of the intellect, contribute to what Stevenson called "the strong Scots accent of the mind."

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## B. Self-Improvement.

### 1) Private enterprise in education.

Glancing back (p. 23 ) to our pilot study of fifty individuals, we recall that while 31 of these individuals are known to have received teaching at home, no fewer than 37, including several who went to good schools and attended a University, were to some extent self-educated; they owed, that is to say, some significant part of their mental training to the pursuit of knowledge by their own efforts, apart from what was taught them in educational institutions. By contrast, the typical student of today pursues a well-mapped professional course and seldom ventures outside its bounds.

A great deal of this traditional private enterprise in education has been described incidentally in the foregoing pages. There is no need to repeat the stories of the self-educated Livingstone (p. 37), Macfarlan, (pp. 37) or Janet Hamilton (p. 37): of the home studies of Clerk Maxwell (p. 37), Nichol, (p. 31), or the Smiths (p. 32); of the scientific experiments of Miller (p. 30), Simpson (p. 40) or Geddes (p. 32); of the language-learning of Macdonald (p. 41), Davidson (p. 61), McNish (p. 41) and both Carlyles (p. 61). Nor need we labour the point that these individual quests for knowledge indicated defects in the school system: on the one hand, its failure to reach all the children from poor homes who were fitted to profit by schooling; on the other hand, the absence from its curriculum of adequate scientific, linguistic or even literary studies.

Far into adult life, the persevering Scot laboured to make good the deficiencies of his early training. To help him, a host of "Popular Educators", useful knowledge books and manuals of instruction of every kind were springing up. Even Lockhart, who is said to have replied to talk about "educating the people" with the succinct retort, "Educate the devil!" -- even Lockhart suggested in 1825 that a "Poor Man's Law Book" would fill a want. "You will agree

with me that they are at present curious in regard to such subjects, that they ought to be so, and that it is a shame that they have not the means of reading what concerns them all in an intelligible form." (Lang, Life of Lockhart.)

The general reading made available by the libraries supplemented the specialised information of the text-books; self-improvement societies brought together those of like mind to study together; and the private student was assisted by a variety of lectures, usually free, given by learned men, such as Birkbeck's famous free Saturday evening lectures for artisans, which began in 1800, and led to the foundation in 1823 of the Glasgow Mechanics' Institution.

## 2) The mixed motives of the adult student.

Voluntary adult education had, then as now, two main inspirations: curiosity -- the desire for knowledge for its own sake; and ambition, the desire to get on in the world. Very often the individual student was motivated by a blend of disinterested curiosity and worldly ambition, in which one or the other constituent might predominate. Thus the musical studies, usually singing or flute-playing, pursued by the minor poets of the time, such as Clark (b. 1810), Gilfillan (b. 1798) or Thom (b. 1798), had a bearing on their ambition to become lyric poets, song-makers working to Scots airs, as did Burns. In the same way, Carrick (b. 1787) made a special study of Scottish literature, partly, no doubt, from a spontaneous interest in the subject, but partly also as a foundation for literary works such as his Life of William Wallace, by which he no doubt hoped to achieve fortune as well as fame.

Some did achieve a career by the cultivation of talents.

Inlah's musical gifts led to work as a piano-tuner for Broadwood's of London, and Ballantine's artistic studies raised him from the artisan level (he began as an apprentice house-painter), to the superior status of an artist-craftsman.

(cf. p. 15). Such efforts as theirs may be regarded as vocational education. Always, however, running parallel with the ambition to make a career, was the genuine love of art and the desire for the free-and-easy, often convivial companionship of the artistic or pseudo-artistic world. (Notes to Whistlebinkie.)

In artistic pursuits, moreover, the gifted young man who was to some measure frustrated educationally could find a personal fulfilment which had little to do with material advancement. Thus James Somerville, returning to his rural home after serving an apprenticeship, found scope for the musical talent he had been cultivating. He "opened evening classes in the parish school of Oldhamstocks, introduced new songs, and taught more people church music than ever before." (Alexander Somerville, Autobiography.) Such a man could build up considerable local prestige. James Somerville, though his family's ambitions for him were unfulfilled (see p. 34), lived a contented enough life, and his small brother Alexander basked in his reflected glory.

Other members of the Somerville family were more practical in their educational aims. Thus Alexander, following the example of another elder brother who had become a forester, was always trying to educate himself above the station of a working-man. It was to this end that he walked many long miles to Dunbar to buy Hutton's Mensuration (cf. p. 2394); but Somerville seems not to have had the kind of intelligence needed to fulfil his ambition.

Another clever young man who failed to harness his talents to a career was John Younger. In his autobiography he recounts how he "with two friends tried to learn arithmetic and grammar, but never found time. We were past our school time, and the rule part of the matter appeared like a drudgery to the mind." He concludes sadly, "I wanted the requisite schooling to enable me to set out for even a clerkship."

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Hugh Miller, on the other hand, having married above his station in life, determined to leave the ranks of the manual workers. So high was the educational standard he had achieved and maintained, despite an unsatisfactory, though reasonably prolonged schooling (p. 40), that he had no serious difficulty in fulfilling this ambition, finding a career in journalism, and, eventually, a fair degree of literary celebrity, by way of a job in a bank. Another who met with modest success by personal effort was John Graeme (b. 1797), who, although equipped only with an elementary schooling, studied medicine in his spare time, to become the humblest sort of doctor, with a practice among the poor of Glasgow's High Street.

A consciousness of superior merit made the youth whose start in life had been poor strive to better himself by education; but if his material ambitions came to nothing, he might well retain a love of learning for its own sake, and a disinterested pride in his acquirements, which would be respected by his fellows. John Younger, whose ~~education~~ schooling was rudimentary, writes a revealing account of the early days of an intelligent lad, educationally frustrated, but striving hard to repair his deficiencies:

"My greatest felt want then, next to a proper supply of daily bread, was a want of that education to arrange and express my ideas. This was a fettering of faculties quite puzzling, over which the thoughts of the mind effervesced to bursting... My mind seemed in a hurry to live, grasping at all things at once." Although he worked a twelve-hour day at the cobbler's bench, Younger found time to attend a Sabbath evening-school in a neighbouring parish, and spent all his week-day leisure sharing with friends an eager intellectual life, "talking and reasoning about life, religion, principle and poetry."

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Younger had little worldly success, but he found consolation in literature, in conversation and in fishing, on which he wrote a book. Typical of many of his kind who are quite unremembered now, he turned inevitably to radical politics. Towards the end of his life, when a letter of his -- he was a prolific correspondent -- was ignored by a Duke, he wrote bitterly: "But you see it is needless to look to Dukes and their dogs except to get worried...How can I read Shakespeare, Milton and Burns, and think of dukes and dogs?" (John Younger, Autobiography.)

### 3) Society and the self-educated man.

The upward thrust of the self-educated man for whom there was as yet little vocational opportunity made a ferment in society. Those of a sanguine temperament could see in this all things working together for good, the point of view expressed by Galt's "Reverend Mr. Balwhidder" who was delighted in 1810 to receive as a testimonial "a well-penned inscription, written by a weaver-lad that works for his daily bread. Such a thing would have been a prodigy at the beginning of my ministry, but the progress of book-learning and education has been wonderful since, and with it has come a spirit of greater liberality than the world knew before, bringing men of adverse principles and doctrines into a more humane communion with each other."

It would be pleasant to regard as typical this tolerant expression of Christian optimism. Actually there was considerable bitterness behind the struggle for popular education. The most notable political champion of this cause was Brougham, a Scotsman, who incurred much odium by his efforts to spread the "dangerous" knowledge of science and economics. Progressive in his views, it was his belief that Mechanics' Institutes and other establishments for instructing the lower classes would in time work out the cure for all political injustice by making the people too strong for the government.

(See Garrett, Life of Brougham.)

Men like Younger and Somerville were ardent supporters of Brougham; they were no great respecters of persons or institutions, and keenly aware from personal experience of the forces of reaction which hoped to suppress knowledge and free discussion. "Burns," wrote Younger, "confirmed my former suspicion that the world was made for me as well as for Caesar, and I am yet convinced that there is no lesson of which the human race still stands in more need than this, which I do not understand to be taught in colleges any more than in kirks."

For the intelligent working-man, with his "toils obscure" and his unfulfilled ambitions, education could be a heady draught. Janet Hamilton, with a conservatism which is said to be typically feminine, points out some dangers in her Essay on Self-Education, and suggests some safeguards. A practical Scotswoman, she comes down heavily on the side of vocational training. The working-man whose time and means are scant and precious, should have a master-idea to work out, a position to attain, a purpose to accomplish.

She says that with a "respectable proficiency in arithmetic, engineering, drawing, mensuration and the practical and working departments of mechanical science...he will be unfortunate indeed if he cannot improve his position in society." A self-educated man may become a skilled worker, a clerk or even a minister; he should therefore use his studies to achieve some specific goal, avoiding pointless tale-reading or addiction to the theatre, which she classes as a dissipation along with gambling and drink. He should also devote himself to Christian principles and the "culture of the heart", beware of pride. Let it not be said of him, "John has grown a proud sulky fellow since he took so much to books and attending mechanics' institutes."

4) Moral purpose in adult education.

Such is human frailty that, despite Mrs. Hamilton's sage advice, many a self-educated workman continued to harbour feelings of dissatisfaction with his lot. Nevertheless, the moral purpose which she discerns in education, the aim of which should be character building as well as worldly progress, is very characteristic of the old Scotland. Hugh Miller associated education and a stable home life with moral well-being, ignorance and the decay of the home with depravity.

"An education in Scotland," he writes in My Schools and Schoolmasters, "however secular in its character, always casts a certain amount of enlightenment on the conscience; a home, however humble, whose inmates win their bread by honest industry, has a similar effect; but where for generations there has been no education of any kind, or in which bread has been the wages of infancy, the moral sense seems so wholly obliterated that there appears to survive nothing in the mind to which the missionary or the moralist can appeal."

Miller is writing of a contemporary problem(1857), which, despite the poverty and sometimes wretched circumstances of the Scottish peasant, (cf. p. 78), was made urgent by the horrifying lives lived under laissez-faire economics by large sections of the industrial workers. Universal compulsory elementary schooling was one obvious remedy, soon to be applied, together with other social reforms such as factory and public health legislation. In the meantime, the mechanics' institutes and other classes for adults who had failed to obtain an adequate education in childhood provided first aid in a desperate situation.

Education thus became a missionary enterprise, and self-improvement took its place among the moral duties of those who sought the highest good. The idea, so often met with in English educational history at this period, that ~~education~~

knowledge is "dangerous" for all but a chosen few, is foreign to the Scottish tradition. In self-education as in parenthood, the self-respecting Scottish parent accepted, and indeed claimed, a total responsibility. Hugh Miller condemns the clergyman who preaches down to the working man, and the text-book writer who tries to spoon-feed his readers: "All the attempts at originating a cheap literature that have failed have been attempts pitched too low; the higher-toned efforts have usually succeeded."

For the working-man who sought to improve his mind, long hours of labour and straitened means offered real obstacles to progress, nor did his overcrowded home offer much peace or privacy for study. Some of the hopeless wishes of the past strike with a certain irony on the modern ear. Thus Hugh Miller wrote: "A half-holiday every week would be a mighty boon to the working-man who has acquired a taste for the quiet pleasures of the intellect"; and George Macdonald in his Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood made the still more revolutionary proposal that some mechanics might be set free to attend their institutions in the morning instead of the evening, since "labour, sleep, thought, labour again, seems to me to be the right order with those who, earning their bread by the sweat of the brow, would yet remember that man shall not live by bread alone."

With what eagerness would such adult students as these crowd the benches of full-time colleges for workers, or utilise to the full the leisure offered by a five-day week, an eight-hour day! But before drawing odious comparisons we should remember that the self-educated worker of a century ago would be reaching the University and entering the professions today. It was an irony of the times we are studying that industrial society, which stimulated the wits of thinking men, offered fewer opportunities to the "lad o' parts" than the traditional rural way of life.

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## 5) The Pleasures of Debate.

Undeterred by the obstacles in their path, the self-educators pressed on towards some ill-defined goal. The more serious-minded attended classes and pursued planned courses of reading; but all, including many more frivolous characters, enjoyed the pleasures of debate. A description, all the more interesting because of its undercurrent of disapproval, of a small industrial community around the beginning of the century was given to Dr. Duns, the biographer of J.Y. Simpson, by an old inhabitant of Bathgate, who held that his native place had greatly improved in his lifetime.

In his young days the townspeople, chiefly hand-loom weavers, were a quick-witted but sceptical and hard-drinking race, amongst whom "religion was low and morality no better." A feature of their way of life was keen and constant debate on the affairs of Kirk and commonwealth. It was indeed only natural that weavers, always a reflective body of men, and one whose whole way future was crumbling before the advent of the machine, should seek by a process of free discussion to re-examine their position in the scheme of things. Their special circumstances intensified the inborn Scottish passion for argument, and gave it a new direction, away from the theological matters which had absorbed Scotsmen for so long.

For an example of the sort of conclusions working-class Scotsmen were reaching in their endless debates, we may turn to David Farquhar's prize essay in the National Sabbath Essay competition of 1847. Farquhar (b.1820), whose struggles to obtain education are described on p. 84, worked a thirteen-hour day in a Dundee foundry. He was a member of a mutual improvement society, the members of which learned to speak and to write, and encouraged each other in reading.

Thirteen of the members of this society tried the competition, and all received honourable mention, which suggests a certain amount of collaboration and mutual discussion. Of like mind, it may be presumed, with his friends, Farquhar defends the Sabbath on educational and cultural grounds. The labourer, he asserts, has been converted into a mere machine - a tool. "Those qualities of his nature that constitute him a rational and intelligent being, and the proper exercise of which produce his greatest happiness, are nearly suspended for ten, twelve or fourteen hours a day, and were it not for the Sabbath, would perish."

Farquhar, it will be seen, took a poor view of the work by which he earned his daily bread; and indeed the work was not commensurate with his talents. (Yet he was no idler; on the contrary, during a six months' spell of unemployment he studied drawing to improve his skill, earning thereby his employer's commendation.) There were thousands of Farquhars up and down the Scotland of their time, hoping by self-improvement either to escape from "mind-starving mechanical occupations", or, failing this, to find in private reading and discussion with friends some compensation for the frustrations of daily life.

Naturally there were others besides manual workers who owed some part of their development to the practice of debate. Cockburn thought of himself as belonging to a "discussing age" --- and this despite the inadvisability of free comment upon politics during the early years of the century. An enthusiastic member of the debating societies of Edinburgh University, he belonged first to the Academical, which flourished from 1796 to 1816, and later to the Speculative, that same Speculative which Stevenson much later described as the best thing in Edinburgh. "No part of my training

did me so much good," wrote Cockburn.

Another account of this excellent club is given by Blackie in his Notes of a Life. It was, he says, an association of young men connected with the University and with liberal professions, especially law, for the purpose of intellectual culture and the practice of public speaking. As an adjunct to academic training, it was a training-school in confidence and readiness of speech; also "a training-school for life, and like life, an excellent castigator of conceit." Blackie shrewdly commends the practice of debate as specially useful for "youths of local importance in their own parish or provincial town."

The subjects for debate were generally chosen from English parliamentary history, and thus Blackie was "introduced to a subject of which my own habit of mind and our defective academic curriculum had left me altogether ignorant." Here again the shortcomings of school and University were quietly made good by the private researches of individuals. It may be recalled that at an earlier date Scott's historical studies which in the event contributed so much to the national tradition, were pursued as a pastime.

#### 6) The high value placed on self-culture.

Amongst academic figures Blackie, and, a few decades later, Patrick Geddes, showed a progressive attitude not shared by all their colleagues in attaching great educational importance to the debating society, the sing-song, the common meal, and similar manifestations of the "corporate life" of University students. For the self-taught student outside the academic fold, voluntary associations of the like-minded naturally occupied a central place in the educational scheme. The self-educated were not humble.

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Hugh Miller, who wrote his autobiography for the benefit of working men, in the hope of "rousing the humbler classes to the important work of self-culture and self-government", cheers them by the assurance that, "They will find that by far the best schools I ever attended are schools open to them all." Still higher is the opinion of self-education expressed by the Rev. George Gilfillan in his Memoir of Janet Hamilton, where, praising the hardihood of spirit of the self-taught, he concludes:

"Self-teaching is unquestionably fraught with advantages for which no amount of culture can compensate. Its source being the soul, it is obvious that the self-educated person has the privilege of coming more directly into contact with that interior light. Far more than the highly cultured man, he is alone with his own spirit and realises it almost as a divine presence within him. "

Gilfillan, as was natural for one of his time and calling, harks back to the spiritual sources and applications of education, far more important to him than its utilitarian aspects, --- though the latter were also ever-present in the minds of those of his contemporaries who actually achieved an education by their own efforts. As a biographer, he was in sympathy with his subject, Janet Hamilton, who, when asked how she developed her literary gift, once replied proudly, "Shakespeare was my teacher; my ear is also a guide so far; and besides all this, God has given me a good tack of natural grammar."

