THOMAS GUTHRIE

BY OLIPHANT SMEATON

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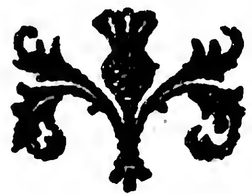

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PREFACE

To return thanks to all by name who have assisted me with information, letters, etc., in the preparation of the present work, would be impossible. I can only record my sense of gratitude to the majority of such helpers collectively. To three of these, however, I must return especial thanks, viz. to Mr. C. J. Guthrie, Q.C., for his kindness in revising my MS., and for many useful criticisms and suggestions which have been gratefully adopted; to Mr. Mathew S. Tait for making me free of his stores of information regarding Disruption times; and to Mr. James Sime, M.A., late Principal of Craigmount School, for valuable facts regarding the relation of the Free Church to Education.

The severest condensation and abridgment have been necessary to compress the enormous mass of material within the authorised limits of the series. Many valuable facts have had to be omitted; and his early life until his call to Edinburgh has had to be sketched in the compass of a very few pages. I trust, however, the main features in the story of Guthrie's life have been so kept in view throughout, that a recognisable portrait of the great preacher-philanthropist has been cast upon the literary canvas.

O. S.

EDINBURGH, *May* 1900.

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THOMAS GUTHRIE

CHAPTER I

A MIDSUMMER SABBATH'S SCENE IN FREE ST. JOHN'S

At the point of junction of three thoroughfares in the Scots capital—the Castlehill, the Lawnmarket, and the West Bow,—thoroughfares with a Past as splendid as their Present is squalid—stands a church placed on high like a lighthouse, to cast the beacon-gleams of the Gospel over the seething sea of misery and vice among the 'lapsed masses' of the Grassmarket and Cowgate. Fifty-five years ago, in St. John's Free Church, that light was kindled by the devotion and spiritual enthusiasm of Thomas Guthrie, and its cheering ray, though trimmed now by other hands, is burning brightly yet.

A midsummer Sabbath morning in the later 'fifties' of the nineteenth century! A firmament of cloudless blue and a June sun warm on the towering 'lands,'[1] on the quaint, crow-stepped gables and peaked dormer windows, on the carven architraves and deeply mullioned casements of the romantic 'capital of the Stuarts'!

Ten of the clock had only recently 'chappit'[2] from the steeples of St. Giles' and the Tron. At the 'Bowhead,' however, a crowd had already collected before the still closed doors of Free St. John's. Momentarily it increases, swelled by all sorts and conditions of men and women. Will these doors never open? Patiently the crowd tarries as the 'half-hour' approaches, a hum of conversation

[1] Tenements. [2] Struck.

rising the while from the densely packed mass, while the bloated and blear-eyed dwellers of the Bowhead, in whom godliness and cleanliness alike have become vanished virtues along with the days when a 'Bowhead' Saint was a synonym for shining piety, lounge at their doors or lean over their windows, discussing in strident Milesian *altissimo* what could be the attraction thus to induce people to stand for half an hour in a blazing sun.

At last the doors are opened. Then the rush and the push commence. One American minister[1] described his experiences as 'fighting my way in to hear Guthrie through a crowd that almost tore the coat from my back.' When the hour of service arrived every available inch of space in the great edifice was occupied. An extraordinarily varied audience it was, when the tourist season was at its height, and Edinburgh was filled to overflowing with strangers from well-nigh every clime under heaven, few of whom returned to their homes without having heard that wonderful orator of the Castlehill, whose discourses, in their persuasive earnestness, their 'passion and compassion,' as Lord Cockburn phrased it, were likened to those of the great Massillon in France.

What with his regular congregation and casual hearers, his audience was representative of every class in the community, from the peer to the peasant. St. John's was often called 'the great leveller,' inasmuch as scions of the proudest families in the aristocracy sat side by side with the working tailor or the journeyman mason. Yonder, seated in the front of the gallery, is the well-known face and figure of the most popular of all the Scots Dukes—the MacCallum Mohr, otherwise George Douglas Campbell, Duke of Argyll, who has brought a brother peer to hear the 'Champion of the Ragged Schools' proclaim that Gospel of Salvation, full, free, and finished, which makes every partaker of it, be his colour what it may, a man and a brother in the fraternal unity of the Sons of God. There also, busily conning the metrical version of the Psalms

[1] Rev. J. W. Alexander, D.D.

ere the service commenced, might be seen William Ewart Gladstone, greatest of England's Chancellors of the Exchequer, and yet to be four times Premier of Britain. Yonder, in Episcopal apron and cassock, is Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, who had worthily earned the title 'Remodeller of the Episcopate.' Not far from him towered the massive frame of William Makepeace Thackeray, whose expressive features surmounted by his silvery hair attracted the gaze of many an admirer of Becky Sharp and Pendennis. Immediately in front of the pulpit, and but a short distance from each other, were seated two notable and noticeable men—Hugh Miller, next to Chalmers, the sturdiest and most vigorous of Scottish thinkers of the nineteenth century, yet, alas! within half a year to perish by the saddest of all deaths; and Dr. James Young Simpson (not yet Sir James), to hundreds 'the beloved physician,' his name even then wreathed with the imperishable laurels of having robbed surgery, and especially maternity, of its terrors by the discovery of chloroform.

We cannot even name all the notables present in these pews,—peers and judges, professors of European fame, merchant princes, artists, *littérateurs* British and American, soldiers of world-wide celebrity, sitting side by side with the labourer and the domestic servant, with the tradesman and the clerk, with strangers of well-nigh all lands and languages who could make shift to understand our tongue—and all attracted by the genius and eloquence of a great orator.

But the hour of service had come. Scarcely had the 'bells' ceased when the old beadle, John Towert, was seen entering with 'the books,' and a hush of expectancy fell upon the vast congregation as the preacher made his appearance. It was an impressive and commanding figure that met the eye. His stature, at least two inches over six feet, his erect carriage, his lithe and sinewy frame, his broad square shoulders, which the folds of his severely simple Genevan gown could not hide, impressed the spectator with an idea of latent power, which a view of head and features burdened with the sense of a mighty

message tended to confirm. The face, crowned with locks powdered with the frost of the 'fifties,' was suggestive of great intellectual strength. The high pile of forehead sharply chiselled back towards the temples and the occiput, but overhanging the eye sockets with an almost excessive frontal development, would denote, if the readings of phrenology be worth aught, superior imaginative faculties. The eyes, bright and piercing, by their quick, almost restless, glances, lent an expression of intense alertness to the visage. The cheeks were thin and long, the nose prominent, the chin resolute and firm in outline and moulding. The face would, in truth, have left the impression of a somewhat stern and severe character, an idea still further strengthened by the shaggy, protuberant penthouses of eyebrows, had it not been relieved by the influence of the wonderfully mobile and expressive mouth. The lips, finely and delicately curved, were so sensitively alive to the emotions of the mind, that almost every feeling could be read by their subtle index. When he smiled the whole features seemed irradiated, every line and wrinkle appearing to laugh in concert. Altogether it was a noble and impressive figure that stepped into the pulpit of Free St. John's on that Sabbath morning in June and faced his audience.

The opening psalm was announced and read in mellow, resonant tones, and with faultless articulation. After this had been sung a prayer followed, not too long, but full of unction and earnestness, while the voice in its rise and fall was just touched and no more with that subtle rhythmic cadence that exercised a hallowing influence upon the hearer. A chapter from Holy Writ came next, read with appropriate accent and emphasis, but with no elocutionary embellishments to catch the sensation-lover. Another psalm, and then ensued a visible settling down of the congregation each into his special attitude wherein to listen to the sermon. The preliminary exercises were over.

Up to this point there had been nothing in either voice or action to indicate that one of the greatest pulpit orators

of the nineteenth century was before that audience. Had Guthrie's eloquence been a mere elocutionary trick, it would have made itself manifest in all he did. But the great deeps of his emotions and his sympathies needed to be broken up before the irresistible flood of his oratory could find adequate means of expression. He only revealed himself the peerless orator when his feelings were stirred to the inmost Siloam-depths of his many-sided nature.

The preacher now announced his text, 1 Cor. i. 17-18: 'Lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' For a moment he allowed his gaze to wander over the sea of faces surrounding him on all sides, as he slowly and impressively repeated the words, '*The Cross of Christ made of none effect—the Cross of Christ the power of God.*' His voice as he entered upon the introductory part of his discourse was pitched almost on a conversational key. He talked of this great theme being 'the prime problem of every man's being, more vital to his welfare, temporal and spiritual, than the most crucial question of science or of metaphysics.'

But ere long his utterance became more rapid. His emotions were beginning to be stirred. His eyes were sparkling with animation, his face was lighted up with the reflected gleams from his spirit's lofty enthusiasm, his long arms were used with perfect gesture to lend still further emphasis to the 'forcibleness' of his language as it rapidly mounted towards its climax. Then with a burst of eloquence, impetuous and irresistible as some mighty mountain torrent swollen with winter's snows, he broke forth into the following lofty passage, which at once lifted his discourse on to a higher plane alike of thought and feeling. He was describing Christ's utter desertion and loneliness at the Cross, and a thrill of emotion like an electric shock vibrated through the audience as they heard the words :—

'Christ was alone, awfully alone, in that last terrible conflict with the Prince of Darkness. The day had been when crowds followed Him, tracked His steps from city to city, from shore to shore, hanging on His lips, thronging the streets through which He passed, and besieging the houses where He lodged. The day was when ten thousand tongues would have spoken and ten thousand swords would have flashed in His defence; but the day had arrived when, during for a while, they all fell away, and of the crowds that swelled His jubilant train all—all deserted Him, the only voice lifted up in His behalf coming from the cross of a dying thief, "This man hath done nothing amiss: Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."'