With the great minds of the past available as teachers in every library, and a sturdy confidence in the God-given powers of mother-wit, the 19th, century Scot saw no serious obstacle in the way of learning. Writing of the career of James Ballantine (cf. p. 45 ), who by his own efforts reached the educational standard necessary for admission to the

Trustees' School of Art in Edinburgh, and who became novelist, playwright and poet as well as designing windows for the House of Lords, William Bell Scott expresses the confident view current in his lifetime of the opportunities afforded by his native land: "Scotland is the country where self-education abounds, and where mental powers in all walks of life assert themselves in spite of fate and fortune."

### 7) Conclusions.

It is hardly putting it too strongly to say that the typical Scot of the first half of the 19th century was a self-educated man, in whose learning-process schools and University played an incidental part. In good homes, where dire economic pressure and industrial upheaval had not entirely disrupted family life, the full responsibility for education, which was a religious duty, was accepted by the parents, and in due course passed on to the student himself in early manhood.

The foundation of all schooling was laid in the home, where the elements were commonly taught by one of both parents. Here too moral principles and the rudiments of the faith were inculcated, and the Scottish tradition of song and story became part of the growing child from infancy onwards.

As the child grew older, he continued, if he were intelligent, to supplement his schooling by the reading of books, which were available to some extent even amongst those in humble circumstances, either as household ~~poss~~ treasures, or as library-borrowings. His leisure interests were also fostered by parents or other relatives; in this way, the child whose bent was in the direction of artistic, scientific, linguistic, literary or historical studies which might not be properly developed in his school, often managed to come by the knowledge he sought.

By contrast with the school, the atmosphere of the normal home was humane and kindly. Here the child worked side by side with his elders at the shared household tasks. In all walks of life, he was quite commonly introduced to the world of work by learning from his father; girls too served a domestic apprenticeship with thrifty Scottish mothers.

As he grew up, he would be able, in any well-established village or town, to take advantage of opportunities for adult education offered by the community. D.M. Moir, who drew his local colour from his native town of Musselburgh, wrote in Mansie Wauch: "Such doings in an enlightened age and a civilised country! in a town where we have three kirks, a grammar school, a subscription library, a ladies' benevolent society, a mechanics' institution and a debating club!" When we remember that Moir's fictitious community of the 1830's also benefited from the teaching of "Springheel the dancing-master", we may well agree that here was a civilised country, an enlightened age.

In the new industrial communities and the expanding cities, however, the prospect was not so bright. Not only were the schools set up by Church and private enterprise failing to adjust themselves to movements of population, but the sweated labour of the factory was attacking the foundations of the home. As a peasant-farmer or worker in a cottage-industry, the traditional Scottish family might be poor, even miserably poor, but their life was centred around the home, and the spiritual standards which they set for themselves were sometimes actually strengthened by a frugal existence.

But now under industrialism many children were growing up illiterate and without moral training, sometimes though no fault of the harassed parents, sometimes because in new surroundings the old values had lapsed. We have seen in Chapters Three and Four that educational pioneers tried

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to stem this rising tide of illiteracy and barbarism; legislation to help them in their labours was beginning, and would soon be extended to provide elementary schooling for all.

In the meantime, a flourishing movement for adult education grew up more or less spontaneously amongst the intelligent working people who knew themselves to be educationally frustrated. This movement expressed itself through mechanics' institutes, mutual improvement societies, debating clubs and the like; while everywhere there were eager readers applying their minds not only to vocational studies which might aid them in worldly advancement, but also to the traditional disciplines, literature, philosophy and divinity, the prestige of which remained high even in a community which was being visibly moulded by the new discoveries of science.

The self-educated Scot of the 19th. century did not share the feelings of inferiority to the products of more conventional education which was common, and remains common, in the south. He was encouraged in his individual approach to study, not only by the whole tradition which we have been outlining in these pages, but also by the active moral support of many eminent Scotsmen of the time, some of them themselves the products of good schools and of the Universities. The typical intellectual hero was Carlyle, who acknowledged few debts to his teachers, and is remembered for his originality -- the power to break new ground, the self-reliance needed to go on alone.

In this atmosphere, the value of self-education became for many a kind of religion. That rugged individualism had its limitations is easily seen today; but at the time the Scotsman's independence and perseverance in educating

himself when other helpers failed, did much to disguise the defects of Scottish educational institutions --- their irregular standards and narrowness of curriculum ---, while the admirable qualities of the successful, and often, wholly or in part, self-educated, Scot raised the prestige of his national education throughout the world.

## CHAPTER SEVEN.

### The Education of Girls.

The position of women and their education --- the traditional education of girls --- a good country education --- women of high intelligence --- common criticisms of female education --- towards a better education for girls --- education for enforced leisure --- frustration of the intelligent woman --- educational theories of Mrs. Grant --- the education of working-class girls --- progress in the education of girls --- conclusions.

1) The Position of Women and their Education.

No apology need be made for giving separate consideration to the education of girls, whether during our period of study or at any other date. To some extent the problems involved in educating girls both for their future as wives and mothers and for their prospective share in the world of work as well as in the common culture, are perpetual and virtually insoluble. The fact that the Scottish tradition is mainly co-educational does not automatically resolve these problems. The modern girl, whether educated separately or together with boys, requires the same general and vocational preparation as her brothers, and also has needs and interests of her own which he does not share. Since time and energy are limited, this sets a conundrum for the educator.

These difficulties were not so apparent in the early 19th. century. Although, as we have already seen (pp. 64, 78), girls attended the common schools of Scotland by a well-established tradition, they did not come to school in such numbers as boys, nor did they stay so long. The Universities and the famous High Schools of Glasgow or Edinburgh, together with other schools of superior status, were closed to girls. Although female workers abounded in industrial communities, the Mechanics' Institutes and other less formal adult education groups were for male workers only. In general, the notion of education as a key to worldly advancement did not apply to girls.

Thousands of women were at work in field or factory both before and after marriage; many married women were working partners with their husbands in various enterprises, such as farming or shop-keeping; numerous single women of the

educated classes were employed as governesses or companions, while a few exceptional women made a living as writers. Nevertheless, the only career really valued for a girl was marriage. Even in enlightened Edinburgh, the spinster Susan Ferrier was of little account socially, despite a literary success which bore the hallmark of Sir Walter's approval; in her later years she was readily suffered to live a life of retirement, with no society but that of a few close friends and little celebrity. By contrast, male writers of far less merit might, as we have seen, (p. 47), have considerable social success and any amount of convivial companionship.

Now, there was nothing new about the position of woman in early 19th. century society, except the growing practice of employing women in factories, and therefore outwith the home. Educationally, this was not a progressive step. The female factory worker could not maintain the values in her home which her ancestresses, however overworked and underpaid, had managed to conserve under a system of cottage industry combined with work on the land; nor did she find the energy and independence to assert herself in the industrial sphere, remaining, on the contrary, little more than a source of cheap labour.

The changes in the position of woman, the revolutionary demands for equality of opportunity, accompanied by a feminine invasion of many exclusively masculine preserves, had not yet begun. These innovations were, however, foreshadowed in our period by a growing feeling that families of any social pretensions should give some sort of a higher education to their daughters as well as to their sons, even though the girls were not expected to use their acquirements towards a career.

Thus, while the girl of humble origins need only learn enough to read her Bible and manage her future household, the girl of slightly higher social standing might expect some schooling beyond mere literacy, some training beyond that of the home. The purpose of this ever-extending education for girls was, as we shall presently see, still in doubt. In practice, a well-brought-up girl of our period would study with masters and probably attend schools for shorter or longer periods; but her education, like her expected future, would still centre around home life.

## 2) The traditional education of girls.

At an earlier period, even this degree of education was thought excessive for girls. Susan Ferrier in Marriage (1818) sketches the typical product of an older tradition in "Mrs.

McShake", an elderly gentlewoman whose Doric is of the broadest: "She was born at a time (presumably about 1750) when Scotland was very different from what it is now. Female education was little attended to, even in families of the highest rank; consequently the ladies of those days possessed a raciness in their manners and ideas that we should vainly seek for in this age of cultivation and refinements." These fictional ladies were Lord Cockburn's real-life heroines -- "a singular race of excellent Scotch old ladies...their language like their habits entirely Scotch, but without any vulgarity other than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for."

The main educational deficiency of these Scottish gentlewomen, products of the 18th. century, was a lack of surface polish and drawing-room accomplishments. Innocent of schooling, they were capable in practical matters, pithy in conversation, and sometimes well-read -- more widely-read than was later considered suitable in a genteel female. Theirs was mainly the education of experience, and their

independence of character in maturity was the result of an untrammelled youth.

Far into the 19th. century, their simple educational tradition lingered on in the outlying parts of the country, where modern "frills" were hard to come by. A gloomy view of the state of education in the Highlands is expressed by the cultivated Miss Ferrier through one of the characters in her novel Marriage: "If a woman can nurse her bairns, mak their claes and manage her hoose, what mair need she do? If she can play a tune on the spinet, and dance a reel, and play a rubber at whist -- nae doot these are accomplishments, but they're soon learnt. Education! pooh!"

The limitations of the traditional education are further indicated in the same book by a conversation between two delightful, if reactionary, Highland spinsters, concerned about the schooling of their nieces: "I'm certain (Miss Grizzy opines) that reading does young people much harm. It puts things into their heads that never would have been there but for books..." "Much depends upon the choice of books," said Miss Jacky. "Fordyce's Sermons and the History of Scotland are two of the very few books I would put into the hands of a young woman. Our girls have read little else." Under the care of their aunts, these girls learned "white sewing" -- a popular accomplishment of the time; reading and writing "in the worst manner". Occasionally they wore a "collar" (for deportment), or learned the notes on the spinet; and this education was completed by two years at a "provincial boarding-school."

In fact, Miss Ferrier, a lady from the capital, conversant with all the progressive notions of her day, took a poor view of the attainments of her country cousins.

### 3) A Good Country Education.

It must be remembered, however, that the generally accepted standard of the good life was not, in the early 19th. century, set by urban examples as it is today. The education then given to country gentlewomen might be defended on the sensible grounds that their training fitted them to cope with their environment. This is the view taken by Norman Macleod, a Highlander by birth, who in his Reminiscences describes the schooling given to the daughters of an isolated manse by a governess who had a wooden leg; -- lameness seems to have been almost an accepted qualification for school work in the old days! Despite her handicap, this lady had worked in the best Highland families.

"The education of the manse girls was neither learned nor fashionable. They were taught neither French nor German, music nor drawing, while dancing as an art was out of the question with the wooden leg as the only artist to teach it. The girls, however, were excellent readers, writers and arithmeticians; they could sew, knit, shape clothes and patch to perfection, and give all needful direction for the kitchen, the dairy and the poultry yard."

These skills, together with their abundant store of practical good sense, fitted the "manse girls" for a domestic life in the country. They were thoroughly capable, and, since their minds had not been neglected, they possessed resources for the wise use of leisure. Unfortunately, in lonely districts where social opportunities were few, their marriage-chances were poor; and when, in later life, they sought posts as governesses or teachers, they found it hard to succeed, despite their excellent qualities, for lack of fashionable accomplishments. This was also the experience of George Macdonald's sisters, clever girls, but country-bred.

By the middle of the century life in Scotland was becoming increasingly complex, more and more urbanised, so that the traditional country education was outmoded. But the well-read, homely, capable woman whom such a schooling produced remained a familiar figure in the life of the time. At best such a woman, although she did not aspire to have a career of her own, or even to sparkle in the drawing-room, could exert a strong influence both in the family circle and in the community. Her special place as a mother of great men we have already noted (p.37). Hugh Miller has this to say of Cromarty in the 'thirties.

"The town had its small but very choice circle of accomplished intellectual ladies who, earlier in the century, would have been perhaps described as members of the blue-stocking sisterhood; but the advancing intelligence of the age had rendered the phrase obsolete, and they simply took their place as well-informed sensible women, whose acquaintance with the best authors was regarded as in no degree disqualifying them for their proper duties as wives or daughters."

Alas! the "intellectual ladies" were not to remain content to "take their place" in a man-made society for many generations more! Their values were in danger of being swept away in their own time by the rising tide of "accomplishments", and half-a century later women of intelligence were to become sharply critical of their passive acceptance of the feminine role. Yet in their day and generation they had a certain unpretentious excellence of their own.

#### 4) Women of High intelligence.

A restricted mode of education bears hardest on those most richly endowed by nature with intelligence. Yet the few intelligent girls whose educational histories were included with our fifty selected individuals, settled down surprisingly well to their typical 19th. century lives.

Later in this chapter we shall examine the educational theories of Janet Hamilton (b. 1795), who, in spite of her inadequate schooling and poor start in life (pp. 37 ), was able to preach contentment from the standpoint of one who had made terms with circumstance. The other home-educated girl, Mary Jane Smith, (b. 1843), shared the scholastic opportunities of her family, (see pp. 132-134). Her early death makes it impossible to judge her career, which might have taken her into teaching; she was also experimenting with literary work. The Smiths as a family seemed confident in the future, though handicapped by constitutional weakness, and Mary Jane's prospects would no doubt have been reasonably bright, had she lived.

Typical of the life-history of a well-educated intelligent middle-class Scotswoman of the early 19th. century is the case of Jemima Beveridge (b. 1795.) She attended first a co-educational school, presumably the burgh school, in her native Dunfermline, and later went to a good girls' boarding-school in Edinburgh, where she so profited by the teaching given her that a life-long taste for serious reading was formed. A dominating influence in the development of her large and gifted family, she made her Greek Testament her daily companion to the end of a long, busy and useful life.

Less typical was Jane Welsh Carlyle (b. 1801) --- see p. 139 . To begin with, her situation as an only child was unusual in an age of large families; from this resulted her father's attempt to put her in the place of a son, at a time when such a substitution was not really possible because of the absence of professional opportunities for women. A later Jane Welsh would have studied medicine with a view to succeeding her father in his practice. As it was , the strenuous desire for scholastic excellence instilled in her by her father came to seem in later life somewhat pointless. Apart from the fantastically long hours

of study, the precocity and the male private tutors, Jane's educational history was not unusual for an intelligent girl. She went first to local co-educational schools, then to girls' boarding-schools of varying standard, latterly attending a very good one in Edinburgh. Since there was as yet no University class to which she might proceed, she then continued to study privately at home.

The boarding-school habit was commoner then than now amongst girls from good, but not necessarily pretentious homes. As a country girl grew older, the rough-and-tumble of the local co-educational school (cf. p. 98) became unsuitable; and a variety of suitable day-schools was not to be found except in large centres of population. The choice lay between boarding-school and the governess (cf. p. 127). Hugh Miller's future wife, the daughter of a Cromarty widow of genteel pretensions but reduced circumstances, was educated in Edinburgh where she "boarded with a few other ladies in early womanhood, in the family of Mr. George Thomson the well-known correspondent of Burns;" and Barrie's sister went to boarding-school from a humble but modestly prosperous home. These boarding-schools were small establishments, where the girls lived en famille.

##### 5) Common criticisms of female education.

Hitherto we have been discussing the schooling of the intelligent girl from the home with a greater or smaller financial margin. It must be remembered that the standard of education allowed to the few was not at this time thought necessary or desirable for everybody. The average girl in the old Scotland was barely literate; it was touching to see, in a recent exhibition of Barrie relics, the almost indecipherable letter written, with many mis-spellings, by Barrie's mother, that idolised figure whom her famous son did his best to immortalise. Yet Mrs. Barrie was

(11)

an intelligent woman, an educational force in her home, and fond of reading (see p. 155). When she, and others of her generation, were young, domestic accomplishments together with knowledge of the catechism and the ability to read the Bible were thought the best preparation for an ordinary woman's life.

From the beginning of the century onwards, however, increasing national prosperity and the general march of progress were spreading the notion that this modest standard of female education was not good enough for the daughters of an aspiring family. The new fashionable ideal in education had the advantage of being applicable to girls of all levels of intelligence, for it consisted of a smattering of modern languages, some shallow artistic accomplishments, and a schooling in the social graces.

This curriculum, originally devised for the upper classes, soon became fashionable and therefore desirable throughout the middle ranks of society. Like most innovations, it came in for a good deal of adverse comment, and scathing ~~sexm~~ references abound in the literature of our period. Thus John Younger, describing in his autobiography the rise of the small farmer since 1800, remarks, "A pianoforte and other etceteras must be had for Miss the daughter."