The full, rich tones, now deep as the diapasons of some mighty organ, sweet anon as the strains of a well-tuned harp, gradually sank in pitch as he neared the close of the passage, until, with hushed voice, and eyes and hands raised pleadingly to Heaven, he uttered the pathetic words of the dying malefactor, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'

The audience was now thoroughly in his thrall. Every word was followed with a jealous, hungry interest that never for an instant flagged. Every type of lofty, persuasive oratory was impressed into the service of demonstrating that the Cross of Christ is worthy of having all things accounted loss for it. Now he thundered forth indignant remonstrance against the scoffer who sneered at the 'Carpenter of Galilee':—

'The history of infidelity, were it written, would present a succession of ignominious defeats—defeats due, not to any want of ability in those who have assailed the truth, but to this, that its defenders have driven them out of all their positions. We have seen the soldier return from the fields of war with scars as well as medals on his breast; but the Cross of Christ and our religion, based upon it, has come out of a thousand fights unscarred, from a thousand fires unscathed. Our faith bears no more evidence of the assaults she has sustained than the air of the swords that have cloven it, or the sea of the keels which have ploughed its foaming waves; than some bold rocky headland of the billows that, dashing against it in proud but impotent fury, have shivered themselves on its sides.'

At other times his voice became tenderly low and pleading as he described the love of Christ for the sinner:—

'Ah, dear friends, He can and will be all in all to us. Am I wounded?—He is balm! Am I sick?—He is medicine! Am I naked?—He is clothing! Am I poor?—He is wealth! Am I hungry?—He is bread! Am I thirsty?—He is water! Am I tried?—He is my advocate! Is sentence passed, and am I condemned?—He is my pardon! O blessed Jesus, whose Cross of shame has become the sinners' crown of justification!'

Presently he began to picture the career of a noble-minded, noble-spirited youth setting out on the voyage of life without religion as his compass. He likened him to a stately vessel leaving harbour with all her sails set, a thing of beauty and of grandeur. But ere long her course is cut short. She gets among the breakers of temptation. In vivid and picturesque language he described the awful scene of the wreck, the launch of the lifeboat of salvation, and the terrible struggle with the powers of evil. As he worked up the various details of the picture with realistic skill, his hearers lost the consciousness of its parabolic character. The whole scene became visualised to them. At one time a sob, at another a gasp of excitement, passed over the whole church. Some in the back seats involuntarily rose as though to view the scene better. As the cry was echoed, 'Man the lifeboat!' a young sailor in the front of the gallery, oblivious of everything, leapt to his feet and began to pull off his coat to volunteer, until he is drawn down into his seat again by his friends.[1] Then, when the great picture is completed, and the salvation of a soul achieved, a long sigh of relief, betokening the loosening of the tension of the feelings, seemed to break involuntarily from the great gathering.

But the preacher is now nearing the conclusion of his discourse. Only the personal application remains to be enforced. With what earnestness, what depth of love, what fervour of appeal—nay, with what keen knowledge of the human heart—was that application of his sermon not driven home? The orator seemed to bend down from the

[1] An actual occurrence.

pulpit and literally entreat the sinner to accept Christ as his individual Saviour :—

> 'The day is quickly dying ; soon will come the night of death for all of us, when life's fitful fever shall be over. By all you hold dear, by the memories of your beloved dead who have passed within the veil before you, by the value of that immortal essence within you, which is neither yours to give nor yours to take away, I charge you this day, this hour, this moment, to look well to it that your calling and your election is made sure, for it is a fearful thing for an unrepentant soul to fall into the hands of the living God !'

The solemn close of the sermon produced a deep impression. People looked at each other anxiously, as though mutely inquiring, 'How does that affect us ?' Ten minutes more and all was over. The mighty audience was slowly pouring out from the church into the brilliant sunshine, discussing the while the merits of the remarkable discourse to which they had been listening. As the preacher passed down from his pulpit to the vestry he overheard two young and beautiful ladies of title referring to the sermon : 'Oh, what a charming discourse it was ! Is he not a delightful preacher ?' said one to the other, an opinion the latter warmly indorsed. The man of God looked back at them sadly, and the light seemed to die out of his face. 'O my Saviour !' he unconsciously murmured in the hearing of one of his elders who, unseen by him, stood near, 'why will they always exalt the instrument and not Thee ? My preaching is a failure if I can only charm but not change !'

CHAPTER II

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

THOMAS GUTHRIE, the twelfth child and the sixth son of David Guthrie and Clementina Cay, was born in Brechin, Forfarshire, 12th July 1803.

Both his parents were, to quote the old Scots phrase, 'by ordinar folk'—that is to say, they were possessed of characteristics and qualities differentiating them from the general run of their neighbours. His father, David Guthrie, who at the time of his distinguished son's birth was the leading merchant in Brechin and the Provost of the burgh in addition, was a man of sincerely religious principles, upright in business, exemplary in his family relations, a model citizen, and a staunch friend. He was elected a member of the Town Council when only twenty-two years of age, and all his life remained one of the pillars of the municipality—a position, curiously enough, 'inherited' by two of his sons, the elder brothers of the subject of our sketch.

Dr. Guthrie, however, owed much of his intense spirituality to his mother. She appears to have been a woman whose piety was of the most real life-leavening type. Finding that in the Established Church of that epoch, icebound in Moderatism, she failed to obtain the spiritual nourishment she considered indispensable to her soul's health, though attached to the State Church by many ties, past and present, she decided to leave it, and to connect herself with the Burgher section of the Secession Church in Brechin, presided over by the well-known David Blackadder.

The home life of the Guthries of Brechin was of the most elevated character. The harmonious conjugal relations of the heads of the house and the atmosphere of peace enfolding all within its walls, caused their example to act as a sort of 'object-lesson' to the community around them. The paternal discipline was strict, but not stern.

The farms of Guthrie's paternal grandfather and uncles were all in the vicinity of Brechin. He early learned to love Nature by visits to these scenes of rural beauty and peace, and the lessons thus early acquired were never forgotten through life. Nor was his scholastic education neglected. When but four years old, he was sent, along with his brother Charles, to an elementary school taught by a worthy Christian man named Jamie Stewart, who combined the dual vocations of pedagogy and weaving. Here Thomas Guthrie remained for upwards of two years, receiving a thorough drilling in the three R's. When the slender store of the weaver-dominie's accomplishments were exhausted, the two boys were sent to a school in connection with the Anti-Burgher Church in Brechin, where once the great Dr. M'Crie had acted as teacher. At this seminary Guthrie received the remainder of his education. When he closed his school-days he was just twelve years old—an age when others are usually only entering upon the grammar-school curriculum.

To a different sphere he was now called upon to proceed. Early in November 1815, accompanied by a friend named John Whyte, who, being somewhat older, was supposed to play the dual rôles of a Mentor as well as a Pythias, he journeyed to Edinburgh to enter himself as a student at the University of the Scots capital. Guthrie's college-days were comparatively uneventful. Though never a brilliant, he was, as his certificates from his professors show, always a faithful student. His work was conscientiously performed, although a child of thirteen could scarcely be expected to understand the subtleties of metaphysics or appreciate the differences between Plato

and Aristotle. Natural Philosophy as expounded by Professor Leslie alone attracted his interested attention. To it he applied himself with an enthusiasm that would have ensured success had his powers been developed.

At first he felt the loneliness of the great city, where all but him seemed to have friends. Gradually he formed acquaintanceships which lent a savour and a sweetness to life. In the society of such friends as, like himself, loathed the very suggestion of vice while they delighted in the display of pure, healthy animal spirits and the sports which gave scope for them, his spare time during his Arts curriculum was passed. His hours for study were carefully observed and were never less than 'five' per day, in addition to his class hours. His general reading during his spare time was of a miscellaneous yet thoroughly healthy character, comprising Scott, Cowper, Bacon, the *Morte D'Arthur*, Milton, Shakespeare, Allan Ramsay, Buchanan, Sidney's *Arcadia*, etc.; while Saturdays were always devoted to long rambles into the country, where he and his companions would be brought face to face with God in Nature. During the last years of his Arts course he was a member of a University Debating Society called the 'Forfarshire Literary Association,' in the work of which, I am informed, he took a deep interest, and frequently contributed papers.

No other profession than that of the pulpit seems to have even been considered possible for the young Brechin lad. Nor did he shrink from the sphere thus pressed upon him. Those years spent partially at least under the ministry of godly Mr. Blackadder of the Burgher Church in Brechin, had implanted the good seed in his heart. To the Divinity Hall in the University of Edinburgh he therefore proceeded, where he spent four years more of hard study, under Professors Ritchie, Meiklejohn, and Brunton—none of whom, however, were men of any great eminence. At the termination of those years, after satisfying his teachers of his proficiency in the subjects taught by them, he presented his credentials to the

Presbytery of Brechin, and by them was licensed to preach the Gospel. The 'Trial Discourses' delivered by him on the occasion are still extant. In them, even a partial eye can detect no trace of the future eloquent orator. They are good average productions, but rise little, if at all, above mediocrity. However, they satisfied his clerical examiners, which was the chief desideratum; and on the 2nd February 1825 he was admitted a licentiate of the Church of Scotland.

To him this successful consummation of all his studies was robbed of one-half its anticipated pleasure. In the previous year his father, who had taken such keen delight in his progress, and whose judicious praise had been his stimulus, was removed by death. The effect of the blow on young Guthrie was for a season almost overpowering, until Time, the great healer, mitigated the severity of his sorrow.

In Guthrie's licentiate days the democratic method of settling ministerial elections, now practised in connection with the Established Church, was unknown. The trail of patronage lay over every parish in Scotland. This was, however, not a disadvantage to the young preacher. His family influence was such that he could confidently expect to be presented to a charge at once on taking licence. And such would have been the case, had he been prepared to join the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland. But when he declined to do so, and preferred to leave himself freedom of action, the Moderates brought all their influence to bear against him when he applied for any 'cure.' The consequence was, he had the mortification of seeing four presentations, any of which he might have had if only he would have bowed to the Moderate yoke, given to others.

So marked was the hostility shown by the Moderate party towards young Thomas Guthrie, and so hopeless did the outlook appear, that some of his friends advised him to think of some other profession. To this suggestion, however, he declined to lend an ear. But that the time might not be lost, he first of all entered upon an extensive

course of reading at home, then determined to return to Edinburgh University and take out one or two extra classes in Chemistry and Natural History under Professors Hope and Jamieson; also Surgery and Anatomy under the extra-mural lecturer Dr. Knox—within three years to become unpleasantly associated with the Burke and Hare horror. In all these subjects the young man displayed conspicuous proficiency.

The step, however, which more than aught else put the copestone on the academic culture of Thomas Guthrie, was the visit he paid to the Continent for the purpose of studying at the University of Paris. He proceeded thither in the autumn of 1826, being attracted by the fame of Gay-Lussac, professor of Natural Philosophy; Geoffrey St. Hilaire, the Comparative Anatomist; Louis Jacques Thenard, the great Chemist; also by Lisfranc, Dupuytren, and Baron Larrey, the distinguished Surgeons. He made a short stay in London *en route* both going and returning, when he met the Hon. W. Maule, Joseph Hume, M.P., and others, whose friendship afterwards proved useful to him. His stay in Paris influenced him beneficially in more ways than one, in expanding his intellectual outlook. It broadened his sympathies, it widened his ideas of the brotherhood of humanity, and taught him many lessons in catholicity of sentiment which bore fruit in the years to come. There also he studied very hard, and carried back with him the approbation of his teachers. He likewise walked the hospitals in the 'train' of the great surgeons, where he picked up much of that medical knowledge which stood him in good stead in after years. Despite the benefits he received, intellectually speaking, from his visit to Paris, his pictures of Parisian society, both of the *bourgeois* and of the better classes, are mournfully black. He recoiled with horror from the shameless vice which met him on all sides; but, as he said after a visit to Frascati's gambling-saloon, which was maintained at the expense of the Government, who drew a vast revenue from it, 'what else can be expected of a people whose rulers actually

pander to and provide means for the gratification of the vilest vices?'

He returned home in April 1827. He had gone forth a youth full of boyish ways and ideas; he returned a man who had seen the world and studied the world's ways under different conditions of life from the majority of his fellows, and whose desire now was to utilise the knowledge thus acquired to the best possible advantage.

On his return he found his prospects of obtaining a charge on conditions he could accept as remote as ever. Not for a moment did he lose heart. He felt that God was preparing him for some service, and that his duty meantime was simply to wait. Accordingly he resumed his methodised course of reading at home, preaching from time to time as opportunity offered. While thus engaged, a curious call to duty came to him—no less than to take the management of a bank. His elder brother, Bailie John Guthrie, who had been manager (*Scotticè* agent) of the local branch of the Dundee Union Banking Company, a position held by members of the family for nearly sixty years, died very suddenly. His eldest son was then a boy in the later 'teens, but still too young to assume charge of so important an institution. The great influence of the family caused the directors of the bank to desire that the son should succeed the father, if only the place could be held open for a year or two. Thomas Guthrie was asked both by his relatives and the bank to act as *locum tenens*. After some hesitation he consented, and was accordingly duly installed.

He made a splendid banker. In a few weeks he had mastered all the details, and his success in carrying on the branch may be gauged by the remark made by the manager of the Head Office on Mr. Guthrie taking leave of him, when about to begin work at Arbirlot. 'Sir,' he said, 'if you only preach as well as you have banked, you will be sure to succeed.'

CHAPTER III

PARISH MINISTER OF ARBIRLOT

AT last the object of Thomas Guthrie's ambition was to be realised after five years of waiting. He was to be placed as minister over a parish for whose moral and spiritual welfare he would be responsible. In the early months of 1830 the Crown appointed him to the Forfarshire parish of Arbirlot, on the recommendation of the Hon. William Maule. The presentee having preached before the congregation to their manifest satisfaction, the 'call' was signed, and on the 13th May the 'new minister' was inducted into his charge.

Arbirlot—Aber-Elliot, the place at the mouth of the Elliot—is a beautiful country parish on the eastern coast of Scotland, situate about three miles from Arbroath and sixty from Edinburgh. The geographical position of the parish causes it to combine in itself the somewhat diverse natural charms of rich landscape and bold seascape. From several points in the district one can command views of either kind, unrivalled on the eastern seaboard of Scotland for peaceful beauty and impressive grandeur.[1] It had the advantage of being easy of access, and was, moreover, within twenty miles of Brechin, so that he was not cut off from intercourse with his kindred.[2]

The parish was neither very large nor very populous. In 1824 it had been returned as numbering 1077 souls, while by 1830 it had only reached 1086, showing that the ratio of increase was not rapid.

[1] Edwards' *Description of Angus* (1678: repub. 1791).

[2] After a time his mother came to reside in Arbirlot to be near her son.

To Mr. Guthrie this was an advantage, and from the first he regarded it as such. How many promising young ministers are dwarfed and stunted, both intellectually and spiritually, by being placed at the outset in onerous charges where the work is beyond their strength! Robert Hall's remark about the ratio of sermon-production should be laid to heart by every young preacher.

From the outset Mr. Guthrie's preaching was acceptable to his people. Of this fact there are many proofs extant, chiefly the testimony of those who had heard the older residents speak of it. Among others, that of the saintly David Key, one of his elders, and given at length in the *Memoir*, is the most remarkable. And yet, from existing specimens of his sermons in those early days of his Arbirlot ministry we can detect few traces of those qualities of figurative diction, picturesque illustration, and striking apostrophes and appeals so familiar in the discourses of later years. The style is severely simple and chaste, while ornament is rare.

No sooner was Mr. Guthrie fairly settled down in his sphere of work than he began to evince that tireless activity in the service of his Master characteristic of him all his days. He threw himself into parochial work with an energy and concentration of purpose that astonished and delighted all. For five years he had been eating his heart out in enforced idleness. The stock of restrained activity, kept in check all that time, now had free course to flow out from him in a mighty tide of far-reaching achievement. Probably that weary delay was the Creator's mode of fitting His instrument for the glorious work before him. Had he stepped into the ministry fresh from college, he might never have learned that great lesson of 'patience till God opens the way' which was not the least of his virtues. Disappointment is oftentimes the greatest of teachers, and so it proved to Thomas Guthrie.

His parochial schemes and enterprises were both varied and numerous. Five months after his induction into Arbirlot he took unto himself an 'helpmate,' who, in the

highest and noblest sense of that word, proved herself his coadjutrix. For some years he had been engaged to Anne, the eldest daughter of the Rev. James Burns of Brechin; and on 6th October 1830 they were married by the bride's father.

Though Arbirlot was, morally speaking, an earthly paradise into which the darker and more revolting sins of our great cities scarcely entered, the spiritual state of the parish was decidedly 'dead.' His predecessor had held the living for the lengthened period of fifty-nine years, occupying the pulpit in person until he was eighty-seven. Though at first a sound Evangelical preacher, the advent of age brought listlessness and torpor, so that vital religion and warm spirituality burned low in consequence.

To suffer such a state of things for any length of time would not have been in keeping with the splendid activity of Mr. Guthrie's nature. He immediately set to work to remedy it. In the first place he established a weekly prayer-meeting. One of these was held at Arbirlot, but he had two or three other 'cottage-meetings' throughout the parish for those living at a distance. These were superintended by his elders, and to each of them he paid a visit once a month. Though successful in Arbirlot, the 'cottage-meetings' elsewhere scarcely came up to his expectations, largely owing to the diffidence and modesty of the elders conducting them.

Another means of reaching his people, and thus promoting their intellectual as well as their spiritual amelioration, was through the congregational library, which he instituted and, in conjunction with Mrs. Guthrie, personally superintended. The books were given out on Saturday evenings, and were retained a week. When the parishioners returned them they found their pastor or his lady always ready to discuss the volumes with them and to elicit even from the shyest—but without seeming to do so—their opinions on what they had read. The parish library was one of the most successful of Mr. Guthrie's means for raising the status of intellectual culture among his people.

But while their spiritual and mental improvement was thus carefully considered, he felt that the lessons inculcated regarding thrift and economy would be shorn of half their value if there were not at hand some agency whereby the savings of the people might be looked after for them. Hitherto the time-honoured bank of the Scottish peasantry—the stocking or the old teapot—had prevailed in Arbirlot as elsewhere. But such a system had its evils. The money was always at hand, and the pedlars' packs were oftentimes pitfalls, leading the industrious country-folk into extravagances they afterwards regretted. A parish savings-bank was therefore initiated and proved a conspicuous success, the minister's banking experiences now standing him in good stead in suggesting the best means of organising and carrying on such an institution.

Nor were the young children neglected. Several Sabbath-schools, conducted by the elders in various parts of the parish, were started and proved successful. To-day the Sabbath-school is the invariable adjunct and feeder of every congregation. Then, however, they were few and far between, the opinion being too often entertained that such classes destroyed parental responsibility for the religious education of their children. At Arbirlot the schools were so arranged that they did not interfere with family catechising where such existed, but rather acted as valuable aids to such domestic instruction.

Nor was the social welfare of his parish beyond the limits of his personal oversight. Though not yet a total abstainer, he was a strong advocate of temperance, and impressed its necessity upon his people. Not that the vice of drunkenness was very prevalent in Arbirlot. When Mr. Guthrie went there he found only two public-houses in the district. One of these, after a fatal accident to an inebriate had roused the community, he succeeded in getting closed. The remaining one being at the extreme end of the parish, offered little temptation to the Arbirlot people.