An uncharitable observer of the social scene, "Mrs Soorocks", in Galt's Last of the Lairds, has this to say: "They say Miss Jenny, who cam last week frae the boarding-school at Edinbro, is grown a perfec' beauty, and can play on the spinet, and paint red cabbages and kail blades upon paper. It was a better world when a laird's daughter learned to play on the spinnin' wheel, and kent the wholesome use o' kail blades."

A distrust of the modern elegances in education was not

confined to the homespun philosophers. Many women whose own intelligence owed its development to the solid studies they had pursued for themselves under the traditional regime, disliked the modern emphasis upon "frills" and accomplishments. In Inheritance (1824) Susan Ferrier makes fun of an affected young lady who adorned her letters with scraps of inaccurate French and Italian; into the mouth of another character in the same book she puts this comment: "There's not a house where you go but some of the family are musical. I know one family where there's five grown-up daughters that all play upon the harp, and such a tuning and stringing and thrumming goes on that I declare I get perfectly stupid."

Women of good sense and good traditional education were finding it difficult and confusing to keep up with the times. A superficial broadening of the field of interest, notably in the arts, was taking place, at the expense, they alleged, of depth of reflection. Mrs Grant of Laggan could not keep awake at the opera, though she had no difficulty in taking her place in middle life amongst the Edinburgh literati. Mrs Oliphant too, in Lilliesleaf (1856), describes with relish the lack of comprehension in a quiet country home of musical accomplishments displayed by a young lady visitor; she expresses a preference for "simple national airs."

But still the tide came in: even in the stern north-east new ideas were making headway. In Johnnie Gibb, Alexander, who describes the Disruption period, writes of a farmer's daughter: "Miss Birse had spent the winter at Aberdeen in a fashionable ladies' seminary; and, let me say it, had been wonderfully successful in picking up that uneasy polish and those stilted conventional phrases that lend such a charm to the manner of our proper and properly trained young ladies. She was coming home 'finished!'"

The final devastating comment on the Birse family's attempt to acquire culture on the cheap and in a hurry is reserved for the vernacular of "Meg Raffan", the hen-wife: "Wi' that she taks me awa ben to their hole o a parlour; they've gotten a secont-han' rickie o a piano in't noo for Miss Birse, an twa-three bits o buiks laid doon here and there." The way of the social climber is hard in Scotland.

#### Towards a better education for girls.

In judging all this adverse comment, allowance must be made for a certain native Scots philistinism -- national scorn of pretension reinforced by the universal dislike of change. No doubt the new education suited many girls; some acquired real proficiency in their studies. D.M. Moir, for example, refers in a letter to his daughter Elizabeth, who in the middle of the century was travelling three days a week to Edinburgh from the doctor's comfortable home at Musselburgh, to study Italian, German and French: "She also draws well, and so pleased is her music-teacher with her progress that he is publishing a set of Scots airs with a dedication."

Such a young lady would be an ornament to any prosperous household; numbers of such young ladies were bound to have a humanising influence on the grim old Scotland. If some of the girls' schools were not of a high standard, and if many of their pupils, attending for a few terms only, emerged with a superficial veneer rather than a true culture, still the best girls' schools were good enough to be of service to a Jane Welsh, a Jemima Beveridge. As the century went on, there came into being, as we shall see, some very fine girls' schools, which played a worthy part in developing the higher education of women.

All the same, there was something radically wrong with

the fashionable "ladies' education" of the early 19th. century, in Scotland as elsewhere, and thinking people were concerned to analyse the process and find the error. The Edinburgh Review article of 1810 entitled Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind aims to "turn the attention of women from the trifling pursuits to which they are now condemned." There is no difference, the writer contends, between the understandings of men and women "which may not be accounted for by the difference of circumstances." Yet daughters are kept to occupations, such as needlework, by which they could not earn tenpence a day.

There are fashions in education, the writer continues; the place taken by housewifery a century past is now held by accomplishments. But mere accomplishments have no lasting power, compared with a mind full of ideas. "The pursuit of knowledge," this writer avers, "is the most innocent and interesting occupation which can be given to the female sex ...it keeps away the horrid trash of novels." While admitting that jealousy exists amongst "pompous and foolish men" respecting the education of women, the writer makes the point that if the education of women were improved, that of men would improve also.

So far so good; but the Edinburgh Reviewer, having given so much with one hand, proceeds to take it all away with the other: "We do not wish ~~to~~ a lady to write books, to defend and reply to squabbles about the tomb of Achilles or the plain of Troy -- any more than we wish her to dance at the opera, or play at a public concert, or to put pictures in an exhibition, because she has learned music, dancing and drawing."

We are back, in fact, at the original conception of education as a preparation for domestic life, remembering always that the domestic life of a lady in the days of many servants involved no domestic duties. It is easy to see

that the pursuit of knowledge which must not, once obtained, be put to any use, would soon become as empty and unsatisfying as the most time-wasting accomplishment ever devised to while away the ~~xxx~~ idle hours.

### 7) Education for enforced leisure.

The pointlessness of a lady's life, which increased as the national standard of living rose, was naturally much in the minds of those who had to live it. A typical expression of the gentlewoman's point of view is Susan Ferrier's novel Marriage, really a treatise on education, illustrated by the fictional adventures of twin sisters, one fashionably brought up to a fashionable London life, the other trained in a sensible family to adorn the less ostentatious but (in Miss Ferrier's opinion) more intelligent society of Edinburgh.

The author is an enthusiast for social training, provided that "in the societies of professed amusement are to be met the learned, the studious and the rational." Such a milieu is not, according to Miss Ferrier, provided by the great world of London. She holds up to ridicule the silly ideas of Lady Juliana, who engaged French and Italian governesses, and bought modern treatises on education. "But amidst this splendid display...THE BOOK found no place."

With these new-fangled and morally unsatisfactory notions is contrasted the wise home education of "Mrs Douglas", based on religious principles, and on the maxim, "L'inutilité de la vie des femmes est la première source de leurs désordres." How to avoid a useless life? Miss Ferrier recommends a studious habit of mind and the cultivation of practical religion in works of charity. But it must be admitted that generations of girls and women found this prescription of limited efficacy.

The educational problem was simplified for girls who, because of straitened means or family responsibilities, would always have plenty of work, however lowly, ready to hand. Securely grounded in a family life where everyone cultivated habits of industry, Norman Macleod could afford to make pointed criticisms in his Reminiscences of the current education of girls:

"One wonders what becomes of all this fashionable education in the future life of the young lady. What French or German books does she read as a maid or matron? what music does she love and practise for the sake of its own beauty? The manse girls could read and speak two languages at least -- Gaelic and English. They could sing, too, their own Highland ditties...acquired habits of reflective observation, with a capacity of relishing books, enjoying Nature...and expressing their own thoughts with freshness and force. A fashionable education, on the other hand, is often a mere tying on to a tree of a number of branches without life, instead of developing the tree itself."

The "manse girls" (see p. 127) were always busy in kitchen, farmyard or schoolroom. A traditional mode of life absorbed them, married or single, and in it they found, not only security, but reasonable expression for their energies and talents. In this they were fortunate. The rise of the "fashionable education" cannot be understood unless we remember the Edinburgh Reviewer's statement, startling to a modern reader, that "there are perhaps fifty thousand females in Great Britain who are exempted by circumstances from all necessary labour." A still greater number had a considerable amount of time on their hands, and were debarred by convention from gainful occupations.

8) Frustration of the intelligent woman.

Custom and tradition supported the status of the woman at home, while, if she married, the bearing and rearing of a large family was likely to occupy her youth and middle years. Nevertheless, a measure of frustration did undoubtedly exist amongst clever women of the leisured classes, and even amongst the more usefully occupied working women. It was part of the general social upheaval and questioning of values which was going on everywhere that women should begin to wonder about their position in the scheme of things.

Jane Welsh Carlyle, for example, although she had a first-class brain, and was fortunate in obtaining an education adequate to the development of its powers, did not find the happiness which might have been hoped for in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. She was a restless, fretful girl, and later on, as a childless married woman, she seems to have cherished the belief, which some of her admirers still share, that, despite the brilliant social opportunities put in her way by her marriage with Carlyle, she would somehow or other have done better for herself without him. "When I remember what I am, and what I used to was..." she remarked ruefully in a scrap of doggerel. The fact remains that she never had a career, and that there was in reality no suitable career she might have pursued, except the uncertain life of a creative artist.

In the same family, but born to a humbler lot, Carlyle's clever little sister, of whom Jane once said, "Such a child ought to be educated," failed after all to learn Latin, and settled down to matrimony at Dumfries. Carlyle described her in his Reminiscences as "still a clever, speculative, ardent and affectionate and discerning woman, but much zersplittert by the cares of life; zersplittert -- steadily denied acumination or definite consistency and direction to a point; a tragedy often repeated in this poor world."

How to avoid becoming "zersplittert" -- it is a recurrent feminine problem. The clever women of the early 19th. century tackled it with courage, each in her own way. Many, as we have seen, found fulfilment in a busy home life which included the education of their children; others who had the means and the time to spare gave their energies to good works. Self-discipline and devotion to moral principle seemed the best weapons against vain repining.

### 9) The educational theories of Mrs. Grant.

Such principles form the basis of the theory of education evolved by Mrs. Grant of Laggan, who gained her practical experience from teaching her own large family, and, later, from teaching the daughters of others in her own home -- Mrs. Grant did not believe in schools. "My purpose," she wrote to Mrs. Hook in 1808, "is to take a house fit to accommodate a few young ladies, the children of wealthy persons in the upper circumstances of life...The desirable accomplishment of cherishing home feelings, pure affections, domestic habits and a just solid manner of thinking and of digesting the knowledge acquired by reading, is a thing utterly impossible to be done in a school."

Herself a characteristic product of the 18th. century, Mrs. Grant was not attracted to any new ideas in education which might tend to frivolity or superficial display. Her own thoughts had been maturing for many years. As early as 1785 she was writing to Mrs. Smith about the education of her own young family, then growing up in the solitude of Laggan: "Now I am going to make an experiment on my mountain nymphs...Know then that I propose, in the first place, to attend above all things to the culture of the heart, and at leisure and in due time, to that of the understanding; and having secured there main points, to let the manners, in a great measure, shift for themselves."

Mrs. Grant was preoccupied with the building of character, which, in her view, is best developed by family life. Like most matriarchs, she was a successful disciplinarian -- "One or two indulged children might be endured, but a large family of them would be Tophet and Gehenna." But her rule was humane, being based on affection and esteem. We hear nothing of punishments, but much of the power of example: "The most finished coquette was never at greater pains to appear to advantage before her lovers, than I am to conceal every defect and weakness from my children...I never formally forbid them to steal or covet, to envy or traduce...but I always set the contrary virtue in the strongest, fairest light...The kind and degree of good breeding I should most approve and wish for, will naturally result from a well-principled mind, a feeling heart and a just and cultivated taste."

After the culture of the heart, the cultivation of the understanding. The curriculum which Mrs. Grant was later to apply as a teacher of young ladies was sketched in a letter she wrote to Mrs. Brown in 1790, when her eldest daughter, Mary, was pursuing her education in Glasgow.

"I do not wish her to read much at this time, and what she does read I wish to be of a moral and serious cast: sketches of history, biography, poetry or essays of a graver cast. Richardson's are the only novels I would wish to indulge her in. In short, whatever a young creature's mind has a strong bent for should be checked and counterbalanced, to prevent its running into blameable excess. Let her write, dance and attend a geographical class with Mrs. Smith's children. Drawing and music are out of the question; she has neither the ear for the one, nor the turn of fancy which leads to excellence in the other. Tinkling and daubing are tolerable amusements for the superabundant leisure of the wealthy...Needlework is the thing. It exercises fancy,

fixes attention, and by perseverance and excellence in it, habituates the mind to patient application and to those peaceful and still-life pleasures which form the chief enjoyment of every amiable woman."

One feels sure that Mrs. Grant made an admirable job of the education of the well-born young ladies who were entrusted to her care. She had the happy knack of enclosing a regard for the needs of the individual within a framework of discipline and effort. Having personally experienced many of life's trials as well as a few of its triumphs, she places great value upon self-control and the cultivation of an inner peace. To her youngest daughter she writes in 1808:

"Say to yourselves, we shall not trifle away this day, but divide it into certain portions -- so much for reading, so much for work, and so much for walking etc....Invaluable time! was ever anything so precious? Keep up your French and speak it to each other; watch over your respective tempers. This is just the time to tame those tigers, the passions, before they have strength to master you."

Left a widow at the turn of the century with eight children to support, Mrs. Grant had to make her own way in a world designed for men. She did this with conspicuous success, and without any loss of femininity. If any sense of the disadvantages of her sex rankled with her, she does not show it, preferring to combat the difficulties of life with a blend of persistence and stoicism. To the young people in her charge she passed on her own philosophy. A phrase in a letter written to one of her elder daughters in 1789 might epitomise Mrs. Grant's life-work in education: "Dear Charlotte, whatever you learn, do not learn to despise peace, friendship and needlework."

## 10) The education of working-class girls.

Miss Ferrier, Mrs. Grant and others of their type concerned themselves with the education of upper-class girls, whose acquirements were emulated in turn by the rising middle-class. The intelligent woman in a humbler rank of society had few opportunities to develop and use her faculties; but she had the advantage of being kept very busy all her life, with little time for introspection. The modern reader is conscious of a waste of potential power when reading, for example, of John Younger's mother who was "electrified with delight" when given a copy of The Gentle Shepherd, which she read as she sat at her spinning wheel; or of Janet Hamilton reading, in her eighth year, volumes of poetry found on a weaver's loom:

"It was there wi' the poets I wad revel and dream,  
For Milton and Ramsay lay on the breast-beam."

On the whole, however, the ordinary women of the early 19th. century accepted their lot without question. In the struggle to do well by a large family, it was seldom possible to give a clever girl educational opportunities equal to her brothers'. She did not expect this, since school, for her, opened no doors. For example, in the poverty-stricken Somerville family, where the father scraped and saved to give his sons a few winters' schooling, a daughter, Mary, was sent to school for one quarter at the age of ten. It says much for the Scottish tradition that this much was done for her. Even amongst the poor, some degree of literacy was thought proper for the girls who, in later life, would be, among other things, home educators.

Janet Hamilton in her Essay on Self-Education, written towards the middle of the century, comes in her own way to much the same conclusions as those reached fifty years earlier by Mrs. Grant: intellectual ability is an excellent thing in woman, but there are better things, such as moral rectitude and the "culture of the heart." She writes:

"Education of the mind is both useful and becoming in a working woman, but the seat of her strength is not in the head, it is in the heart...Working women, daughters of working mothers with families, your education must chiefly have been that of the hearth and the heart."

Discontent with her own poor and limited life---she never saw a mountain or the sea, or even the Falls of Clyde, so near her home -- does not seem to have occurred to Mrs. Hamilton. Her mental acquirements and her small literary reputation were to her ends in themselves, not a source of profit or a means of escape. Her ideal woman was contented with the domestic role, a fosterer of life --- "one born to build for others and to be forgotten."

#### 11) Progress in the education of girls.

As the century went on, and Scottish everyday life became more complex, opportunities for women became more varied. The education of girls improved steadily, despite the gloomy forebodings of traditionalists in the early years of the century. The last girl on our list of fifty individuals, Mary Jane Smith (b. 1843), would undoubtedly have found, had she lived, a teaching post commensurate with her ability and with the splendid education her parents had given her. Yet she, like others of her generation, had been trained by and for home life. She went to Aberdeen in her 'teens to share student-lodgings with her brothers, not only that she might complete her education, but also in order to "be a mother to the boys." (cf. pp. 132-137). Not only did teaching improve as a profession for women in the latter half of the century, but educated girls began to enter nursing, the commercial world and other spheres.

Basically the Scottish tradition is co-educational. Most of the girls who responded to the challenge of the new careers had been educated in primary schools shared by both sexes. As more and more girls found a secondary education useful,

a higher proportion of girls attended the grammar and other secondary schools, and more of these girls completed the course; until eventually women students took their place in the Scottish Universities, not under a separate collegiate system, but on an equal footing with men.

Nevertheless, the work done during the 19th. century and afterwards by girls' schools, usually intended for the daughters of comfortable homes, must not be forgotten. The development of the large fee-paying girls' ~~xxxx~~ day-schools of high academic standing dates from the 'seventies onwards, and is later than our period of study; but smaller private schools, both boarding and day, existed, as we have seen, throughout our period. Such schools are interesting, if only because their curriculum gives some idea of what was thought necessary or desirable in the upbringing of young ladies at a given time.

Recent articles and correspondence in the Glasgow Herald brought to light detailed information, some at first hand, about Connell's West End Academy. This Glasgow school has already been mentioned (p. 106) because of the progressive methods used there to teach reading. The school was opened in 1860 by the younger Connell, who taught English subjects, and conducted an optional Latin class during a pre-school hour, during which non-Latin pupils assembled for dancing. The regular subjects were French, writing, needlework, singing and elocution, while a sergeant came once a week to give the pupils physical exercises. "Mathematics played no part in the curriculum, and the girls learned little more arithmetic than was needed to keep household accounts."