While Mr. Guthrie was attaching his parishioners to him by the closest ties of mutual love and respect, his relations with his brethren of the Presbytery of Arbroath were of the most friendly character. He likewise interested himself in the business of the Synod of Angus and the Mearns, and was a Commissioner to the General Assembly in 1832, a position he also filled in the years 1834 and 1835.

Among his important speeches in the Presbytery was one he delivered in January 1834, when he moved the notable resolution that the Presbytery should petition Parliament to repeal the Act relating to Church Patronage. His speech on that occasion was a cogent and convincing one, and he carried his motion by three votes, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Moderate party in the Presbytery. This Anti-Patronage resolution brings us at last to the time when the first 'soughings' became audible of that mighty storm which was first to shake, but in the end to rend Scotland, in a social as well as an ecclesiastical sense, to her foundations.

In 1830, when Mr. Guthrie began his ministry at Arbirlot, there were in reality two questions adopted by the Evangelicals of the day as their rallying cries against the dominant Moderatism—'No Patronage' and 'No Intrusion.' Though logically separable and, as was proved, capable of attracting each its distinctive class of supporters, yet the two topics were virtually the obverse and the reverse of the same great problem—'Was the Church of Scotland "Erastian" or "free"?—in other words, was it the thrall of the State, or had it inalienable *rights*—*rights* that might indeed have remained dormant for many long decades, yet *rights* that had never been legally abrogated? Moderatism [1] maintained the right of the State to intervene in the purely spiritual affairs of the Church, while the Evangelicals claimed that Christ's Headship over the nations and His

[1] The 'high' Moderates, that is, of the type of Dr. Cook of St. Andrews; for there were several members of the party, such as Dr. Robertson of Ellon and Mr. Story of Roseneath, who went quite as far as Dr. Chalmers in denying any rights to the State of jurisdiction over the spiritual concerns of the Church.

Church left the spiritual jurisdiction of the latter independent of the Civil Power, save what was implied in formal recognition, protection, and maintenance.

Mr. Guthrie was not only an 'Evangelical' in a party sense, he was one by conviction, temperament, and bitter experience of the evils inflicted alike on the doctrine and polity of the Church by Moderatism and its methods. Not because Dr. Nicoll and his followers had long debarred him from exercising the office of the ministry did he now put forth all his efforts to destroy the influence of the party. His motives were not dictated by such personal considerations. As he says in a letter written a little later, 'my aim all through this bitter but monotonous struggle has been solely to vindicate the Headship of my Saviour over His Church and people, to lead men to see that no one, not even the State, has a right to come between Christ and His Redeemed.'

Mr. Guthrie accordingly threw himself into the struggle with the enthusiasm of a youthful warrior, conscious of the justice of his cause. Never minister 'educated' his people better in the principles at stake. Though with that lofty reverence he always manifested for the sanctity of the pulpit, he never introduced controversial topics into the Sabbath services, he was assiduous on week-nights in lecturing to his parishioners on the subjects then bulking so largely on the public attention. He also held meetings in the district, at which his friends were brought from far and near to speak, and he proposed motions both in Presbytery and Synod on the Abolition of Patronage. As yet the Auchterarder and Strathbogie cases[1] had not made the question of Non-Intrusion so prominent and crucial as afterwards it became. To an Anti-Patronage crusade, therefore, rather than a Non-Intrusion one, his efforts were at this stage devoted.

Several of the addresses he delivered on such occasions

[1] The Auchterarder case was then only in its initial stages; the vacancy did not occur until August 1834. The Strathbogie case was still in the womb of the future.

are still extant. They are characterised by thorough knowledge of the subject, sound logical reasoning, vigorous thought, stirring personal appeals, pithy apophthegms, almost proverbial in their epigrammatic conciseness, while the whole is seasoned with the Attic salt of his wit and humour. No wonder opponents even were constrained to admit the force of his arguments.

This, however, was not the only controversial campaign wherein he was then engaged. Voluntaryism and the State Church principle were being subjected to keen discussion and comparative analysis. Into what is known as the 'Voluntary Controversy' Mr. Guthrie threw himself with as much gusto as spirit, involving as it did the defence of what, at this stage of his career, he believed to be absolutely indispensable to the spiritual welfare of the country—the national maintenance of religion. In the war of words characterising the assertion by either party of its distinctive principles, Mr. Guthrie took a prominent part, and crossed swords with the redoubtable 'Ajax' of Voluntaryism himself, 'Potterrow John,' otherwise Dr. John Ritchie of Edinburgh.

The efforts made by Dr. Chalmers and his friends to promote the cause of Church Extension in many districts in Scotland had filled the Secession churches with dismay. At this time there may be said to have been four separate denominations coming under the generic designation 'Seceders': the United Associate Secession Church, formed by the re-union, after seventy-three years of disruption over the terms of the Burgess oath, of the General Associate or Anti-Burgher Church, and the Associate or Burgher Church; the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, the Original Burgher Associate Synod, and the Relief Synod. The *raison d'être* of these bodies, apart altogether from the high-handed oppression shown towards the original founders of the Secession churches, had largely been the inertia and abuses, along with the lack of spirituality, peculiar to the State Church under the reign of Moderatism.[1] There can be no

[1] See Dr. M'Crie's *Statement*.

doubt, as an unprejudiced study of contemporary facts will demonstrate, that in many districts the Church of Scotland was either most inadequately represented, or not represented at all. In some instances, incumbents who came under the designation of 'Slothful Shepherds,'[1] alienated the mass of the piously inclined people from the Church; while in the case of others who ostensibly did their duty, the icy apathy of Moderatism to all higher spiritual interests, with the Socinianism and Rationalism preached from the pulpits, drove from the 'parish kirk' to the 'Secession meeting-house' those who felt that to remain under State Church ordinances would be to allow an Arctic winter of religious indifference to settle down upon their souls.

To counteract in some measure these patent evils, Dr. Chalmers had initiated his great Church Extension movement. His aim was to infuse life into the whole organism by commencing aggressive religious effort in certain parts of it; and by begetting a spirit of emulation among the clergy, to induce the sluggards from mere shame, if from no higher motive, to bestir themselves in their respective spheres. But the Secession ministers, in place of welcoming such evidence of 'the coming spring' in the State Church, looked upon the Anti-Patronage and Church Extension crusades as threatening their existence. If the State Church were reformed, where would be the logical vindication of the continuance of Dissent? Hitherto none of these Secession Churches had definitely pronounced against the principle of State Aid.[2] But with the ripening reformation of the Church of Scotland before them, with the steady decay of Moderatism and the consequent predominance of Evangelicalism, after the turning-point of the passing of the 'Veto Act' in 1834, the Seceders felt that they must have some more positive and definitive foundation for their existence than mere negative dissent to certain abuses in the State Church. Thus came into

[1] See Wodrow's description of the Church early last century in vol. ii. of the *Analecta*.

[2] Once more see Dr. M'Crie's *Statement*.

being what is known as 'the Voluntary principle,' which, be it admitted or not, forms the chief stone in the foundation of every Dissenting Church's standards.

Mr. Guthrie, albeit in after years he was to hold, proudly and tenaciously, the Voluntary principle, in most, if not all, of its ramifications, considered his duty meantime to lead him, as parish minister of Arbirlot, to a vehement opposition to the doctrine. Yet he did so in no spirit of bigotry. Though a State churchman, he was a liberal-minded Christian, and only resisted what he esteemed an unwarrantable aggression. He would not have been the honest and honourable man he was, in fact, if, holding the sentiments he did, he had not rushed, when the battle-bugle sounded, with all the enthusiasm of his nature, into the thickest of the fight.

But Mr. Guthrie, however busy with Church politics, never permitted the interests of his congregation to suffer. He might do battle with 'Potterrow John' to-day, and with the Moderates of Presbytery and Synod to-morrow; Church Extension meetings might occupy one part of the week, and schemes for the social and moral improvement of the parish the other; but when the Sabbath came round he entered his pulpit as carefully prepared as though he had done nothing else all week than write his sermon. We have already noted with what honesty he worked when a student at College, and also when removed from every beneficial home and social influence during his stay on the Continent. To him, as to Carlyle, albeit their spiritual and ethical standpoints were so diverse, the Gospel of Work-a-day Duty presented its moral Categorical Imperative so forcibly as to require no external authority to induce him to be instant in industry. He loved work for its own sake. With regard to the exercise of his powers, until he went to Arbirlot his character was still tinged with much of the impulsiveness and prodigality of youth. His chief anxiety was to do a thing well, without giving much consideration to the expenditure of time, talents, and energy on the undertaking. He was too apt to take a

Nasmyth hammer to crack a nut, in place of apportioning the degree of effort to the importance of the end. He did not, as yet, understand that the subtle laws of the Conservation of Energy hold as potently in the mental as in the physical economy.

When placed in charge of a parish, however, and when he realised that he, and he alone, was responsible for its progress, both in a religious and a moral sense, his character underwent a rapid change. To the irresponsibility of youth—and of such a youth as his had been, engirt with pious home influences, and where the strictness of the family *régime* had precluded any member being left open to the assaults of early temptations—had succeeded a sense of personal obligation and liability, with a realisation of all the duties the position of pastor and teacher implied. Only a few months were to pass, ere those who had known him in pre-Arbirlot days, scarce recognised in the sagacious, far-seeing clergyman, the volatile youth, brimming over with laughter and humour, and ready for all kinds of innocent amusement. The laughter and the humour remained as the salt and savour of his gracious yet dignified personality. But into the laughter had crept a new note as of one who had looked upon the mystery of the world's misery and sin and had been awed by the sight; while the humour, if less piquant, was more human, having lost somewhat of its careless *abandon*, as though the possessor had learned to regard all humanity as his brethren, because bound to him in the universal 'Brotherhood' of Christ.