This successful school, the forerunner of others still flourishing, was planned with an eye to the future needs of the young ladies, who in the course of time duly became the wives of leading citizens and adorned prosperous homes. Nevertheless, teaching was taken seriously, and a high standard set.

"I have heard," writes Mrs Jessie Kerr, Connell's grand-daughter, "that my grandfather had a very quick temper and did not suffer fools gladly. On one occasion, in a fit of exasperation, he threw a book at the head of a defaulting pupil. As he was very short-sighted, the volume hit a door instead, with disastrous results to the glass panelling and to the nerves of the young ladies." Even in schools for young ladies, the irascible Scottish schoolmaster ran true to form!

## 12) Conclusions.

The education of girls in the early 19th. century differed from that of boys, firstly, in being less extensive. In all ranks of life a girl was likely to get less schooling than her brothers of equal intelligence. It differed, secondly, in being consciously adapted to the requirements of her future life, which was, rightly enough, thought of in domestic terms. Any well-brought-up girl would receive, besides instruction in reading, some writing and perhaps a little arithmetic, a sound practical training in homecraft. This, together with the moral and religious teaching which was every child's birthright, equipped her for her life-work as wife and mother. In some ways a girl's schooling was more realistically conceived than a boy's education, which, with its conventional grammar-grinding, might be quite irrelevant to the boy's work in the adult world.

There remained the problem of the higher education of girls, which was inseparably bound up with the whole question, then still an open question, of woman's place in society. Throughout our period, some higher education was thought desirable for some girls, and sometimes it took the form of a fairly exacting intellectual training, though few outlets were available for feminine minds, once trained. Such an education could be obtained at the co-educational parish and grammar schools, at private schools for girls, which

during our period were usually small and homely, through governesses, or simply by private study in a cultivated home.

As the standard of living rose in the first half of the century, a fashionable education based on accomplishments and the social graces became popular. This schooling prepared girls to be ornaments in the home; but sturdy Scottish public opinion attacked it with commonsense criticism, and there was always a section of opinion which favoured more serious studies.

As the century went on, outlets for feminine talent and energy multiplied, and the standard of female education steadily rose. Intelligent Scotswomen welcomed the challenge of independence when it came; but long before careers for women in the modern sense became possible, the educational standard of women in Scotland was comparatively high. Clever and well-educated women did not consider their efforts at self-cultivation wasted, since at all social levels the woman in the home was highly regarded, as a mother, a teacher, and a custodian of the moral values of the race.

## CHAPTER EIGHT.

### English Influences on Scottish Education.

An assimilation of cultures -- the decline of the Doric -- voluntary exiles -- disowning the heritage -- Scottish education on the defensive -- the public school question -- loss and gain -- the equivocal Scot -- English influences in general.

1) An assimilation of cultures.

From time to time as we have surveyed the Scottish educational scene, we have been conscious of English influences at work upon the tradition -- for example, in the criticism of the Scottish Universities prevalent, and justified, at the beginning of the century (p. 76), and in certain new developments in the education of girls (p. 191), which aimed at a social elegance modelled upon southern examples.

It was natural that this should be so. Since the Union of the Parliaments, Scottish public life and Scottish business interests had been linked more and more closely with corresponding institutions south of the border, and the failure of the Jacobite rebellions had precluded any reversal of this trend. The great period of Scottish culture, when, in the 18th. century, Edinburgh was the Athens of the North, a centre not only of national but of international wit and learning, had not predisposed the clever Scotsman to accept a merely parochial role; he wished to conquer the great world, by whatever means seemed effective. The Edinburgh Reviewers spoke not to Scotland, but to the nation.

Even the renewal of interest in things Scottish -- in Highland customs and history, in the scenery of island and mountain -- which was part of the Romantic Revival in literature, did not have the effect of confining the Scot to his national preserves. Sir Walter Scott was the founder of the modern tourist industry; but he and his like regarded their national heritage from the point of view of cultivated citizens of Britain, able to meet the English visitor on equal terms.

While those who still cared for their traditions were evolving a new patriotism, which would include loyalty to the larger unit, there was an increasing tendency for

fashions, domestic customs, popular literature etc. to be of English origin, at least among the upper classes; and in an age of emergent democracy, what was admired by one social class was speedily copied, so far as circumstances permitted, by that immediately below. There was no department of Scottish life and culture which was not, by 1800, already overshadowed by the wealthier partner across the border.

## 2) The decline of the Doric.

This is clearly seen when we consider the changes taking place in Scottish speech -- a matter of some educational importance. As early as the 1750's, Boswell was being taught, at Mundell's school for young gentlemen, "to write English fluently and correctly with surprisingly few Scotticisms"; while by 1761 he was in attendance at Thomas Sheridan's popular elocution classes, where leading Edinburgh citizens were drilled in "a correct English pronunciation." The motive behind these studies was not mere snobbery, but had a practical aspect; Scotsmen with a certain social background wished to make themselves understood in the world at large, and especially in the united Parliament, where great careers were open to them.

Plain-spoken Scotsmen were laughed at in the House; in society, too, they were at a disadvantage. In Smollett's Humphry Clinker (1769), the Scotch lieutenant, Mismahago, observes that "a North Briton is seen to disadvantage in an English company, because he speaks in a dialect that they can't relish, and in a phraseology which they don't understand. He therefore finds himself under a restraint which is a great enemy to wit and humour." -- Hence the tradition of the humourless Scot. "Bramble", the Welsh-English squire concludes: "I think the Scots would do well for their own sakes to adopt the English idioms and pronunciation, those of them, especially, who are resolved to push their fortunes in South Britain."

It is not the business of the present writer to take sides in this linguistic controversy, which still rages. The hard name of "collaborator" has recently been applied to those who took "Squire Bramble's" (and presumably Smollett's own) view of the matter. The plain fact remains that the decay of the Doric amongst the educated classes went on apace. We can trace its decline in the letters of Mrs. Grant of Laggan, who found it necessary, in 1809, to explain to a London correspondent, Miss Fanshawe:

"I stop to observe to you that a class of people then existed in Scotland -- of whom a few relics now remain -- that were peculiar to this country, and died away with the broad Scotch of Allan Ramsay -- for they would not or could not speak English properly. They were to be found in middle life, among the clergy, petty lairds, and professional people of the second class; what distinguished them was a simplicity of manners and plainness of language, amounting to rusticity, and yet perfectly distinct from vulgarity; on the contrary, those derived from a most complete and intimate knowledge of Scripture, of the English classics of Queen Anne's reign, and all the touching and ennobling productions of their own national Muse."

Mrs Grant was a conservative of the best kind, who wished to preserve whatever was good in the old ways. In this mood she wrote in 1812 to Mrs. Brown: "Glasgow is far more Caledonian, more national than Edinburgh; and our spoken nationality decays so fast that I feel a kind of pain at its departure, and greet any of its appearances as one does a worthy plain relation, whom habit and the force of blood make us prefer to a newly acquired accomplished friend."

Observe the operative word "accomplished." It was in the name of accomplishment, no doubt, that the Edinburgh young lady said in 1815 of Guy Mannering, "It was a great

pity that such a clever book was not more genteel." On her Mrs. Grant scathingly pronounces, "It is very rare to find a Scotch cockney, especially in Edinburgh."

Lastly we may recall that Scott himself, that master of Scottish prose, wrote to Constable in 1822: "Did you ever see such vulgar trash as certain imitators wish to pass on the world as Scotch? It makes me think myself in company with Lothian coal-carters -- And yet Scotch was a language which we have heard spoken by the learned and the wise and witty and the accomplished, and which had not a trace of vulgarity in it, but on the contrary sounded rather graceful and genteel. You remember how well Mrs. Murray Leith -- the late Lady Dumfries -- my poor mother and other ladies of that day spoke their native language -- it was different from English as the Venetian from the Tuscan dialect of Italy, but it never occurred to any one that the Scottish any more than the Venetian was more vulgar than those who spoke the purer and more classical. But that is all gone."

### 3) Voluntary exiles.

The reasons for this change, soon to have repercussions far beyond the social stratum to which it originally applied, are not far to seek. The distressed economic conditions of the Scot at home in the 18th. century had caused the southward track towards commercial prosperity to become firmly beaten out. Early in the new century Irving was writing of the London Scots as "our ambitious countrymen...the hardest, most secular, worldly and self-seeking creatures which this metropolis contains." Irving was missing the simple piety to which he was accustomed at home: it is a melancholy fact that the expatriate Scot soon lost a number of his national characteristics, including some that were justly admired.

Overseas the transformation might become even more complete. It is amusing to read in Hervey Allen's biography of Edgar Allan Poe, of the Richmond Scots, only a lifetime

away from the Calvinistic Ayrshire which had bred them, receiving with open arms the disreputable company of strolling players into which the poet was born; and to learn that Poe's foster-father, John Allan, had by the end of his life "attained all that the world could give him, wives, concubines, children, slaves, horses and the envy of his neighbours." A mere London Scot could not hope to achieve this truly oriental emancipation from the ways of his fathers; but he too soon adapted himself to a richer and more materialistic civilisation.

Not all the voluntary exiles were business men. Brains, as everyone knows, are a traditional Scottish export, and at this period in history the excellence, within its limits, of a Scottish education, gave the lad o' pairts an advantage in the professional, literary and political worlds. A good example is the career of Henry Brougham, famous for his pioneer labours in the cause of popular education, who owed much to his own years at the High School and University of Edinburgh, and even more to his clever Scottish mother.

"Edinburgh," writes his biographer, G.T. Garratt, "in those days provided a wonderful upbringing for a clever and ambitious youth, giving a far wider and more intensive training than could be obtained elsewhere in the British Isles...It was inevitable that the old English governing families, the Amateurs, should look to Edinburgh for talented Professionals to strengthen their party sides, when the 19th. century called for a new type of politician, capable of understanding economic and industrial questions."

In the latter half of the century a similar infiltration of "professionals", many of them from Scotland, was to be seen in the Civil Service, where a system of appointment by competitive examination was adopted to replace the old way of filling vacancies by nepotism. A whole study could be made of the effect upon Scottish higher education of changes

in the Civil Service entrance examination -- from paper work which rewards close scholarship, to the interview method which favours social polish, to selection by techniques of group study to prepare for which practice in discussion, knowledge of current affairs and a tutorial method of instruction are necessary.

Even before the external examination came to dominate education, brilliant boys from Scotland were going south to collect any glittering prizes that England might have to offer, and ambitious schoolmasters were preparing them for the fray. However proud of the Scottish tradition such youths might be, they were not anxious to arrive in Oxford or the metropolis with heather visibly sprouting out of their ears; and their special needs were not without influence upon the education they shared with others who would stay at home. For every promising lad who left Scotland to make his fortune in England or overseas, there were ten, still in their native land, who nurtured secret ambitions, and in the meantime watched and copied every modification of speech or behaviour which new surroundings imposed upon the exile.

#### 4) Disowning the heritage.

Naturally those who adopted English ways came in for a certain amount of criticism. Carlyle wrote of Jeffrey: "His accent was singular, but it was by no means Scotch...Old Braxey (Lord Braxfield) was reported to have said, 'The laddie has clean tint his Scotch and found nae English.'" This was a favourite line of comment with Carlyle. Of Campbell, the poet and founder of London University, he wrote in a letter to Jane, "He is not so much a man as the editor of a magazine. His life is that of an exotic. He exists in London, as most Scotchmen do, like a shrub disrooted and stuck in a bottle of water." Exotic or not, Campbell became sufficiently acclimatized to think English ladies pleasanter and better educated than their Scottish counterparts, and to

remember, by contrast and without pride, the bare feet of women in his native Glasgow.

How far Scottish characteristics, such as a northern accent, were a handicap in England, depended on circumstance. Both Carlyles remained essential Scots to the end, though they did not pine for their native heath. To the Sage all things were forgiven; but there can be little doubt that Jane's Scots accent, and a certain self-consequence and de-liberation of manner which derived from her small-town youth, were drawbacks to her socially in the exalted circles to which her husband's fame introduced her. It was ironical that Jane, so much Thomas's social superior when they married, should have lived to be criticised by his friends on points of speech and manner, but so it was. Charles Darwin, who did not like her, wrote in 1839, "I am not able to understand half the words she speaks, from her Scotch pronunciation."

Throughout the century, the educated Scotsman was intent upon becoming a citizen of the United Kingdom and of the Empire which he did so much to build and administer. Once launched into the great world, he seldom looked back, except sentimentally. It is true that to this day the colonies of exiled Scots in certain parts of the Commonwealth are more Caledonian than the Scot at home; but in this there is an element of the theatrical. In business, the professions and the arts, the educated and successful Scotsman has been seeking, in England and abroad, to become assimilated with his English neighbour, for more than a century and a half.

Stevenson records in Memoirs and Portraits that the aged Robert Hunter, Sheriff of Dumbarton, "cautioned me, with entire gravity, to be punctilious in writing English; never to forget that I was a Scotchman, that English was a foreign tongue, and that if I attempted the colloquial I should certainly be shamed: the remark was apposite, I suppose, in the days of David Hume."

It is certainly not apposite today, when most Scottish children, in town and country and at all social levels, have to be taught common Scots expressions, and have vernacular poetry "translated" for them, as if the Doric were the foreign tongue. This decline of the braid Scots tongues was implicit eighty years ago, when neither Hunter nor Stevenson himself had any doubt that the first duty of a Scottish writer was to achieve a command of standard English. Already by the latter half of the century the desire to speak "properly" was widespread amongst ordinary folk, as it is today. Barrie wrote of his mother in Margaret Ogilvy:

"We always spoke to each other in broad Scotch (I think in it still) but now and again she would use a word that was new to me...If I ask boldly, what was that word she used just now...she blushes and says she never said anything so common, or hoots! it is some auld-farrant word about which she can tell me nothing...I shall get no more old-world Scotch out of her this morning, and she weeds her talk determinedly, and it is as great a falling away as when the mutch gives place to the cap."

Not only upon speech, but upon other externals as well, English influences were brought to bear. Robertson Smith, the Oriental scholar, retained a strong Scottish accent which the years in England did little to modify, but he acquired a taste for beautiful things which was foreign to his frugal upbringing, and by the time he settled in Cambridge, "lived surrounded by splendid Eastern rugs and other spoils of travel." Many another Scotsman picked up on his travels all sorts of ideas about the good life, which were gradually to transform the rugged land of his fathers into something approximating more closely to an international norm.

## 5) Scottish education on the defensive.

The bearing of these social changes upon education, and especially upon higher education, which is most valued by the ambitious, is obvious. At the beginning of the century, (cf. p. 70), Scottish schools and Universities were under fire from critics who alleged, amid a great outcry of refutation, that standards, especially in the teaching of classics, were higher in England. It is difficult to judge this issue now: evidence of the imperfection of Scottish teaching (pp. 71-74) is counterbalanced by the success of the product of Scottish schools in every competitive field. What the controversy does show is that, then as now, the Scottish educator was keenly aware of his southern neighbour, and acutely sensitive to comparisons.

While fair-minded people at the time admitted the truth of many of the criticisms, there was a general feeling that the practice of educating Scottish boys in their native land should not be given up without a struggle. This is roughly the position of the Edinburgh Review, which throughout the first few decades of the century is consistently campaigning for more Greek and better Latin in Scottish schools, as well as higher pay for masters, while at the same time defending the native system at its best against the boarding-school tradition from across the border.

In 1810 an Attack on the Public Schools of England pronounces: "We have no hesitation in saying that that education seems to us the best which mingles a domestic with a school life, and which gives to a youth the advantage which it to be derived from the learning of a master, and the emulation which results from the society of other boys, together with the affectionate vigilance which he must experience in the house of his parents." Scottish public opinion was reluctant to surrender entirely to the school the parent's traditional authority, even in the interests of the best pupils.

The balanced view, on this as on so many Scottish topics, is taken by Sir Walter Scott, of whom Grierson writes, "Though a patriotic he was not a complacent Scot in whose mind truth must take a back seat when things Scottish are criticised, and he did, with Lockhart, feel that some things were better done in England than here...The English Universities did produce a higher, if narrower, type of scholarship than ours could attain to, and gave to those who could afford them a more delightful academic life. For the class into which Scott was moving, the English gentleman had become as much the ideal as the English tailor has become since for most European countries."

These sentiments, unpalatable to the modern nationalist, were produced in part by the long delay in effecting needed reforms in Scottish University education in the 19th. century (cf. p. 22 ). Once begun, the tendency towards a drift south on the part of influential Scots was not easy to arrest in the cultural and educational sphere, any more than in affairs of commerce. The low esteem in which the Scottish Universities were held in the first quarter of the century is strikingly exemplified by the career of Carlyle's brilliant pupil, Charles Buller, who, upon leaving Harrow at the age of fifteen, was sent on Irving's recommendation to Edinburgh University, to bridge the gap between public school and Oxford.

### 6) The Public School Question.

Scottish gentlefolk and men of means would not have been human if they had not wished to reap for their sons any superior advantages which the schools of the south might have to offer; but some doubted the advantages, and others were bound to the Scottish tradition by more than a merely sentimental attachment. The public school question, as it affected the families of the Highland gentry, is discussed from all angles in Susan Ferrier's Destiny (1831); where

Glenroy, the Highland chief, is found advising his friends to "send that boy to some cheap public school in England where he would learn something of the world, which is the thing for a boy that has his way to make in it. But they wouldn't hear of it; said they would rather live upon bread and water than send any child of theirs to a great school."

Later, when "Glenroy" expresses the opinion that most of our great men have been educated at public schools, the virtuous Captain Malcolm somewhat smugly replies: "That is an opinion which has been completely refuted, and even were it otherwise, I should prefer having my son a good man rather than a great one."

But when it comes to deciding the education of his own son, this same "Glenroy" surprisingly appears in his true colours, a deeply dyed nationalist: "I should be glad to know what my son could learn at an English University!... He shall not be tamed into insignificance if I can help it.

It is a fine preparation for a Highland Chief to be cooped up in one of their musty colleges with a pack of priests and dominies, and sailing about their plainstones in a black gown and a trencher skull cap... Then the scheme of sending him to the Continent is if possible still worse. What can he learn there but to dance and speak gibberish, or to be running after old bridges and broken statues, when he ought to be building new bridges and entertaining the gentlemen of the county?"

The patriotic Scottish parent of the land-owning class protested against new fashions in education, but even as he protested he gave in. His alternative (cf. p. 108) was to entrust his sons' schooling entirely to a succession of tutors, raw lads just down from the University, who would teach with their minds on something else. In time he was also to have the choice of sending his boys to a Scottish public school; but these, when they were founded, copied the

best English models, and are not really part of the Scottish tradition by their origins, though their products have helped to mould the tradition.

Or again, by way of compromise, the upper-class family which preferred a home-education, might try to improve on the homely Scottish type of tutor and governess (cf. pp. 107/127) Mrs Oliphant, herself an expatriate Scot who made sacrifices to send her sons to Eton, describes in Lilliesleaf the coming of a tutor from Oxford to a Scots country family:

"'Well, my dear, Lilliesleaf is the best judge,' said my brother rising up, not without anger, 'and they do attend more to the classics in England -- but --'"

In the same novel an old servant is puzzled by the coming of a French maid for the children: "What for suld bairns learn outlandish tongues, Miss Marget? Where's the marrow of the kindly Scots that's born with them?"

### 7) Loss and Gain.

The protests of the traditionalists notwithstanding, the tutor came, the French maid was engaged, and the gulf between a Scottish upper-class education and its origins in the past widened. Many thoughtful men regretted, or half-regretted this change, though few could withstand it. Professor Blackie was, as we have seen (p. 105), a keen critic of the Scottish University and of the products of the Scottish schools who made up its student-body; yet, writing in Notes of a Life of his friend Norman Macleod, whose forebears the Macleods of Morven were for generations Highland ministers and lairds, he expresses this point of view:

"In the days when Norman was a youth, (i.e. in the 1820's and '30's) before the country was invaded by the commercial with its unsocial greed, there was a large population in those parts, and in that population even in its lowest strata a culture and a fine breadth of vigorous healthy humanity such as few countries could boast of. It was a happiness

for those men that they lived before the times when it became fashionable with the upper middle classes who could afford it to send their sons to Eton and Harrow, where they grew up disnatured and denationalised, and divorced from all the bracing habits and breezy traditions of their native soil."

There were two sides to this question. For the countryside and its schools it was a bad thing that the most promising or the most influential boys should be sent away to get their schooling elsewhere; but for the gifted individual it may be a disadvantage to have missed the mind-broadening effects of an experience of the stranger's ways. We saw this in the case of Clerk Maxwell (p. 106).

The result is much the same if an individual scholar feels himself deprived, even if his actual loss be negligible or imaginary. Henry Beveridge, born in 1837 and educated entirely in Scotland, wrote in 1877 to his English wife: "I could fancy Cambridge life being very delightful to an undergraduate, and it is always one of the regrets of my life that I had not a University education. There is no College life in the Scotch Universities."

Blackie and others were striving to make good this defect in the Universities; but to some extent, for want of living accommodation and the money or will to make use of such accommodation if it existed, the problem is still with us. Some educationists would cut the Gordian knot by offering more scholarships for Oxford and Cambridge to the best Scots students. At a less specialised level, the same dilemma exists in the schools: should country children be transported to more selective central schools, or should they work out their differing courses in the less competitive but more natural home environment? There is no simple answer to these questions.

### 8) The equivocal Scot.

By the end of our period there were many Scotsmen whose attitude to their national tradition was, to say the least, equivocal. J.M. Barrie seems to have been such an one practically from birth. "In my early youth," he wrote in The Greenwood Hat, "I delighted in tales of English school life...It costs as much to educate one English boy as scores of Scottish boys, but there was a time when I longed to go, with gunpowder in my box, to an English school."

The "gunpowder" is an allusion to some of the more lurid incidents in the youthful Barrie's favourite works of school-fiction. Writing to the author of some such stories, "I remember carefully mis-spelling many of the words, because the boys in his books spelt so badly." So far from being frankly proud of the fundamental excellence of his education, the future celebrity was already as a schoolboy eager to compromise with the Sassenach. Of a later period when Barrie became responsible for the education of his adopted sons, Denis Mackail writes:

"He was becoming, among other things, a kind of Etonian or old Etonian himself...For a while he was still wary, for it can be difficult to imagine anything less like the true standard of comparatively Spartan education, which was of course the Academy of Dumfries. But he was fascinated." Barrie himself said, only half in fun, at a school speech-day: "Your great English public schools...I never feel myself a foreigner in England except when I am trying to understand them...I am like a dog looking up wistfully at its owner, wondering what that noble face means, or if it does have a meaning...Those schools must be great -- and yet I don't quite see how it comes about."

To consider Barrie in later life is to stray out of our period; yet he exemplifies more clearly than any other the tinge of duplicity in the racial attitude which the wily

Scot adopted in taking captive his conquerors. There is a good deal of ironical compliance in Barrie's toadying to the English ideal; at the same time, his adherence to the beliefs and standards which bred him is no longer whole-hearted.

Within our chosen period, many an aspiring Scot had his mind firmly made up to preserve the best of both worlds. Alexander Smith, for example, in A Summer in Skye, written in the 'sixties, took a cautious line on Scottish University reform -- and well he might, since his short-lived fame as a poet had won for him a comfortable administrative post at Edinburgh University. The Universities as they stand, he contends, suffice to produce professional men for Scotland:

"and if, every ten years or so, some half-dozen young men appear with an appetite for a higher education than Scotland can give, and with means to gratify it, what then? In England there are universities able and willing to supply their wants."

On the social changes which were transforming the Highlands Smith was likewise complacent. "The Highlands are now open to all the influence of civilisation. The inhabitants wear breeches and speak English even as we. Old gentlemen peruse the Times with spectacles on ~~their~~ nose. Young lads construe Cornelius Nepos, even as in other quarters of the British islands. Young ladies knit, and practise music, and wear crinoline. But the old descent and breeding are visible through all modern disguises; and your Highlander at Oxford or Cambridge -- discoverable not only by his rocky countenance but by some dash of wild blood, or eccentricity, or enthusiasm, or logical twist or turn of thought -- is just as much a child of the mist as his ancestor."

In other words, the more Scotland changes, the more it remains the same place. This was not altogether true.

The defection of the upper and educated classes was slowly but surely degrading Scottish language and literature to an inferior position, so that its ultimate extinction seemed certain. The success of the vigorous artificial respiration applied in the present century must be judged by time.

In the sphere of education, although Scotland has retained her own law and administration, and although the schools of the two countries differ in certain respects, there has been an increasing tendency to seek common standards, which must, indeed, apply where an interchange of population goes on all the time. At present the British Isles might more reasonably be divided, not by the Border, but into three sectors -- Southern England, the industrial belt including Northern England and the Scottish Lowlands, and the thinly populated Highlands. Even these territorial divisions show signs of breaking down as the South becomes more conscious of its economic dependence on the North, and as the Highlands are altered by such developments as the hydro-electric and atomic energy projects. All the signs point to unity in the future, even if within that unity some diversity be retained.

#### 9) English influences in general.

Even if the English influences which worked upon a privileged class in the 19th. century could have been confined to that class, the consequences for Scotland would still have been far-reaching, since many of the wealthiest, most gifted and most powerful Scotsmen would have been amongst those schooled in southern ways. But in any case, such class-segregation was impossible in Scotland. Already in the early 19th. century the basic concepts of democracy had a firm hold on the ordinary Scot; on every door to which the few held the key, representatives of the many would soon be hammering for admittance.

We have seen that education was regarded as an "open sesame", even when disappointment was in store for many who held the magic password. As coveted positions in society came to be reached more and more by competitive examination, this point of view gathered strength. "The Schoolmaster is abroad!" Brougham had melodramatically exclaimed in the 'twenties. As the century advanced, the schoolmaster had to prove his worth by equipping the lad o' pairts for new opportunities not only in Scotland but beyond its borders. The great levelling and generalising influences of the 20th. century -- popular press, cinema, radio and television -- have only completed a process of assimilation that was already under way.

At the beginning of our period the schools of Scotland were markedly more Scottish than at the end, in a number of respects of which speech is the most obvious example. The schools had always used standard English text-books so far as they used the vernacular at all. The battle to preserve the Doric was really lost as far back as the 17th. century when a Scottish Bible and catechism were not brought into use.

Barely literate readers in our period, such as Alexander Somerville (p. 58), had trouble in reading the vernacular which was their daily speech, because they had never seen it written down. Nevertheless, the schoolmaster and his pupils were maintaining in the early decades of the century a compromise between spoken Scots and written English, this compromise being less yielding in "better" schools (cf. pp. 56, 57). "Apples on the book; aipples aff the book," explained the country dominie in the present writer's family tradition.

By the end of the century all this had passed away. The schools were busy correcting the speech of all the pupils; and while the "kindly Scots" survived as an informal language, the average Scottish citizen was becoming

progressively more and more like his neighbours, not only in speech, but in manners, reading, preferred amusements and general standard of living. In this transformation of the Scottish scene the school both acted and was acted upon; it helped to mould the citizens of the modern Scotland, and itself yielded to pressures from a changing community.

CHAPTER NINE.

Basic Issues -- Science and Religion.

Ideological conflicts of the early 19th. century -- science and the individual career -- religion in the Scottish home -- the Bible in the nursery -- teaching in Church and school -- liberalism and authority -- criticism of the parish school's religious teaching -- compromise between Church and State.

1) Ideological conflicts of the early 19th. century.

The basic issues which were dividing the minds of men in the first half of the 19th. century are too familiar to require lengthy exposition here. In the political sphere, the ideas which had led to the French Revolution were everywhere causing the individual to assert his rights in opposition to society, and the democratic principle to war against oppressive forms of government. In the sphere of philosophy, the scientific spirit was growing in strength and in real or apparent contradiction of the supreme wisdom of the Church; while the industrial development which the applied discoveries of science made possible was setting problems for the administrator which rendered it inevitable that the State should gradually assume many of the educational and social functions of the Church.

From the standpoint of history we can see these changes in traditional modes of thought and practice more clearly than they appeared at the time. The full force of the clash between science and religion, between State and Church seems not to have been felt in the Scotland we have been studying. A reconciliation between Church and State in education was made possible by the belief, widely held in the 19th. century, but nowhere more unquestioningly accepted than in Scotland, that the supreme aim of education was moral training. As for the scientific challenge to accepted beliefs, this was softened by the fact that the man of science in Scotland was likely to be the product of a Church-dominated school, and --- far more important --- of a devout and united home.

If we had been making a parallel study of English education within the same time limit, we should undoubtedly have had to reckon with the utilitarian views of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who regarded the sciences related to individual health and well-being as most essential to the

curriculum, and the "useless" studies of literature and the arts as least essential, while moral education could for him be reduced to the pleasure-pain principle. We should also have studied the views of Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), who staked the claims of a scientific education to be regarded as of at least equal value to a literary education, and who in 1870 was openly determined to secularise the State schools.

No comparable figures stand out from the Scottish educational landscape. Owen was probably the most "modern"-minded educator to leave his mark upon Scottish education during our period, and he was a Welshman who had evolved his theories in England, and who worked in a Scottish setting by the accident of opportunity. Even amongst our traditionalists, we have no one quite like Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), whose conservatism in education reckoned constantly with the forces, national and international, which were moulding the world he lived in; he made the classics, writes Dr. Boyd, (History of Western Education, p. 398), "an aid to the accurate and forceful use of the mother tongue, and was specially careful to connect what was read with the social and political problems of the modern world."

Great intellectual advances are apt to result from conflict either within the individual thinker or within the society which produced him. The fact that the Scottish mind and Scottish culture were well-integrated within our period may have prevented adventures in thinking and in free discussion similar to those taking place elsewhere; and in this there may have been a certain loss to the future.

A boy like Livingstone, with an intellect made for scientific enquiry, had his early questionings stifled by dogmatic replies, such as the statement that shells were to be found in rocks inland "because God had put them there." In his not untypical case, the old anchors held; the scientific

life-work took a form which need not clash with religious orthodoxy; and the man himself maintained an impressive integrity. But the fundamental questions which had to be asked and answered before science and religion could achieve a philosophic unity were not to be asked by such as he.

## 2) Science and the individual career.

There were less abstract aspects of the new knowledge with which every practical man who wished to get on in the 19th. century world must reckon; yet these too the Scottish educator, secure within his traditional framework, did his best to ignore. The gradual and grudging recognition of science in education would make a separate study which the present writer lacks the specialised knowledge to attempt.

It seems, however, to the non-specialist that Scottish educational institutions showed a deplorable lack of imagination in failing to adapt the traditional curriculum to the new needs. J.W. Adamson, writing in the Cambridge History of Literature of the unprecedented development of science in the 19th. century, points out that "the most striking results of scientific research and experiment were to be found in the applied sciences and in mechanical inventions." Since from these there resulted great industrial expansion, it was "inevitable that the critics of contemporary education should condemn its almost absolute disregard of useful knowledge and of modern studies."

Although Scotsmen played a distinguished part in the scientific developments of the time, a thorough-going re-thinking of the curriculum which educated such men was lacking. The schools, despite ~~and~~ certain public demand, showed, for example, by the setting-up of academies and other "modern" schools, did not within our period lay an adequate foundation for a career in pure or applied science.

Science was taught in the Universities, but the scraps

of evidence which have occurred in our individual studies suggest that a brilliant student like Clerk Maxwell could all too easily get ahead of his teachers (p. 106). As late as the 'seventies, Patrick Geddes gave Edinburgh University one week's trial, and, dissatisfied, went off to work with Huxley in London. Even in medicine, the doctor-scientist (like J.Y. Simpson), full of experimental ideas, was only emerging as a type from the ranks of the rule-of-thumb practitioners (like Dr. John Brown), who regarded medicine as an art. It is not irrelevant that modern languages too were neglected; for these were becoming increasingly needed not only for cultural reasons, but to keep in step with international movements in trade and research.

While the world changed around them, the official authorities on education in early 19th. century Scotland adopted the attitude of the ostrich. The Edinburgh Review was preoccupied to the exclusion of all else with the defence of the classics and the improvement of the standard of classical teaching. Sir William Hamilton defended the obsolescent conception of the University as a place of lectures and tests. It was owing to his influence and that of Thomas Campbell that London University was at first mainly an examining body; while in the Edinburgh Review of 1836 Hamilton strongly opposed a suggested reform of mathematical teaching on tutorial lines. Alexander Bain thought manual and bodily instruction outside the school's province, laboratories unnecessary; about the teaching of history he was unsure.

Somehow by their own efforts brilliant Scotsmen set out on scientific voyages of exploration, begun in the first half of the century when neither the practice nor the theory of education gave them much encouragement. Our life-stories suggest that a good deal of private experiment and field-work went on in the sciences, often on an amateur basis. It would be interesting to collect more information about

the scientific careers of Scotsmen born in the first half of the century, and to examine the value of such science-teaching as was given at that time in relation to the individual quest for knowledge. But here we must leave this topic.

### 3) Religion in the Scottish home.

When we turn from the evolution of the scientific spirit to examine the religious attitudes of 19th. century Scots, we are inevitably led back to the home and its teaching. The atmosphere in which children grew up was then one of homely piety. Although long hours of factory-labour by both sexes and the uprooting of families from their rural habits were secularising home life in the poorer working-class districts of large towns, the typical home was still a place where religious teaching began at mother's knee, and where the father in his brief hours of leisure continued to teach and catechise his sons and daughters throughout their youth. Since the earliest years are the most impressionable, it was natural that the Scot should grow up with a deep religious sense interwoven with the fibres of his being.