Meantime, the light of a man so prominent as Mr. Guthrie was becoming, both in a spiritual and intellectual sense, could not longer be hid under the bushel of a country charge. Already the eyes of many of the leaders of the Evangelical party in Edinburgh were turning towards Arbirlot, anxious to devise means whereby a minister of such gifts and controversial ability might be secured for the metropolitan pulpit and the central councils of the party. More than one deputation went to the beautiful seaboard parish from the capital, to hear the young preacher.

To such deputations as appealed to himself, Mr. Guthrie gave no encouragement. He was happy at Arbirlot. He believed God was blessing his labours. His 'Ebenezer'—or sign that hitherto the Lord had helped him—was raised in those numerous fruits of his ministry that had come under his personal knowledge. His stipend was sufficient for the simple needs of his family: 'not a royal revenue would tempt me to leave,' he wrote to a friend in Edinburgh, 'were mere social position and increased remuneration the sole inducements held out.' Therefore, when the new and fashionable parish church of Greenside was built, and negotiations were opened with him to see if he would accept the pastorship, his reply was an unconditional negative. He could not discern the Master's leading therein.

When he was sounded with regard to Old Greyfriars' Collegiate Church, however, the matter presented itself in a different light. Though at the outset he discouraged the proposed transfer, yet when he was informed that the charge was about to be 'uncollegiated,' and that his work would really lie in that field where he had always desired to labour—the slums of the Cowgate—he felt that the Lord's voice was present in the 'invitation' to 'come over to the Macedonia of sin, suffering, and sorrow, and help us.'

But another reason, and one of a more secret and personal character, decided his acceptance of the call to Old Greyfriars. During the fatal winter of 1836-1837, when the epidemic of influenza passed like a scourge over the land, he had been brought within view of the dusky shores of death. For months he had lain helpless as a babe. Restored at length to life and labour in response to earnest prayers, he felt that, in return, notwithstanding his love for Arbirlot and its rural peace, *that* life with all its splendid possibilities must in future be consecrated to higher, nobler, and wider issues. Peaceful and pleasant beyond most though his pastorate had been, the irresistible call had come for the young labourer to proceed to that

new sphere, to carry the 'good news' of the Gospel, with all the force of his burning eloquence, to that 'submerged tenth' in our population that had fallen away from the means of grace. On the conditions named, therefore, Mr. Guthrie accepted the call to Old Greyfriars, and amid the regret of his Forfarshire parishioners he took leave of them in September 1837, after, as he says, 'seven busy, happy, and—I have reason to know and bless God for it—not unprofitable years spent amongst them.' The radiance of those golden days of his early ministry followed him on into life—nay, was never dimmed until the great end came. During those years in 'Bonnie Arbirlot' he had realised the mission of his manhood. There first he had learned the secret of true eloquence—viz. to touch the heart in such a way as to tell on the life; there first he had known the holy joy of leading a sin-stricken soul to the divine Sin-bearer; there first he had adequately understood the possibilities as well as responsibilities of the pastor's office; there first he had come to see that not by might of intellect or of eloquence, not by power of will, but by the working of the Spirit of the living God—was the world to be won for Christ.

And in ever-deepening dependence on that divine source of all success, he set up the banner of the Cross and marched forward into the unknown future, to achieve fresh conquests for his King.

CHAPTER IV

THE VINEYARD OF APOLLYON

APOLLYON has his vineyard in all great cities, and no sadder sights can be conceived than those revealed there from time to time. *His* terrible vintage is always being gathered, and *his* gatherers leave no gleanings.

Many of my readers have doubtless stood on the spot where George IV. Bridge spans the Cowgate. The stranger who comes to view the place for the first time expects to see a river flowing beneath. A 'river' there certainly is, but of a different type to what he anticipates. When he gazes into the ravine below, he beholds—a *river* of seething, pulsating human life, perpetually swollen with the vices and follies of mankind.

But as the observer looks down into the Cowgate, he descries not only a river of human life, but a drama of existence being enacted before his eyes—a drama Protean in its variety and infinite alternations. He beholds a teeming population beneath, moving hither and thither, but a population bearing the stamp on well-nigh every countenance, of that sullen hopelessness which ensues when a soul has relinquished the moral struggle to subdue its own vicious propensities. Right below lies the narrow street of towering tenements whose chimney-pots reach the level of the bridge, and whose patched and battered roofs are emblematic of the character and fortunes of the tenants. Of these some are lying over the sills of windows innocent of glass, or stuffed with old hats or dirty rags; others, coarse-looking women with children in their arms, stand around in groups. Able-bodied men who should have been at work are moodily smoking at the mouths of the closes,

or brawling among themselves over some partition of the proceeds of crime; brazen-faced girls who have long lost woman's subtlest charm—virtuous modesty—are either egging their male friends on to quarrels, or shouting coarse jests to one another; wrinkled crones, upon whose locks the snows of the 'sixties' and 'seventies' have fallen heavily, are gossiping conveniently near the public-house; while troops of children prematurely old and hardened—many of them born out of wedlock, and therefore left to hang as they grow—are darting in their noisy games hither and thither, picturesque in their raggedness, but by their gaiety introducing the one *human* element into the picture; fish-hawkers and fruit-sellers are shouting their wares; while, high over all, two termagants, who have quarrelled over a lover, are tearing each other's hair out to a running accompaniment of oaths and shouts from their respective partisans. The public-houses are nearly as numerous as autumn leaves—*and they are all well patronised!* Disease is present on all sides; while sin, sorrow, and suffering, are writ large on almost every face.

Such then was the Vineyard of Apollyon Mr. Guthrie was called upon to take as his parish. I will not say that the magnitude of the task did not appal him, much though he longed to engage in such work. He was standing at the point of view named above, a day or two after his arrival in Edinburgh, and was gazing somewhat despondently upon the awful epics and tragedies of misery being enacted below, and contrasting the scene with the rural peace of 'Bonnie Arbirlot,' when an arm was slipped through his, and the broad, Luther-like face of Dr. Chalmers looked up into his own, with an encouraging smile. For a moment or two they stood both silently eyeing the Cowgate. Then the great man, with a sweep of his arm that took in the whole district, said in tones of genuine rapture—'A grand field, sir, for your work; yes, indeed, a beautiful field. Far greater is He that is for you, than all that are against you.' Like the morning cloud Mr. Guthrie's despondency vanished, never to return.

Largely to Dr. Chalmers did he owe the opportunity now about to be afforded him of exercising his powers in evangelising the masses. That extraordinary man, at this time only slightly past the meridian of his superb intellectual force, had, since the death of Sir Henry Moncreiff and of Dr. Andrew Thomson, been the recognised leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland. He was now engaged in carrying into effect his great scheme of Church Extension, a prominent feature in which was his plan for evangelising the 'Lapsed Masses' by the system of 'Territorialism.' To understand this thoroughly we must realise what the Edinburgh parochial system comprehended.

In 1625, Charles I., affirming the scheme formulated by his father, enacted[1] :—

'That the town of Edinburgh, including the Westport, Cowgait Street, and the head of the Canongait, incorporated with them by ane late Act of Parliament, and whole sall be distributed in *four* several paroches . . . and that eache of the said Parochins and Congregatiouns sall be provided with *twa* Ministers, so that the Town sall have eight Ministers in the whole.'

In 1641 the number of churches was raised to *six*, and at a later date to *eleven*.[2] 'In all the churches' (as Hugo Arnot said in 1777)[3] 'within the royalty, excepting Lady Yester's and New Greyfriars', two ministers officiate.' But after the city overflowed its ancient boundaries, and spread north and south and east, when, in addition, the wealthier parishioners left the older churches to attend *quoad sacra* places of worship erected in the 'New Town,' the Town Council found a difficulty in paying the stipends of two ministers who were doing work that could easily be overtaken by one. Accordingly, one by one they were 'uncollegiated.' In 1834 the Town Council definitely put the question whether the Presbytery of Edinburgh would give its consent to the same course being applied to the

[1] *Coun. Regist.*, vol. xiii. f. 289.
[2] Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, p. 277.
[3] Arnot's *Edinburgh*, p. 275.

five remaining charges within the jurisdiction of the regality—to wit the High Church, the Old Church, the Tron, Old Greyfriars, and St. Andrew's.

This consent the Presbytery expressed its willingness to grant, upon condition that the city should be divided into eighteen instead of thirteen parishes, each parish to have a minister of its own! But eventually the Council shrunk from the undertaking—nay, at one time even from fulfilling its pledge to provide a new church for Mr. Guthrie. Then Dr. Chalmers interposed to relieve the Council of its difficulty. Thirty individuals were induced by him to subscribe £100 for the erection of a church in the Cowgate, one of the most destitute places in the whole of Edinburgh.[1]

The proposal was not destined to be promoted by the Town Council to the extent hoped, and had help not been extended by Lord Medwyn, one of the judges of the Court of Session, and a son of Sir W. Forbes the banker—a man, moreover, who though a bigoted Episcopalian and cherishing a dislike to Presbyterianism, yet placed benevolence above sectarian feeling—the erection of the building would have been indefinitely delayed.

Lord Medwyn, with some other prominent citizens of Edinburgh, had started what they called 'a Savings-Bank'[2] in the city. As soon as his lordship understood that the Church of Scotland was about to try the experiment of reviving the old parochial or territorial system, and that there was a difficulty in securing the necessary funds, he proposed to his fellow-managers—then engaged with him in winding up their institution, which had been superseded by the National Savings Bank—that some £1700 of unclaimed deposits should be devoted to the purpose. Help never came more opportunely.

We now behold Mr. Guthrie installed in his new sphere as colleague-minister of Old Greyfriars, a position he would

[1] Hanna's *Life of Chalmers*, vol. iii. p. 446.

[2] In fact, Lord Medwyn claimed to be the originator of savings-banks, as against the claims of Dr. Duncan of Ruthwell.

hold, sharing the pulpit duties alternately with the Rev. John Sym, until the new territorial church was built. Into the work of this new sphere he threw himself with an energy and enthusiasm which astonished some of his patrons of the Town Council, accustomed to the 'easy-ozy ways' of most of his brethren. His many-sided nature, cramped hitherto within the narrow bounds of a quiet rural parish, where the poor were few, the destitute fewer still, while the vicious, criminal, and reprobate classes were practically unknown, had now free scope to expand itself. Now he had been 'called' to the Vineyard of Apollyon, where his parishioners would largely be found among those who were not merely indigent, but vicious as well.

The oversight of the Old Greyfriars' congregation he, in great measure, left to his colleague, whose flock they would continue to be after the charge was uncollegiated. Mr. Guthrie opened a vigorous campaign against the powers of evil by a 'house-to-house,' nay, we may almost say a 'room-to-room' visitation—for few of the residents could afford more than a single apartment—of the whole field of his operations. Of the awful sights he witnessed he speaks again and again in his works.[1] They were sights which filled him both with sorrow and despair. More than once he remarks that had his faith not been firmly grounded on the Lord's grace being sufficient to enable him to achieve all things, he would have relinquished the work as hopeless. The frightful destitution, the ravages of disease among people with constitutions undermined by want and excess, the unblushing brazenness of vice, the callous criminality of those who lived by robbery and violence, the hateful hypocritical deceit which feigned religious impression in order to obtain money, the prevalence of juvenile depravity, with the almost general indulgence in the most degrading forms of drunkenness —all combined to form a picture of 'sin, sorrow, and

[1] See particularly *The City—its Sins and Sorrows*; his *Pleas for Ragged Schools*, *Man and the Gospel*, *Sketches of the Cowgate*, etc.

suffering' never absent from his thoughts until life's latest hour.

But he never faltered. He took as his motto 'Jehovah-nissi: The Lord my Banner,' and every disappointment and failure only caused him to redouble his efforts and his prayers. 'We *must* win if we have only faith enough,' he was wont to say to those critics who were inclined to sneer at a man of his ability throwing himself away 'on a lot of paupers and pickpockets.' But despite his hopefulness and cheery good spirits, the position was one of great anxiety. He knew he was being watched, not only by his own Church, but by all the other denominations, who were on the *qui vive* to see how the experiment of reviving 'Territorialism' would work. He realised that not only his own reputation but that of Dr. Chalmers, and others who had so eagerly promoted the scheme, were all involved in his successful achievement of the great work set before him. Therefore, in season and out of season, morning, noon, and night, Mr. Guthrie and his devoted helpmate were at work visiting, relieving the sick and destitute, obtaining work for the unemployed, clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry. He virtually *lived* in his parish in every sense of the word, for his dwelling was situated upon the southern ridge overlooking the Cowgate, viz. first in Argyle Square and next in Brown Square. Within two minutes he could be at the bedside of any sufferer who summoned him.

Such an existence, lived at pressure so high, necessarily detracted much from that quiet home life which was Mr. Guthrie's keenest delight during his Arbirlot days. His arrival in Edinburgh marked the close of what may be described as the 'domestic period' of his life. Henceforward he had to pay the price of popularity[1] and metropolitan position, in diminished domesticity; hence-

[1] A good proof of his wide popularity is to be found in the fact that his 'figure' was selected by Crombie to form one of the representative 'Modern Athenians' in the volume of portraits published under that title. He appears in plate 21 in company with John Menzies of Pitfoddels.

forward he had to keep 'open house.' His table and the warm 'Guthrie welcome' were ever made free to all his country brethren and friends who might come to town. His growing fame also drew strangers to his roof, who, after being electrified by his eloquence on the Sabbath, desired to see if the great pulpit orator practised in private what he inculcated in public. I have always maintained that Dr. Guthrie preached as powerfully by his life as by his lip, for those who came to see found that for him the precepts of the Sunday moulded the practice of the Monday. Though for thirty-six years he lived continually in the fierce light of public scrutiny which beats on our prominent men, the words of Monod express no more than the truth, 'He is even more marvellous as a man than as a minister.'

On the 19th November 1840, Mr. Guthrie's new church, named St. John's, was opened, and as the *Witness* of the day remarked, 'the event formed an important era in the history of the Church of Scotland.' The whole area of the building, containing six hundred and fifty sittings, was reserved as absolutely free seats for residents in the parish, while the gallery was let to applicants from all parts of the city. As might be expected, within a day or two every seat was taken up, and hundreds were unable to obtain accommodation. Mr. Guthrie's reputation as a pulpit orator had now been unquestionably established. When he was announced to preach in aid of a scheme or charity at any church other than his own, the fact was sufficient to ensure the building being packed to suffocation long before the hour of service. In consequence, he was overwhelmed with applications for such occasions, the promoters being thereby assured of a good collection. Though the Edinburgh pulpit was at this time exceedingly strong in pious, evangelical, and earnest ministers—the Revs. Dr. R. S. Candlish being in St. George's, Dr. Gordon at the High Church, Dr. Cunningham at Trinity College Church, Dr. Bruce at St. Andrew's, Dr. J. Buchanan at North Leith, Dr. Charles Brown in the New North, and

Dr. Begg at Liberton—yet the opinion was widely current that, with the solitary exception of Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Guthrie was the greatest pulpit orator in the city. While he never manifested the metaphysical subtlety of Candlish, nor the massive thought of Cunningham, nor the *curiosa felicitas*, at times even approaching quaintness, of Bruce, nor the majestic stateliness of Buchanan, and thus was not their equal as a 'preacher' or theologian, in all the supreme qualities of oratorical pre-eminence, in range, volume, and compass of voice, in knowledge of the human heart, and skill in adapting tone to tenor of thought, in vividness and warmth of imagination united to wealth of diction, Guthrie took rank before all, in some respects even excelling Chalmers himself. He was the popular pulpit orator, the magic of whose tones swayed thousands at will; but there was in his oratory something higher as well, the poet's love of the picturesque and the beautiful.

From 1837 to 1840, when the Non-Intrusion struggle began in grim earnest, Mr. Guthrie spared neither time nor trouble to make the territorial experiment so great a success under God's blessing, that it would justify other schemes of a cognate character being tried. What those scenes of horror and of misery cost him in agony of spirit when witnessing a destitution so widespread, only an infinitesimal portion of which he was able to relieve, can be guessed by those alone who knew the great compassionate heart of the man, or who peep into his note-books and memoranda.

With regard to his new church and the special purpose it was designed to serve in the neighbourhood, Mr. Guthrie at this stage held very strong views with regard to the absolute necessity for State connection and State aid in prosecuting effectively such operations. On this subject he remarked in a speech delivered in 1838:—

'I have read of a cave from which the most thoughtless came out sobered, the most talkative came out silent; and I have often fancied that if I could get some Voluntary to

accompany me on my parochial visitations for a single day, the College Wynd and the Cowgate would rival that cave in the wondrous change they would work on him. He might go in a Voluntary, but he would come out for an Establishment, . . . and with the conviction that there was no means which would move and lift up these people but that thorough parochial system and that pastoral superintendence which is inseparable from an Establishment, never has existed with Voluntaryism, and, what is more, never can.'

I quote these words at length in order to show how far Dr. Guthrie had modified his views on this subject when, in November 1871, at the centenary of the Wallace Green U.P. Church, Berwick (Rev. Dr. Cairns'), he remarked amid thunders of applause :—

'There is nothing in our formula binding our ministry or any one now to hold the principle of endowments, . . . and though the Government were to offer me endowments tomorrow, I would fling them in the face of the Government, and I would say—"I have learned to walk on my own feet, and am no more disposed to lean on your crutches," knowing perfectly well from the whole history of the past that when I lost the power of walking and depended on your crutches, you would knock them out from below me and lay me at your feet.'

What the process of 'Territorialism' would have effected in the direction of evangelising the masses can now, however, only be matter for speculation. The promising and daily increasing interest in Church Extension was to be arrested, to the intense grief of Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Guthrie, by the chilling frost of ecclesiastical controversy which for years laid its numbing hand upon the healthy development of the Church of Scotland. The Evangelical party had to lay down the spiritual mattock and hoe and take up the controversial sword and breastplate. Scotland, however, was to be covered with churches in another way than to either of the two friends of 'Extension' had appeared possible or expedient. But the Lord had His own methods of ecclesiastical development to work out, and when despair was deepest, the dawn of a new era of spiritual blessing for Scotland was even then ruddying the east.

CHAPTER V

THE NON-INTRUSION STRUGGLE

ONLY two and a half years remained wherein Mr. Guthrie, as a minister of the Church of Scotland, might labour to bring to fruition those carefully matured schemes of his for evangelising the masses. But, at the very time when his utmost efforts were required to cope with the demands of his great charge, other matters claimed his attention—matters, moreover, of such cardinal moment, not alone to himself but to the Church as a whole, as even to warrant time being taken from parochial duties for their consideration.

Scarcely was Mr. Guthrie settled in Edinburgh than the horizon-cloud of conflict between the Church and the Law Courts—a cloud hitherto not larger than a man's hand—began steadily to overspread the entire sky-line of that Church's future. The vigorous efforts of the Evangelicals on behalf of Church Extension, as well as in repudiation of the allegations of the Voluntaries, had aroused the antagonism of two widely differing types of adversaries, viz. the Moderates within the Church, who were angry that their slumber had been broken by the misdirected enthusiasm of the 'Highfliers,'[1] as the Evangelicals were styled; and second, the Seceders without the Church, who, as we have said, saw their *raison d'être* threatened by this evidence of vitality within the Establishment, and were therefore compelled, in order to preserve a logical reason for their continued existence,

[1] 'Highfliers.'—This name gave rise to a misconception in England at the time of the Disruption. Some supposed the Scottish Evangelicals to be identical with the party now known as Ritualists.

to advance to the final position of out-and-out opposition to all State connection.