The Scottish parent was a good teacher who studied his child. Religious training in the home was interwoven with moral precept which was not contradicted in practice. Young people educated in Scotland in the early 19th. century did not tend to revolt from religion in their mature years because of the minor hypocrisies of their elders, a conventional attitude nearer our own time; for on the whole the teaching they received was of a deep sincerity.

This was a traditional characteristic, which transcended sectarian differences, and was not, as in English Methodist circles, the result of a violent evangelical revival. Mrs Grant of Laggan was a typical moderate in religion and a typical upholder of the importance of early religious training.

In 1790 she wrote to her friend Mrs. Smith : "One can never begin too soon to direct a child's hopes and fears to their proper and ultimate object; though reason must not be addressed until it unfolds, for fear of teaching children to use words without annexing ideas to them, which is just the parrotism I dislike." -- Just the parrotism, as we shall soon see, which the schools of the time were practising with some complacency; in the home, a more personal atmosphere caused the teacher to re-think his or her methods and principles.

In her life-long concern for the spiritual well-being of the various children who came under her care, Mrs Grant eventually began to use stories re-told from the Bible to introduce the youngest readers to the original. In this child-centred attitude to the teaching of Scripture, she was ahead of her time, and evidently felt herself to be so; for, sending a child's book of Old Testament history to Mrs. Col. White in 1822, she writes, "I hope I do not betray the good cause when I express a doubt whether it were not as well, at an early age, that they knew the Old Testament through the medium of such a compendium as I send you, as through the entire text." With so many other things to be learned, the basis of all learning might otherwise, she considers, come to be neglected. She was typical of her time in having no doubt as to what that basis was.

#### 4) The Bible in the nursery.

Mrs Grant, an exceptional woman in many ways, was very much a representative Scotswoman of her time in her motherly and domestic qualities. Scotland owed a great debt to the mothers in all walks of life, who evidently expended time and patience on the re-telling of Bible stories in homely language, and the application of moral precepts to daily life. One after another, their sons acknowledge this.

Robert Follok (p. 41 ), who wrote his poetry with the Bible constantly beside him, aspired to create literary works which should contain his "mother's divinity"; Clerk Maxwell owed the extraordinary knowledge of Scripture on which his friends and teachers remarked, to the mother who died in his tenth year. John Nichol first learned religion "as most of us learn it", from his mother. His faith he owed to her, his subsequent doubts to others. Examples could be multiplied. From a nursery lore composed in equal parts of Bible stories and old Scots songs a type of culture emerged which is summed up in the belief of Thomas Davidson (cf. p. 161 ), that children should be brought up on "the Shorter Catechism, the Psalms of David and plenty of Border ballads."

In Scottish children the creative and play impulses were bound up with this early religious teaching. John Younger, the son of a deeply religious mother of superior mental powers, (see p. 33<sup>138</sup>), first felt the "spirit of poetry" through a Biblical inspiration. Even Bell Scott, who was out of sympathy with his father (p. 143 ), and critical of the religious teaching given in his home, took to the Shorter Catechism "with great love and respect", and later, as his poetic and artistic gifts developed in adolescence, found "the Bible an inexhaustible treasure, inspiring equally awe and delight." R.L. Stevenson as a small child played at Pilgrim's Progress with dolls on Sundays, and betrayed precocious metaphysical leanings by remarking, "Mamma, I have drawn a man. Shall I draw his soul now?"

The Scottish child rehearsed in play the religious preoccupations of his adult years; thus Robertson Smith as a boy "played at Church and preaching." Or in later life the mind of the far-travelled Scot might return to dwell upon the interests of childhood. In this spirit Patrick Geddes wrote in 1913:

"The great example, the classic instance of city renewal is that of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and my particular civic interests owe more to my boyish familiarity with the building of Solomon's temple and with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah than to anything else. Jews probably know more or less how the Old Testament has dominated Scottish education and religion for centuries; these were above all the stories which fascinated me as a youngster, and though I lapsed from the church of my fathers wellnigh forty years ago, I still feel these as the great example for the Town Planning Exhibition."

#### 5) Teaching in Church and School.

Of the formal teaching of religion to the young which went on in church and school a less enthusiastic account must be given. Although many children enjoyed Bible stories, and some liked learning the metrical psalms by heart, and a few even took delight in the Shorter Catechism, no instance has been discovered by the present writer of a child who revelled in the interminable church services of the early 19th. century. Contrary indications, on the other hand, abound.

Thus Geddes, whose enduring interest in Old Testament history has just been quoted, and who, as a boy, spent evenings at home reading the Bible aloud (p. 122), disliked the regular church attendance to which he was bred, and discontinued it at an early opportunity. Charles Mackay, who for a time "sat under" Edward Irving, saw nothing in the preaching of that celebrated divine but "frightful Calvinism." Andrew Lang told himself "stories about catching trout" during sermon time; and later, as a boy at Edinburgh Academy, constructed a romance "that the elders had concealed a treasure behind a panel in the wall which closed my schoolmaster's pew." The power for good over the child mind of the 19th. century pulpit must be rated very low.

The teaching of religion in the parish schools naturally came under the jurisdiction of the church, and was subject to an annual presbyterial examination, which might or might not be a dreaded occasion. For the diligent or exceptional pupil it seems to have been an opportunity for showing off.

George Macdonald read his own poetry aloud to such examiners, and "young Benjā" in Moir's Mansie Wauch, who "had learned to read Barrie's Collection almost as well as the master could do for his lugs and was up to all manner of accounts, from simple addition and the multiplication table even to vulgar fractions and all the lave of them...at the yearly examination of the school-room by the Presbytery and Maister Wiggie (the Secession minister) aye sat at the head of the form, and never failed getting a clap on the head and a when carvies."

In all schools, whether under presbyterial supervision or not, the teaching of religion was done with great thoroughness. The Bible was used as a reading-book, the Catechism was duly set and the psalms and paraphrases learned by heart. Whether this teaching was as good as it was thorough is another matter. There are too many tales of catechism and corporal punishment being closely associated, as in Barrie's anecdote of James Carlyle (p. 94), or George Macdonald's recollections of a barbarous schoolmaster of Huntly, who, having emigrated, and meeting a former pupil by chance after thirty years, made his first question, "Are the boys of Huntly always attending to their Shorter Catechism?"

Needless to say, it must have been very difficult to inspire interest in the memorisation of the abstract theology of the Catechism which went on day after day. Small wonder that this basic part of the curriculum became a rote task, with explanation seldom attempted and literal accuracy as

the sole test of merit. Andrew Lang who, like many clever boys, had a natural ability to ignore teaching which was of no value to him, has this to say of the religious instruction he received in the 'fifties: "Unlike other Scots of the period, I got no harm from the Shorter Catechism, of which I remember little, and neither then nor now was nor am able to understand a single sentence... Beyond a strong opinion that I should be a "goat" at the Last Day, I can remember no religious speculations of my own."

But Lang, who to some extent lived up to his joking description of himself as "a lady-dady Oxford kind of Scot," was not typical of his country and generation in this flippant attitude to sacred subjects. Most 19th. century Scotsmen took their beliefs and their doubts with equal seriousness. A fair example of this is the religious history of J. Stuart Blackie, who was naturally of a lively disposition, and did not grow up in an unduly pious home, though "of course the current religious books of the country were lying about." (cf. pp. 148, 149).

Even Blackie, reared in this relatively liberal atmosphere, became at the age of fifteen, following the sudden death of a friend, "what is called in Scotland serious... I rose at 5 a.m. and pored over Boston's Fourfold State and other books of the severe old Calvinistic school." At a more mature age, and with a mind broadened by much study and foreign travel, "I had recurrent fits of deep melancholy, knowing neither whence they came nor whither they went, and in the background of which some vexed religious questions, the spawn of Scotch Calvinism, were sure to be seen looming."

#### 6) Liberalism and authority.

Having finally achieved a liberal point of view, Professor Blackie proceeded to do battle with the religious forces which then dominated academic life, and to "pluck the Church publicly by the beard, no trifling matter in Scotland."

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He had a difficulty of conscience, shared by many, over the Westminster Confession, to which he subscribed with mental reservations. This test for University teachers was abolished in 1853, as a result of the Disruption's having brought the issue to a head; for, as Blackie drily remarks, "by some device or other the jacket must be widened as the boy grows older."

In 1851, before the abolition of tests, Blackie's election to his Edinburgh chair was a touch-and-go affair, since "the patronage lay with the Town Council of the city...then there was the delicate matter of creeds and churches on which it was likely that in the end the election might turn, for in a religious country like Scotland, church naturally enters into everything." Caught between the necessity of religious orthodoxy and the desirability of espousing, politically, the winning cause, the scholar in the first half of the century did not enjoy the unfettered intellectual liberty which would enable him to do his best work.

At a later date, Blackie came into conflict with "the zealous evangelical party in Glasgow Presbytery" for taking part in Sunday lectures on physical, moral and literary subjects, and for supporting the movement to have museums, Botanic Gardens, and suchlike places, opened on Sundays. The desire to make use of these facilities on the worker's free day did not necessarily betoken a rising tide of secularism; it was merely a natural extension of the traditional practice, common amongst serious-minded working people, to set Sunday apart for educational purposes as well as for worship. (cf. p. 125 ).

In Blackie's eventful history of faith and doubt, conformity and rebellion, two things are to be noted. The first is that the professor, though unorthodox, had passed through various phases of religious belief, and understood the whole subject well enough to be moderate in his dissent

and considerate of the feelings of conventional people. The second point, which follows from the first, is that Blackie's war against the reactionaries was waged without bitterness, not only because Blackie was a tolerant man, but because he recognised the Church's dominant position in society as part of the tradition in which he had grown up. "It seemed to me the most natural thing in the world that the clergy should wish to keep an independent thinker like me out of the academic chairs; for had not they that right historically?" (Blackie, Notes of a Life.)

The influential position in the commonweal of church and clergy -- the central role of religious instruction in education: these were accepted almost as laws of nature by a majority of 19th. century Scotsmen, including some whose private views were unorthodox. The keynote was struck in early childhood, when, as Stevenson wrote, "Sabbath observance makes a series of grim and perhaps serviceable pauses in the tenor of Scotch boyhood." Contrasting the imaginative and thoughtful Scots schoolboy with his games-playing opposite number south of the border, Stevenson dwells upon the Shorter Catechism with its question, "What is the chief end of man?" -- a solemn interrogation indeed to address to a little child. But, Stevenson concludes, "the fact that it is asked of all of us, from the peer to the ploughboy, binds us more nearly together." (Memoirs and Portraits.)

In the old Scotland, where this kind of religious education was universal, the orthodox believer, the sectarian and the advanced thinker with "doubts", had still more in common than they had points of variance. This common background of belief was a great source of strength when the time came for the establishment of a system of state-aided popular education in Scotland. In England, the supporters of Church and of Dissent were so implacable opposed that either would prefer to have his children given a secular education rather

than to let them be taught according to the rival doctrine. In Scotland, home of religious controversy though it be, there was common ground between all believers in Bible and Catechism; and although, as we have seen, there were many alternatives to the parish schools John Knox had planned to make universal, including some sectarian schools, the traditional way of bringing children up in the faith had built up sufficient prestige to make secular schools unthinkable.

#### 7) Criticism of the parish school's religious teaching.

This prestige did not save the parish schools from the criticism, in pre-Disruption days, of those who later seceded to form the Free Church, and who had views of their own as to the ideal religious education. The line usually taken by these critics was that the conventional instruction in religion was "mechanical", purely verbal, unrelated to life.

Thus the Reverend William Fraser, biographer of David Stow, states that "the memory was taxed most unprofitably, and the religious instruction was little more than reading the Bible, which teachers managed to make the most distasteful of school-books." Stow himself, sharing this dislike of too much early catechising, and drawing a distinction constantly between teaching and training, still kept the Bible at the heart of education, not as an ordinary lesson-book, but as the supreme authority and arbiter of conduct. He could not conceive of a secular school system, being unable to see how history or literature could be taught if religion were left out.

Hugh Miller, who won literary fame during the Disruption controversy, was much concerned about the low ebb amongst working-class people in the first half of the century. As an intelligent workman, he had disliked clerical patronage and "talking-down", a most understandable personal reaction on the part of one whose opportunities had not matched his

abilities. He was critical of the schools maintained by the Established Church:

"I never knew anyone who owed other than the merest smattering of theological knowledge to parish schools, and not a single individual who ever derived from them any tincture, even the slightest, of religious feeling. In truth, during almost the whole of the last century, and for the first forty years of the present, the people of Scotland were, with all their faults, considerably more Christian than the larger part of their schoolmasters."

This is a partisan judgment, in assessing which we must remember, not only the author's religious views, but also his educational history (p. 94-). The point is not whether such criticisms were fully justified, but that many people believed them who had the development of Scottish education in mind. In 1848 an overture was sent from the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, objecting to the "exclusive control over colleges and parish schools of Scotland by the existing Church Establishment," and enjoining the Assembly to "emancipate our public schools from the thralldom of the existing Church Establishment, and make them take their place as the public schools of the people of Scotland."

### 8) Compromise between Church and State.

Although Free Church schools were founded, the schism in the church was not after all exploited to perpetuate a division, on sectarian grounds, of Scottish education; rather it was used as an argument for unity with a national, and non-sectarian, system. Increasingly men of vision saw that this must be the solution. An expanding population faced with new living-conditions and new demands upon their intelligence and skill, called for more and better schools than could be provided under the old dispensation. Such heroic personal efforts as those made by Chalmers to make the

parish system serve the needs of industrial Glasgow, had only thrown into relief, by his success, the failure of others to meet the challenge of the times.

"Education, and more education, but above all religious education, was Dr. Chalmers's cure for the evils of poverty," writes Helen Kerr in Chalmers and the Poor Law, "and he associated with this a very real and vital connection between the Church and the school on the one hand, and the Church and the poorest of the people on the other." But even Chalmers, that inspired fund-raiser, was not opposed to state endowment where local resources might fail. He wished only to preserve the parish unit, and to encourage self-reliance by asking a small fee from all but the poorest parents, since, in his view, "what is gotten for no value is rated at no value."

The change in the climate of public opinion which freed the University teacher from religious tests, removed the schoolmaster in 1861 (by the Parochial and Burgh Schoolmasters' Act) from the immediate control of the parish minister and the presbytery, and gave him greater liberty to teach in his own way. But although past injustices must have rankled, the schoolmaster was far from seeking to be relieved of the responsibility for religious instruction; he rather sought a more absolute responsibility. Criticisms of religious teaching were concerned more with method than with substance. On the facts of the faith there was enough agreement for the work of education to go on.

The Scottish character is full of contradictions. It may be that the many sects and schisms of Scotland are merely diversified expressions of an underlying unity which, in the early 19th. century, still bound all men of good will to a shared tradition. Scott in a note to Waverley describes the happy compromise achieved around the turn of the century by the heads of the Moderate and Evangelical parties in the

Church, who, "however much they differed in church politics, preserved the most perfect harmony as private friends." Some such agreement to differ often bridged the gaps between those whose dearly cherished beliefs were irreconcilable.

Even those whom the intellectual cross-currents of the time had carried far from the dogma of their forefathers, were still Scotsmen, brought up on the Law and the Gospel to a view of the universe in which mechanistic explanations could play only a subsidiary part. Thomas Carlyle, the prophet-hero of 19th. century Scotland, was no church-goer, yet in his Edinburgh Rectorial Address he quoted Goethe in support of his view of the child as one having many precious gifts best developed by nature, but wanting reverence. There is reverence, said Carlyle, for what is above us, the soul of pagan religions; reverence for equals, an immense power in the culture of man; and reverence for what is beneath, from which derive the blessings of pain, sorrow and contradiction, shown in the Christian religion.

The educator who based his thinking on such assumptions as these was inevitably led to place Christianity at the heart of all learning; such was the Scottish tradition of the 19th. century. It was taken so much for granted that all sorts of concessions and reservations on the part of the unorthodox could remain tacit. Religious doubts were not discussed in planning the education of the future, just as in a united family basic differences on important general questions are often left out of the conversation.

Possibly this was a pity. As the doctrine of scientific humanism filtered down into the general consciousness of educated, and half-educated people, and as a great wave of materialism rose up to meet it, the home became less sure of its values, and religious uncertainty, masked by conventional acquiescence, spread outwards from the family circle to the

school and its teachers.

At the period which we are studying there was scarcely a hint of these impending changes. The school was a place consecrated to moral training and religious knowledge, not because the Church enjoined certain beliefs, nor because the schoolmaster wished to promote the faith, but because Church, school and home were agreed in seeking to train up the child in the way he should go from the very earliest years. Minor differences of belief mattered little in the face of this overwhelming unity of purpose.