These controversies were still being waged, when the early echoes became audible of a more terrible conflict than any yet experienced—the attempt of the State, as represented by the Court of Session, to coerce the Church in the discharge of her spiritual functions. When Mr. Guthrie went to Edinburgh, both the Auchterarder and the Lethendy cases had already come before the Supreme Courts of the Church and of the country. Scotland's Church and Scotland's Judicature were rapidly coming into collision. Dr. Guthrie in after-life maintained that had Dr. Andrew Thomson lived beyond 1831 to combat the desire of Dr. Chalmers and Lord Moncrieff to preserve patronage under certain restrictions, there would have been no Disruption.[1] That event would never have occurred had the Evangelical party been united in their course of action—if, in other words, under the altered state of things in the electorates, due to the Reform Bill, the party had first sought to influence the Legislature through the polls, then gone to the Reformed Parliament asking that the same principle of reform be applied to the Church, and that the fetters of patronage, which had been reimposed by Queen Anne's Jacobite-tinctured Government against the will of the people, should be knocked off. By this means the Evangelical party would have been kept out of conflict with the Law Courts, whose decisions, of course, an English Government, sitting so far away as London, accustomed moreover to the absolute dependence of the Church of England on the State, and also to a large extent ignorant of Presbyterianism and its principles, was bound to uphold.

In August 1834, the parish of Auchterarder[2] having

[1] See also the *Life of Hugh Miller*, by Peter Bayne, M.A., vol. ii. pp. 185-186.

[2] My father, the late Rev. Professor Smeaton, D.D., was the first minister of Auchterarder Free Church. I here draw largely on notes left by him with reference to the state of the parish as he found it after the Disruption.

become vacant through the death of the incumbent (the Rev. Charles Stewart), the patron, the Earl of Kinnoul, appointed Mr. Robert Young, licentiate, to the living. But after preaching to the people on two Sabbaths, his ministrations proved so unacceptable to them that his call on being presented to the Presbytery of Auchterarder, was found to be signed by no more than three individuals, only two of whom belonged to the parish, while the dissentients to the call numbered 287 out of a total of 330 eligible to exercise the privilege. The Presbytery therefore had no hesitation in refusing Mr. Young's application to be ordained minister of the parish. Thereupon the patron and the presentee carried the matter to the Law Courts. The latter, in his petition to the Judicature, affirmed not merely his right to the stipend, manse, and glebe, but, disregarding all distinctions between things spiritual and things temporal, he asked to have it declared, not only that he was entitled to the benefice, but that the Presbytery *was bound to ordain him*, regardless of the parishioners' opposition, provided only they were satisfied with his moral and intellectual qualifications.

The case was argued before the entire bench of thirteen judges, the Dean of Faculty (John Hope) being leading counsel for Young, and the Solicitor-General (Andrew Rutherfurd, afterwards Lord Rutherfurd) representing the Church. The decision of the Bench was given in March 1838—six months after Mr. Guthrie's translation to Edinburgh—eight judges pronouncing in favour of the presentee, the Lord President Hope, Lord Justice-Clerk Boyle, Lords Gillies, Mackenzie, Corehouse, Meadowbank, Medwyn, Cunningham; while five—comprising the ablest and most brilliant members of the Judicature, in particular Glenlee (the acutest legal intellect of his time), Jeffrey, Moncreiff, Cockburn, Fullerton—were on the side of the Church.

This decision of the Court could not, of course, be submitted to. The matter was appealed to the House of Lords. The specific point on which the Church took

its stand was that clause in the order of the Judicature that 'the Presbytery was *bound* to take Mr. Young on trials with a view to ordination.' The Church declined to recognise the control attempted to be arrogated by the Civil Courts over the purely spiritual function of ordination, and declared that under no circumstances could coercion be applied to her to compel her to discharge duties within her spiritual province which she held to be unscriptural. The Judicature, on the other hand, contended that, *under certain circumstances*, it did possess the power of coercion, and that these circumstances had now occurred.

The Law Courts, with a sort of dogged obstinacy the individual members of which were afterwards bitterly to regret, proceeded to push matters to an extremity. They interdicted the Presbytery of Dunkeld from ordaining Mr. Kessen, licentiate, to the vacant charge of Lethendy in place of a Mr. Clark, who had been vetoed by the congregation. When the Presbytery, however, under instructions from the General Assembly, actually did ordain the former, the Court of Session summoned them to its bar and rebuked them. On that occasion Lord President Hope remarked that 'the next time the ministers of the Church of Scotland broke an interdict, they would be visited with all the penalties of the law—the penalty of the law being, the Calton Jail.'

This was followed by the famous Strathbogie case, wherein the cleavage within the Church, between Moderates and Evangelicals, became mournfully apparent. Seven Moderate ministers of the Presbytery of Strathbogie were suspended by the Commission of Assembly for attempting to ordain to the parish of Marnoch a licentiate named Edwards, whose call was only signed by one individual —the innkeeper where the Presbytery dined! The Court of Session actually interdicted any of the other ministers of the Church from entering the parishes of any of the seven, to announce the terms of the suspension to them, or to perform the public or sealing

ordinances of religion to the congregations under ecclesiastical discipline.[1]

Of all these proceedings, both before and after his translation to Edinburgh, Mr. Guthrie was an interested spectator, and in some of them he played a prominent part. In February 1840, Mr. Guthrie took his turn with his brethren in supplying the ordinances of the Church to the flocks of the suspended ministers in Strathbogie, and his conduct, under exceptionally perplexing circumstances, evinced, as much as any other episode in his career, what a fund of practical sagacity he possessed. The seven suspended ministers had made a renewed application to the Court of Session, which, *by a majority*, consented to issue an *extended interdict*, forbidding Mr. Guthrie or any other of the delegates of the Church, to preach or dispense ordinances, in any building whatever within that district —nay, not even on the highroad or open moor. I here subjoin a copy of the interdict:[2]—

'I, Robert Falconer, Solicitor in Keith, notary public, by virtue of an attested copy of the interlocutor pronounced by the Lords of the First Division of the Court of Session, dated the fourteenth day of February 1840, on the Reclaiming Note for the Rev. John Cruickshank and others against the Rev. David Dewar and others, in Note of Suspension and Interdict for the said complainers, of which attested copy of Interlocutor, Note of Suspension and Interdict, Statement of Facts, Note of Pleas, Interlocutor pronounced by the Lord Ordinary dated the 16th day of January 1840, and Reclaiming Note, the 31 preceding pages are a full double, in Her Majesty's Name and authority, lawfully intimate the said Interlocutor to you, the Rev. Thomas ~~(Gutherie)~~ Guthrie, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and require you to conform thereto, and meantime interdict and discharge you in terms thereof with certification. This I do upon the 17th day of February one thousand eight hundred and forty years, before these witnesses, Hugh Wilson and Robert Shearer, both residing in Keith, and William Thorburn, Solicitor in Keith, and James Petrie, bank-agent in Dufftown.

ROBERT FALCONER, N.P.'

Such a veto upon his freedom of action was altogether

[1] *Cf.* Hugh Miller's telling article in the *Witness* of Feb. 5, 1840, entitled 'The Twin Presbyteries of Strathbogie.'

[2] Now hanging in the Common Hall of the New College, Edinburgh.

an abuse of its powers on the part of the Court of Session. Not only by the Evangelicals, but by many of the fairer-minded members of the Moderate party, such as Mr. Robertson of Ellon, the interdict was strongly condemned. It also opened the eyes of the people. As Buchanan says,[1] it overshot the mark, being Erastian overmuch. It brought the arm of the civil power too grossly and palpably into the domain of the Church. The Government itself, receiving so many warnings as to the possible consequences of the Court of Session's illegal act, became alarmed. 'Has your lordship heard of the extended interdict?' said a minister of the Church of Scotland, addressing, two days after the interdict was pronounced, a distinguished Conservative statesman (Lord Aberdeen) on the streets of London. 'I have,' was the reply. 'What may be your lordship's opinion of it?' said the clergyman. 'I am not a lawyer,' answered the sagacious senator, speaking with an air of reluctance, yet with unusual emphasis; 'but I confess I do not understand it. According to the law of this country, any one that pleases, any minister of any sect, any infidel or Chartist, may go and preach in Strathbogie: how then can it be lawful to hinder the ministers of the National Church from doing so? In fact,' added his lordship after a little pause, 'I have written to ——[2] to tell him that, in my opinion, he has brought the Court of Session into a great scrape.'[3] Apparently this remonstrance from so influential a source gave the Scots judicature seasonable warning. Be this as it may, the interdict was never enforced.

Mr. Guthrie, however, was not to know this, and the courage of his action in deciding to do what he believed his duty, be the consequences what they might, savoured not a little of the heroic. He was met by the interdict when he arrived in Keith, *en route* for Strathbogie. Let us hear what he says himself on the matter:—

'In going to preach at Strathbogie, I was met by an interdict

[1] *Ten Years' Conflict*, chap. ix.
[2] Supposed to be Lord President Hope. [3] Buchanan.

from the Court of Session—an interdict to which, as regards civil matters, I gave implicit obedience. On the Lord's Day, when I was preparing for divine service, in came a servant of the law and handed me an interdict. I told him he had done his duty, and I would do mine. The interdict forbade me, under penalty of the Calton-hill-jail, to preach the Gospel in the school-houses. I said, the school-houses are stone and lime and belong to the State; I will not intrude there. It forbade me to preach in the churchyard, and I said the dust of the dead is the State's, and I will not intrude there. But when these Lords of Session forbade me to preach my Master's blessed Gospel and offer salvation to sinners anywhere in that district under the arch of heaven, I put the interdict under my feet and—I preached the Gospel.'