CHAPTER TEN.

Summary and Conclusions.

General retrospect -- the intelligent Scot and his educational aim -- a variety of schools -- pupil and teacher -- the Scottish home -- educational talking-points -- religious teaching and the basic issues -- the tradition in modern Scotland.

1) General Retrospect.

The time has come to look back over this survey of the Scottish educational tradition as it expressed itself in the early 19th. century, and to attempt some assessment, in relation to the present no less than to the past. It will be recalled that in Chapter One, (Section 10), certain general trends in 19th. century educational history were mentioned, which we expected to find illustrated by a more detailed study. These were a) the break-up of the working-class home and the disruption of the existing system of elementary education caused by the industrial revolution; b) the increasing control of education by legislation and a more widespread allocation of state grants; c) criticism of the traditional secondary and University education, pointing towards eventual changes in the curriculum and administrative reforms.

It may fairly be claimed that the present study has thrown light upon these changes of the times, as well as providing a picture of the status quo, with its strong points ~~maxwell~~ and its failings. Our object, it will be remembered, was not simply to repeat what was already stated in the history-books about early 19th. century educational institutions, but by approaching the facts from their sources in contemporary personal recollections to enter into the schools and homes of the time, and so come to appreciate the atmosphere of the education which went on there, and to share the guiding principles of those who taught and those who learned.

With this end in view, we began by collecting information about the learning-process in fifty individuals who completed their schooling within the eighty years preceding the Education Act of 1872. This was a pilot study, which could not be sufficiently comprehensive to have statistical value; again, the selection of individuals could be criticised on

various grounds as not providing a sufficiently typical or representative sample. Nevertheless, the writer found these life-histories, listed in an appendix, and discussed at various points in the preceding chapters, of value in suggesting topics of enquiry, which might illustrate the themes of the period without too much arguing from the particular to the general.

## 2) The intelligent Scot and his educational aim.

The fifty individuals, who were all of good intelligence, came from different parts of Scotland and from homes which represented a reasonable cross-section of the society of the time. We found that in these homes a majority were receiving some education, either by parental teaching or by personal effort. Most of the young people also attended schools, which, as we had expected, showed numerous variations upon the standard type, the parish school of popular tradition. Criticisms of the schools came to light at this stage, which pointed to a separate examination of the schools themselves. Although all our fifty individuals were of fair ability, and deserved a proper education, there were one or two who were not at school at all, and others who had only the most sketchy of elementary schoolings. Leaving out of the question for the moment the exceptional Smith children, who were fully educated at home, this served to remind us of the existence of a class of deprived children who were growing up in illiteracy. Naturally enough, it was hard to find many personal recollections of such childhoods surviving amongst the written records of the time.

One fact which soon made itself evident was the high incidence of educational irregularities, which were due to the poverty or ill-health of the learner, to unsatisfactory schools, bad teachers, or to the lack of what would now be called careers-guidance. Apart from the obvious fact that education is now compulsory for all, this irregularity

everywhere cropping up in the histories of those who did receive an education was perhaps the most striking difference between then and now.

These interruptions in schooling were a reflection of the unsettled conditions of a time when society was rapidly changing. The schools were changing too, but because of their natural inertia, and for lack of a central directive, they could not change fast enough; nor was it as easy for the pupil or his parents to forecast his future as in previous generations. Modern society has become aware of this problem, and a conscious attempt is made, with varying success, to adjust the child to the curriculum, the potential worker to his future job.

Luckily for the individual, an interrupted or irregular schooling was not in the 19th. century a permanent drawback to an intelligent youngster. Schooling, we repeatedly saw as we followed the life-histories, was of less importance than the initiative of the individual. In the latter half of the century this ceased to be true, as standards were set in more and more spheres of activity by a system of centrally organised examinations. Only in our own unsettled post-war era have second chances become as readily available for suitable individuals (e.g. as late entrants to the Universities,) as they were in the early 19th. century.

Where schooling is not compulsory, the educational impulse must emanate from the pupil and his family, with social custom reinforcing the personal decision. Traditionally the aim directing this impulse was the moral and religious purpose which inspired John Knox; but, as we saw in Chapter One, mixed motives have always entered into Scottish education. In studying the life-histories of our fifty individuals, we became conscious that their educational aim was largely, though not purely or even mainly, utilitarian. In a changing society, people hoped to get on in the world by learning.

This aspiration was much more widely diffused through all ranks of society in the early 19th. century than it is today. Now that real equality of opportunity in education has been achieved, something of its glory has departed, along with the social prestige and material rewards of the professions to which education holds the key. At the period we have been studying, <sup>fewer</sup> ~~few~~ boys, and scarcely any girls at all, could hope to realise their ambitions through higher education. The education was harder to come by, and the openings for those who had acquired learning were far less numerous and varied than they are today.

Yet the belief in education as an open-sesame was strong, especially amongst the intelligent members of the working-class, who wished, almost universally, to escape from the manual labour which, in their experience, offered only hard times and insecurity. This stimulus to scholastic effort has disappeared at the present time of full employment, with high wages for skilled and even for unskilled workers; but it is an educational motive apt to recur in times of economic stress, as during the depression of the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties.

At our period there was a strong drive even amongst the comfortably-off towards the learned professions, which were undoubtedly more highly regarded in 19th. century Scotland than they are today. The professional man had greater prestige in Scotland than elsewhere, and became a standard Scottish export. In England, by contrast, more well-to-do people of superior abilities pursued business careers, or remained in the ranks of the landed gentry, while devoting their leisure to art or learning.

Since the aims of a 19th. century education must be understood as not wholly disinterested, it was pleasant to discover an upward trend in the circumstances of our fifty

individuals, who on the whole achieved a higher social level than that to which they were born. In this they to some extent reflected the general tendency of an expanding society; we must remember, too, that the individuals who are remembered tend to be remarkable people who deserve success.

It was therefore all the more significant to discover many instances of disappointment and failure. Although many reached the professions from modest homes, there was considerable frustration amongst intelligent aspirants who failed to rise from the ranks of the working class, often for want of financial backing. Others who did in the end succeed in their ambitions went through periods of bewilderment and despondency when the future seemed dark.

Such frustration is uncommon today, when most professions are clamouring for recruits, so that maintenance grants for students have become a matter of national necessity. Even in the latter half of the 19th. century, the position had eased, as new opportunities opened up in the expanding professional field. In the first half of the century, however, the supply of educated men was in excess of the demand, while the demand for educated women was practically nil.

This led, in due course, to the high academic standards set and maintained by the Scottish teaching profession when, after 1872, it became organised along the lines familiar to the present generation. The student of contemporary educational problems must ask himself whether this aspect of our tradition may not be the result of special circumstances. † (cf. p. 51 ). The circumstances certainly do not repeat themselves today, when a multiplicity of professional and semi-professional vocations are competing for the attention of a limited number of young people with intelligence above the average.

3) A variety of schools.

When we examined the descriptions of schools which the writings of the time afforded, we found that primary education was given at humble private schools, often of a low standard; at superior private schools of better repute; and at parish schools which were efficient where they were well-established in the midst of a reasonably concentrated population, but less good in remote districts or in the new centres of industry. Many children received primary teaching at home, either from parents or from tutors and governesses.

Higher education was still attempted in the country by the parish schoolmaster when pupils presented themselves; but he could not prepare boys for the Universities as well as schools which devoted themselves to this task, and were not burdened with beginners. As we saw in Chapter One, self-respecting townships of a fair size had had secondary schools for a long time, either by ancient foundation, by the support of the burghs, or through the private efforts of groups of citizens. The more recent schools, usually called "academies", aimed at providing a modern type of education, more suited to the industrial and commercial needs of the areas they served; but sometimes this modern character was more a matter of theory than of practice. There were also many private schools, large and small, boarding and day, for boys or girls, which offered higher education to meet the wishes of the well-to-do; and the established practice continued of schoolmasters receiving pupils for coaching in their homes.

The great variety of early 19th. century schools, besides causing confusion to the modern historical student, was not in the best interests of the pupil of the time. "The outstanding characteristic of Scottish secondary education at the beginning of the 19th. century," writes H.M. Knox (op. cit. p. 37), "was a complete lack of direction. There was no uniformity or standard of aim."

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Thus undirected, Scottish individualism showed undoubted enterprise and enthusiasm in tackling the educational problem; but schools competed with one another unnecessarily, and the resulting scholastic anarchy made teaching an unsettled and discouraging occupation. The sole aim of the higher education of boys was the University with its fixed subjects, while the aim of the education of girls remained obscure. The curriculum was therefore narrow, and school life monotonous but short. Once arrived at the University, students who were only schoolboys in age were left to their own devices, and although educational opportunities for poor boys were better in Scotland than in England, the standard of scholarship achieved by the best minds tended to be lower.

Meanwhile there existed amongst the factory workers a submerged class of children who were receiving little or no schooling before their premature entry into the labour market. Their plight was the concern of philanthropists, not as a rule professional teachers, who experimented on a smaller or larger scale with the problems they found nearest to hand, and incidentally uncovered many of the crucial issues which were to demand general attention some decades later.

Thus Owen expressed his theories through factory-schools, Stow studied infant-teaching amongst the poor, and Guthrie combined feeding with education. Such experiments as theirs suggested the idea, then revolutionary, that the school had the right, in case of need, to take over the functions of the home. The educational value of play, the desirability of discipline not based on violence and the importance of the physical welfare of the pupil were other discoveries of pioneers who, from motives philanthropic or religious, did first-aid work amidst the terrible conditions of the 19th. century slums.

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#### 4) Pupil and teacher.

Regarded from the child's point of view, school life was happiest for intelligent pupils whose abilities could be directed to conventional studies. Since attendance was not compulsory, children whose tastes lay in other directions tended not to persevere at school, thus relieving the school of the responsibility for adjusting the curriculum to the pupil. All schools which were even fairly efficient seem to have been well supplied with ambitious youngsters, keen to excel. Those who did not conform to this type were at best neglected, at worst pursued by punishments which by any modern standard seem harsh to the point of brutality.

In the playground, authority took no notice of the rough diversions of schoolboys. It may fairly be said that school was no place for a sensitive child; and while the tough, well-balanced pupil survived the system, even profiting from its rigours, a fine crop of educational "problems" inevitably grew up. They flourished unrecognised, for the age of psychology had not yet come.

Once the University stage was reached, a number of combining factors, such as the uneven preparation given by the schools, and the precarious economics of a majority of the students, made up an overshadowing atmosphere of gloom and hard work. The material well-being of the student, who was in years little more than a child, was nobody's business, so that personal tragedies were a commonplace of University life, and the opportunity, more readily come by in Scotland than elsewhere, of attempting a University course, was often bought at a high price which might be life itself. For the tough and persevering, the crowning glory of a professional career glimmered distantly ahead.

In the meantime, for the would-be minister, doctor or literary man, teaching offered itself as a stop-gap occupation. Sometimes the temporary expedient became a man's life-work; but poor pay, modest social status and indifferent

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working conditions were his lot, and still more galling was his abiding sense of failure in not having achieved some preferred goal. Personal maladjustment may partly account for the 19th. century teacher's morose and irascible disposition, and his reliance upon corporal punishment. At best, however, the grammar or parish school teacher displayed certain Spartan virtues -- industry, thoroughness and devotion to moral values. His tendency to concentrate upon the top tenth of his class, and his unquestioning acceptance of the value of academic studies, kept up the prestige of education in the eyes of his contemporaries, and the serious attitude which he shared with his pupils made for the inculcation of certain values, which may or may not have been those of the classical and scriptural writings which were the main material of study.

Imagination and a love of beauty for its own sake were not qualities he possess or admired. The true classicists among 19th. century Scotsmen, men like Lockhart or Lang, had a significant part of their education in the humaner atmosphere of Oxford. Meanwhile the new thinking about method, school organisation and the curriculum was coming from enlightened amateurs like Owen and Stow. A non-University tradition in teaching was beginning to challenge and stimulate the timeworn approach of the dominie. From the standpoint of history it may well be true that the best Scottish teaching was done at a time when the two traditions met and combined in a profession which was predominantly University educated and college trained.

It would not be fair to criticise the 19th. century school for not performing tasks it did not attempt. Once the principle was established that State-aided schools should prepare all the children for participation in the varied activities of a modern democracy, the educational system was bound to change beyond all recognition, and in ways which the 19th.

century Scotsman with his passion for independence and self-reliance could not have imagined and would not have approved.

The sums of public money expended on modern schools, the wide range of interests represented on their time-tables, and the honourable status claimed by their teachers would astonish the dominie if he could return today. Disapproving of the "frills", wondering at the material amenities, he would be surprised to find children of both sexes and of no outstanding "pairts" remaining at school up to the ripe age of fifteen, while handicapped children stayed still longer and the bright pupil could not be made ready for the University much before the age of eighteen. Nevertheless, beneath the unruffled surface of the educational system he knew, forces were stirring which were to bring about all these changes -- care for the health and welfare of the child, selection and guidance of pupils, concern for the handicapped, and the opportunity offered to all children to prepare for a wide variety of careers.

5) The Scottish home.

Since the schools were an imperfect instrument, the fact that the educational system was used intelligently to produce the eminent men of whom Scotland is rightly proud, was due in no small measure to the efforts of the Scottish home. In a typical home-training sacred and secular influences combined; this was seen from the beginning in a nursery lore which was distinctive in character, based as it was upon ballads and Bible stories. The home of today has lost contact with this heritage, which began to lose itself in the later years of the 19th. century as a supply of cheap children's literature, pouring from the presses, began to swamp the folklore of the fireside; until the mother of today is entirely dependent upon the professional story-tellers of the radio, television and comic paper.

Besides entertaining the small child, the 19th. century parent also instructed him. Parental teaching of the elements, which was common amongst all classes, but especially amongst the poor, had a religious motive, and reflected the high sense of family responsibility which characterised the old Scotland. This sense of responsibility has not only decayed in a materialistic society which offers many diversions outside the home; it has also been deliberately attacked by a more efficient school system, in which the trained teacher is often unwilling to co-operate with the parent. Any gain in efficiency of instruction which may have resulted from this shift of emphasis is counterbalanced, it may be argued, by the loss of the moral security which the old Scottish home, however limited its resources, did offer its children.

By contrast with the schools, the homes of the people were humane in atmosphere. The life of many a family was centred around the children, and deep affection bound together brothers and sisters, parent and child. The new branches of knowledge, notably scientific studies, which were not yet recognised by the schools, were fostered within the family circle; while whole family groups would unite in work and sacrifice to help a gifted, and often junior member to study. Self-respecting families still preserved the unity which had originated in a country of small farms and cottage industries. In such communities the position of women is honourable, since the wife is commonly her husband's working partner; and the high status of Scotswomen was reflected in the mother's central role in education.

Only in the new industrial areas, where factory conditions were attacking home life, did the family commonly fail to lay the foundations of mental and spiritual development. Here ~~in~~ slum surroundings, a population of a kind new in Scotland, and reinforced by poor immigrants in search of unskilled labour, lost touch with the old values, and

bequeathed to posterity a heritage which is still puzzling the sociologist today. The worst problem families of the present day are probably lineal descendants of the under-privileged children of 19th. century Scotland.

But at the time we have been studying, the weight of the tradition still lay with those parents who claimed their right and duty to be responsible for their children. So strong was this feeling that not a few conscientious parents took up a standpoint of extreme individualism, thinking little of outside formative agencies, such as schools. The atmosphere of the home was one of piety, frugality and hard work. The discipline which prevailed there depended upon recognition of authority rather than on force. As for cultural standards, in the homes of the well-to-do these were often surprisingly liberal. Elsewhere the chief fault of the Scottish home was a certain narrowness of outlook, a tendency to be turned in upon itself.

In the absence of outside amusements, Scottish home life encouraged young people in habits of reading and study. A collection of books, religious and otherwise, was found in many homes. Libraries also played their part, while newspaper-reading fostered discussion of current affairs, a topic which did not come within the limited purview of the school.

Children were great readers, their choice of books seeming precocious by modern standards, in the absence of any variety of books meant specially for the young. Amongst the few children's books, stories which stimulated the imagination were beginning to be rivalled by collections of useful information. In this way a certain amount of scientific instruction was imparted, not, be it noted, by the school; but the age of science-fiction was not yet.

Theology, poetry and classical literature were widely read by old and young. Amongst the poor, imaginative writing such as poetry was preferred, perhaps because they sought

a refuge from the disagreeable aspects of industrial change. Now that some degree of order has emerged from the social chaos, an intelligent working man is more likely to interest himself in science, especially applied science, or in economics. A century ago the prestige of the humanistic studies was still secure. Even those of a scientific turn of mind were likely to have been reared on the humanities and within the religious tradition, and to seek a reconciliation between the old and the new.

Inheritor of a book-loving tradition, the Scotsman is apt to think of learning as an affair of reading and writing. The new means of study by mechanical aids such as radio, film and television, which are of special value in awaking the interest of pupils of moderate intelligence and extraverted temperament, are still viewed with a little suspicion in the Scottish school; and the very fact that we, as a people, were better educated than our neighbours in the age of the book, may be making us slow to reap the utmost advantage from alternative methods of learning.

6) Educational talking-points.

We have seen that the school system left gaps and irregularities in the education of many. It was a common practice to seek to remedy such defects by home study, associations of the like-minded, or attendance at popular lectures. The motive behind all this adult education was twofold: partly a disinterested desire for culture, partly worldly ambition. In the struggle for self-improvement some succeeded, many failed. Much criticism of education and society resulted, and in the ensuing discussion disturbing new ideas crept into the consciousness of the people.

There was considerable bitterness underlying the struggle for popular education, the political aspect of which led to radicalism. Self-educated men had a fair measure of confidence in themselves and their fellows. They were critical

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of the established academic tradition, to which they had no natural loyalty, and their criticism was one of the forces which was to change that tradition, altering its bias away from classics and pure mathematics towards more vocational, scientific and contemporary studies. Meanwhile modern languages, the sciences, history and current affairs were being studied privately by those who had attended conventional schools but had not found there the opportunity to pursue a special line of interest. The rebels from within the system joined forces with those who had lacked the means to pursue traditional studies, and together they constituted a body of public opinion pressing for educational reform.

Another talking-point in a country where education was a common subject of debate was the education of girls, a controversial topic which was not fully developed because of the absence of available careers for well-educated women. The fact that marriage was regarded as the only female goal restricted the work of schools for girls, while the parish and grammar schools, though co-educational, were designed for boys.

Nevertheless, Scottish opinion was resistant to the purely feminine education of accomplishments which was coming into fashion, seeking to maintain a realistic and yet liberal approach to the training of girls for a useful home life. Since the status of the woman at home was high, and her work as a teacher of the young highly valued, a solid education was not considered a waste of time for the intelligent girl. As the century went on, intelligent and well-educated girls were less and less content to be confined within the domestic sphere. By reason of the enlightened attitude of Scotland on female education, the transition from the old ideal of womanhood to a modern conception of the feminine role in society was accomplished more smoothly than in less egalitarian lands.

A third subject of debate amongst contemporary observers of the Scottish scene was the English influence upon speech

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and manners, which became progressively more marked during the period we have studied. There was a growing tendency for upper-class children to be educated at least partly outside Scotland, (or later within Scotland at schools planned upon English models), and for ambitious young people from all classes to seek fame and fortune away from their native land. The comparative standards of English and Scottish education were fiercely but inconclusively debated; about the greater range of opportunity offered to the Scot who made his career in England or the Empire there could be no doubt.

Thus it came about that the better-informed and wealthier classes adopted southern ways which were soon copied by humbler folk. Inevitably a purely Scottish culture took a lower place both in the schools and in the general estimation of the community, a change which many regretted at the time and a few have since laboured to reverse. Nevertheless the change took place; and although Scotland has retained its separate framework of legislation and many distinctive traditional features in its schools, new developments are usually on similar lines in the two countries, and an assimilating tendency constantly at work tends to narrow any gaps which may exist between their educational systems.

### 7) Religious teaching and the basic issues.

The basic controversies of the 19th. century concerned the relationship between Church and State, with all the repercussions upon education which changes in that relationship involve, and the position of religion in a cosmos which had seemed to expand and change in the light of new scientific discoveries. In Scotland the impact of these clashes was muffled by the pervading atmosphere of deep moral earnestness and religious reverence.

Religious teaching began in the Scottish home, where the mother's influence and the inspiration of the Bible formed

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the mind from the earliest years. The school was less happy in its teaching of religious subjects, and was often criticised for a merely literal approach, an undue emphasis upon rote learning. Yet the central position of the Church in the community, of religion and morals in the scheme of learning was not seriously questioned even by the unorthodox; and although schism continued to figure in Scottish church life, the differences did not go deep enough to put an obstacle in the way of religious teaching in schools, even when these passed from the direct control of the churches.

It may be that these vital topics have been insufficiently argued out amongst us. We have relied too implicitly upon the acceptance of Christian sanctions by a majority of educators, and upon an belief in the great human interests -- art, literature and religion -- which may no longer be generally diffused amongst the educated men and women of a technological civilisation, although lip-service is still paid to them in the schools.

"The older educational tradition," writes Dr. Boyd, (op. cit. p. 403), "With all its limitations has always been essentially humanistic. It has made the study of the noblest expressions of the human spirit the main concern of the schools." Dr. Boyd further points out that the exclusive concern of the traditional curriculum with Latin and Greek unduly limited the idea of humanism. From our study of the Scottish grammar school in the early 19th. century we came away with the impression that the classical studies pursued there fell short of inspiring in the average pupil an enthusiasm for the great ideals of the ancient world. There are those who would criticise school teaching of religion, both in the past and at present, on similar grounds.

Certainly it would seem to be true that an over-riding concept of general culture, with religion as its crown, no longer dominates our schools, which devote themselves more and more to preparing pupils for examinations which open

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the door to a career. This vocational aim was always present in Scottish education, from the dim past when a "learned clerk's" scholastic training led to the priesthood, through the confused aspirations of the 19th. century led o' pairts, to the clear-cut plans of the modern secondary schoolboy preparing for his "Highers."

In the centuries preceding our own, however, the vocational aspect of culture was supposed to be secondary to its spiritual aim. The cynic would say that already in the 19th. century a growing materialism had undermined this position, so that later the whole edifice was to collapse without argument and almost unnoticed, leaving a new utilitarian training to replace the old cultivation of the whole man by a concentration upon proximate aims, such as vocational skills and examination passes. This would be an extreme view, and one which ignores the preparation for leisure which is so noticeable in the new school, and was so conspicuously absent in the old. In the true use of leisure the spiritual purposes of the modern community must discover themselves, or we perish.

The spiritual activities, religious, literary, creative, which develop the personality and enrich the leisure of the whole man were in the early 19th. century cherished not in the school but in the homes of the people. This pattern of living was and remains inextricably bound up with the deepest implications of Protestant theology. "Among the relative possibilities of culture as education," writes, for example, Emil Brunner (The Divine Imperative, p. 709), "the family occupies the first place." In our little study of Scottish education we have seen this truth exemplified in a whole way of life, a child-centred and home-centred education, which once flourished in a Scotland which was better integrated with its traditions than the Scotland of today.

### 8) The Tradition in modern Scotland.

Nothing is more difficult than to judge one's own times ;

but it would certainly seem that a break in the tradition has occurred in the sphere of the home. Within the past century the central position of the home and its teachings, in practical affairs as well as in religion and morals, has given way rather rapidly before the pressure of a school which has absorbed many of the functions of the family, a community which emphasises the individual at the expense of the natural group, and an omniscient State which cares for its members not only in childhood but from the cradle to the grave. The complexity of modern civilisation has brought about this change by a process often described, and, doubtless, inevitable. Educational systems which were once fairly adequate would nowadays fail lamentably in the task of equipping the citizen for the modern world. What the school has gained in efficiency, scope and usefulness has diminished the authority and responsibility of parent, home and family.

No sensible person denies the blessings of progress. The child of today is healthier and has a longer expectation of life than his 19th. century ancestor. He is better fed and clothed, better informed, better treated by his teachers, who are themselves better qualified and better-off. Amusements are provided for him, opportunities set before him, obstacles and inequalities smoothed from his path. He is more a citizen of the world than his great-great-grandfather; and, despite the efforts of the nationalist, less recognisably a son of Scotland.

In material things the gain has been great, in the school as in the world at large. Spiritually, the comparison is less clearly favourable. Today's child has not been reared in the habits of industry which the frugal domestic economy of the 19th. century made, for most families, not a virtue but a necessity. In consequence, he is often aimless and discontented in the long hours of leisure which so many agencies compete to fill for him.

The contemporary home can seldom give an authoritative ruling on religious and moral questions -- (how long ago seems the lifetime of Carlyle's father who was "never visited by doubt"! ) -- which are still, however, outwith the scope of the school. Consequently the child grows up a prey to uncertainties which may emerge as physical or psychological malaise, or as personality disturbances such as delinquency. The old stability of family affection is weakened; it flourished in poverty and monotony, and amidst the distractions of a higher living standard has declined.

The modern educator must meditate deeply and constructively upon these problems. Recent developments in education have stressed the importance of vocational preparation, the extension of education to cover every aspect of life, physical as well as mental, and the need for scientific techniques in instruction and measurement. A few theorists, such as Dewey, have sought to replace the natural community by an artificial one, in devising a school capable of training pupils to live in the modern world. But the pragmatist and the statistician are at one in their impatience of fundamental inquiries, which would go beyond the symptom to the disease of an ailing civilisation.

A re-thinking of the basic concepts of education may well show, as Dr. Boyd predicts, (op. cit. p. 436), that "science is not the supplanter but the ally of philosophy." This view, unquestioned by intelligent men of the 19th. century, is certainly part of our tradition. An extension of the school's functions wholly to supplant the home would be alien to that tradition; and it may be that in an age of greater material amenities within the home, including educational agencies, such as television, of unexplored potentiality, family life will recover its former values. Upon the responsibility of the parent, under God, for the total welfare of the child

Scottish education was founded. Without the dual sanctions of the faith and the family, this aspect of our past would become a mere matter of history. Should this happen, new institutions to replace the home might finally be perfected, but the Scottish tradition in education would be gone for ever.

Appendix.Education of Fifty Individuals.

|   |      |                  |  |   |    |   |   |
|---|------|------------------|--|---|----|---|---|
| P | 1785 | John Younger     | St. Boswell's, Parish S.                   | E | -- | H | S |
| P | 1787 | John Carrick     | Glasgow. Elements.                         | E | -  | H | S |
| C | 1790 | John Imlah       | Aberdeen. Grammar S.                       | A | -  | - | S |
| C | 1792 | Edward Irving    | Annan. Academy.<br>Edin. Univ.             | A | -  | - | - |
| P | 1792 | William Finlay   | Aberdeen. Grammar S.                       | A | -  | - | - |
| S | 1793 | David Stow       | Paisley. Grammar S.                        | A | -  | H | - |
| S | 1794 | J.G. Lockhart    | Glasgow. High S. Univ.                     | A | I  | H | S |
| C | 1795 | T. Carlyle       | Ecclefechan. Annan Acad.<br>Glasgow Univ.  | A | -  | H | S |
| P | 1795 | Janet Hamilton   | Shotts. No schooling.                      | E | I  | H | S |
| S | 1795 | Jemima Beveridge | Dunfermline. Private S.                    | A | -  | - | S |
| S | 1795 | David Robertson  | Kippen. Parish S.                          | A | -  | H | S |
| P | 1797 | John Graeme      | Glasgow. Elements.                         | E | -  | - | S |
| P | 1798 | James Hyslop     | Kirkconnel. Sanquhar Ac.                   | A | I  | H | S |
| P | 1798 | William Thom     | Aberdeen. Dame S.                          | E | -  | H | S |
| C | 1798 | Robert Pollok    | Mearns. Fenwick Parish S.<br>Glasgow Univ. | A | I  | H | - |
| S | 1798 | Ed. Pinkerton    | Campbeltown. Ed. High S.<br>Edin. Univ.    | A | I  | - | - |
| P | 1798 | Robt. Gilfillan  | Dunfermline. Elements.                     | E | -  | H | S |
| S | 1798 | D.M. Moir        | Musselburgh. Grammar S.<br>Edin. U.        | A | -  | H | - |
| P | 1800 | George Donald    | Glasgow. Dame & Parish S.                  | A | I  | - | S |
| P | 1800 | Jas. Somerville  | Berwickshire. Parish S.                    | E | -  | H | S |
| C | 1800 | Hugh Miller      | Cromarty. Various Ss.                      | A | I  | H | S |
| S | 1801 | Jane Carlyle     | Haddington. Various Ss.                    | A | I  | H | S |
| C | 1801 | James Scott      | Lanark. Grammar S.                         | A | -  | H | - |
| S | 1802 | Robert McNish    | Glasgow. Private S. Univ.                  | A | I  | H | - |
| C | 1803 | Thomas Guthrie   | Brechin. Subscription S.<br>Edin. Univ.    | A | -  | - | - |

Education of Fifty Individuals.

|   |      |                   |   |      |   |   |
|---|------|-------------------|---|------|---|---|
| P | 1803 | William Ross      | Nigg. Dame S.                           | E, - | H | S |
| P | 1808 | Jas. Ballantine   | Edin. Parish S.                         | E -  | - | S |
| S | 1809 | J.S. Blackie      | Aberdeen. Private.<br>Univ.             | A -  | - | S |
| C | 1809 | John Reid         | Bathgate. Parish.<br>Edin. Univ.        | A -  | - | - |
| S | 1810 | John Brown        | Edin. High S. & U.                      | A -  | - | S |
| P | 1810 | Robt. Clark       | Paisley. Elements                       | E -  | - | S |
| C | 1810 | Wm. Miller        | Parkhead. Parish.                       | A I  | - | - |
| P | 1811 | Alex. Somerville  | Berwicks. Parish.                       | E I  | H | S |
| S | 1811 | W. Bell Scott     | Edin. High S.                           | A -  | H | S |
| C | 1811 | J.Y. Simpson      | Bathgate. Parish S.<br>Edin. Univ.      | A I  | H | S |
| P | 1811 | W. Pirie Smith    | Aberdeen. Elements<br>Univ.             | A I  | - | S |
| S | 1812 | Norman Macleod    | Campbeltown. Various<br>Glasg. Univ.    | -    | - | - |
| P | 1813 | David Livingstone | Blantyre. Parish.<br>Glasg. Univ.       | A I  | - | S |
| S | 1818 | Thos. Stevenson   | Edinburgh. High S.                      | A -  | H | S |
| P | 1820 | David Farquhar    | Brechin. Parish S.                      | A -  | H | S |
| C | 1824 | Geo. Macdonald    | Huntly. Parish S.<br>Aberd. Gramm. & U. | A I  | H | S |
| S | 1831 | J. C. Maxwell     | Edin. Acad. & U.                        | A I  | H | S |
| P | 1832 | James Macfarlan   | Nomadic. Little ed.                     | E I  | H | S |
| S | 1833 | John Nichol       | Glasgow. Various.<br>Glasg. Univ.       | A I  | H | S |
| P | 1838 | Thos. Davidson    | Jedburgh Acad. & U.                     | A    | - | S |
| S | 1843 | Mary Jane Smith   | Kieg. Home                              | A I  | H | S |
| S | 1844 | Andrew Lang       | Selkirk. Edin Ac.<br>Edin. Univ.        | A -  | H | - |
| S | 1846 | W. R. Smith       | Kieg. Home. Edin. U                     | A I  | H | S |
| S | 1850 | R.L. Stevenson    | Edin. Various & U.                      | A I  | H | S |
| C | 1854 | Patrick Geddes    | Perth Acad.                             | A I  | H | S |

## Education of Fifty Individuals. Explanatory Notes.

The names are arranged in chronological order, the date of birth being found in col. 2. In col. 1 the reader will find the letter P, C or S, meaning that the subject came from a poor, a comfortable or a superior home. The criteria used to determine these classes will be found in the text. (p. 29)

Of 50 individuals, 19 came from poor homes, 12 from comfortable homes and 19 from superior homes.

To the right of the subject's name, in col. 4, the reader will find the ~~letterxxxxxx~~ place where the individual made his home during the scholastic years, together with a brief indication of the school attended. In many cases, fuller details of schooling will be found at appropriate places in the text.

In col. 5, the letters E or A indicate that the individual concerned achieved a merely elementary standard of education, or that his education was adequate. "Elementary" is taken to mean a somewhat inadequate standard of education, whereas many of the subjects marked A achieved an educational standard which was superior rather than merely adequate. The letters are intended to indicate minimum standards. Only 12 of the subjects had a merely elementary schooling; the remaining 38 achieved an adequate standard. All 12 who had only the elements of schooling came from poor homes. The other 7 poor children had an adequate schooling, and 3 proceeded to the University. 8 out of 12 children from comfortable homes went to the University, and all had an adequate schooling. 13 out of 19 children from superior homes went to the University. All had adequate schooling, 10 at private schools.

In col. 6, the letter I indicates some irregularity in schooling. There are 23 instances of this, and these are described and analysed in the text (p. 37 - 42 ).

In cols. 6 and 7, the letters H and S indicate that the subject received a significant part of his education at Home, or was Self-educated to some important degree. The chapter in the text devoted to informal education analyses these findings. 32 subjects were educated wholly or in part at home, and 37 were self-educated.

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