In a word, then, during that eventful period, 1838 to 1843, Mr. Guthrie bore his share nobly of the heavy duties devolving on the Evangelical leaders. He was a Non-Intrusionist not merely in theory but in practice.

Among other services to the party and to the future Free Church, was the share he had in bringing Hugh Miller to Edinburgh. That great man—one of the noblest intellects Scotland ever produced—and Mr. Guthrie maintained an unbroken friendship until the day of Miller's lamented death. It is the fashion nowadays rather to overlook than to undervalue Miller's services to the cause of spiritual independence, consequent, perhaps, on Dr. Robert Buchanan's extraordinary omission of all mention of him in his *Ten Years' Conflict.* Guthrie first met Miller at dinner at Mr. Paul's of the Commercial Bank, when the 'Author of the Letter to Lord Brougham,' as he was known then, came down to Edinburgh in 1839 to consult about editing 'a Non-Intrusion newspaper.' Guthrie and Miller were mutually attracted from the first. The former became one of the original guarantors and subscribers to the *Witness.* His name stands sixth on the list of the 'Committee of Managers' to whom Hugh Miller addressed his famous letter with reference to the unfortunate misunderstanding with Dr. Candlish. Miller was a mighty force in Scottish journalism from 1840-56, and did more to mould the mind of his country on many important questions than

any other man of his age, ecclesiastical or lay, save Chalmers.[1]

A reference to the *Scotsman* of the period gives one an idea of Mr. Guthrie's tireless activity.

On December 20, 1838, he delivered a speech in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, at the great public meeting 'to Commemorate the Restoration of Civil and Religious Liberty, and of Presbyterian Church Government as secured by the Glasgow Assembly of 1638.' On June 19, 1839, he took part in the meeting in the Assembly Rooms, called 'to Consider an Effectual Remedy against the Intrusion of Ministers on Resisting Congregations.' In both cases his speeches were powerful and convincing appeals.[2] In July 1839 he contributed 'No. VI.' to the series of *Tracts on the Intrusion of Ministers*, a paper still to be read with interest and admiration. During the same month and the succeeding, we find him addressing 'Non-Intrusion' meetings at Liberton, Dunfermline, Perth, Ayr, and elsewhere, at all of which places he was enthusiastically welcomed.

In 1840, however, his 'Non-Intrusion' labours may be said to have commenced in real earnest. When we consider they were prosecuted contemporaneously with his parochial work, and in addition to those kindly services in consenting to preach for such special charities as the Edinburgh Female Society, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Indigent Old Men's Society, Orphan Hospital Fund, etc., one realises how relentless was his economisation of time, so as to find seasons for study, private reading, and, above all, for that daily communion with his Heavenly Father without which, as he once remarked, he found his whole existence stale, flat, and unprofitable. To him of a truth prayer was at once his 'supreme desire' and his 'vital air.'[3] His increasing popularity as a preacher, and the crowds which everywhere flocked to hear him, rendered

[1] For an admirable estimate of Hugh Miller, see Mr. Keith Leask's monograph on him in this series.

[2] They were both published in pamphlet form.

[3] Letter to the Duchess of Argyll, 1851.

the most careful preparation imperative, so as to provide spiritual food for so many diverse temperaments.

To follow Mr. Guthrie through all the storm and stress of those eventful years immediately preceding the Disruption would be foreign to the purpose of this monograph. Suffice it to say that from 1840 to 1843 he accomplished an amount of stern, hard work on behalf of the Non-Intrusion propaganda that has never really been estimated at its true value. People were apt to regard him as merely the great pulpit orator, the Scots Chrysostom or Golden-Mouth, and to lose sight of the fact that for years, both before and after the Disruption, he literally 'stumped' the country on behalf of various principles and schemes. There was nothing of the *fainéant* about Guthrie. When a duty had to be done, be it as thankless, as menial, as onerous as it might, to it he went with that cheery Christian courage and *bonhomie* that was so beautiful a trait of his character.

In company with others of his brethren, he itinerated throughout Scotland, impressing with the magic of his eloquence vast masses of his fellow-countrymen, to whom he made clear the momentous issues involved in the struggle between the Judicature and the Church, in a manner equalled by few of the other Non-Intrusion speakers. No wonder his services were in such request. As Dr. Candlish said when preaching his funeral sermon, 'His eloquence alone, so expressive of himself, so thoroughly inspired by his own idiosyncrasy, so full always of genial humour, so apt to flash into darts of wit, and yet withal so profoundly emotional and ready for passionate or affectionate appeals — that gift or endowment alone made Guthrie an invaluable boon to our Church in the time of her "Ten Years' Conflict" and afterwards.'

As the conflict deepened, and as the Church perceived that the ministry of Sir Robert Peel was to manifest itself markedly unsympathetic towards the principles the majority within her pale held so dear, the Non-Intrusionists redoubled their efforts. 'Scotland is in a flame about the Church question,' wrote Lord Palmerston to his brother,

Sir W. Temple, and the phrase was no exaggeration. Much of that fire was the direct result of the fervid appeals by the pastor of St. John's. His own heart on flame with a burning sense of wrong, is it wonder if he communicated the same lofty indignation to all with whom he came in contact? Nay, not in Scotland alone did he succeed in so doing. Sent in 1841 as one of a deputation to Ireland, on the invitation of the Irish Presbyterian Church, he produced the same profound impression as in his own country.

In this year (1841) Mr. Guthrie was greatly interested in the Bill introduced by the Duke of Argyll into the House of Lords for legalising the Church's 'Veto Law,' and thus removing the cause of conflict between the Church and the Civil Courts. Though he would have preferred a more thoroughgoing remedy—a measure aimed at the total abolition of Patronage—still he warmly espoused the Duke's cause, and in company with Hugh Miller sorrowed sincerely when, owing to the opposition it encountered, the Bill had to be withdrawn. Not that he regarded the abolition of Patronage as the sole or even the main point at issue between the two great national institutions. Lord Cockburn[1] wraps up this important distinction within the compass of a nutshell: 'The contest at first was merely about patronage, but this point was soon absorbed in the far more vital question whether the Church had any spiritual jurisdiction independent of the control of the civil power. This became the question on which the longer coherence of the elements of the Church depended.'[2]

The year 1842—the last of the Church of Scotland's existence in its undivided state—was both a busy and an anxious one for Mr. Guthrie. Each month made the situation look darker, while the prospects of final adjustment and settlement of differences became increasingly

[1] See *Life of Jeffrey*.

[2] Hugh Miller's articles entitled 'Tendencies' in the volume *Headship of Christ* deal with this question most cogently.

faint. In the Assembly of that year the motion for the abolition of patronage, proposed in a speech of wonderful logical cogency and perspicuous force by Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Cunningham, had been carried by a majority of 69 in a 'house' numbering 363 members. The 'Claim of Rights'—the modern Solemn League and Covenant, a document intended as a declaration against the unconstitutional encroachments of the Civil Courts, and a vindication of the people's privileges against the State's pretended prerogatives—after having been carefully drawn up by Mr. Dunlop and signed by 161 members of the house, was presented to the Assembly by Dr. Chalmers in a speech which takes rank as one of the grandest displays of ecclesiastical forensic oratory ever heard in any Church Court. No wonder that the overture in which the 'Claim of Rights' was embodied was carried by a majority of 131.

In this eventful year the Government showed its antipathy towards the Church by the paltry manœuvre, as discreditable to himself as it was damaging to his administration, whereby Sir Robert Peel got rid of Mr. Campbell of Monzie's Bill—or, rather, the Duke of Argyll's Bill already alluded to transferred to the House of Commons and 'fathered' by the gentleman in question. When first introduced, the Government had induced Mr. Campbell to delay pressing it on through its stages by leading him to believe they would bring forward some measure of their own. When that promise could no longer be advanced, they intimated, on the very day when the second reading was to come on, that as the object of the Bill was to modify the law of patronage, and as the Crown held the patronage of a number of churches to which the measure was intended to apply, no Bill which affected any such rights of the Crown could be introduced into Parliament until the consent of the Crown had been obtained.[1] This, of course, meant the loss of the Bill, and it also gained

[1] Hugh Miller, who seldom gave way to strong language, characterised the trick as 'dishonourable chicanery.'

time, as Buchanan says, for the expected development of that defection from the evangelical ranks to which Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham were looking forward as destined to solve all the difficulties of the Scottish Church question. For, as the latter, years after, confessed, statesmen on both sides of politics were led to believe by Hope, the Dean of Faculty, and others, that all apprehension of a secession from the Church was chimerical. 'Were the crisis to come to-morrow,' Hope is stated to have remarked, 'not ten ministers would leave their charges.' This assurance it was, coupled with the advice that severity was the best deterrent, which led the Government to persist in a policy they were subsequently bitterly to rue.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVENTFUL LAST YEAR

In the General Assembly of 1842, Mr. Guthrie delivered a speech which attracted attention even amid the many splendid efforts of Chalmers, Candlish, and Cunningham. Certainly the subject was one calculated to interest the majority of the members irrespective of party, and it was one, moreover, on which he spoke *con amore*. The occasion was a motion for the repeal of the infamous Act of Assembly of 1799, whereby Missionary Societies were condemned, and their agents, who were insultingly termed 'vagrant teachers,' were debarred from entering the pulpits of the Church of Scotland.[1] A resolution aiming at the repeal of an Act so discreditable to Scotland's National Church would appeal strongly to Mr. Guthrie's broad, catholic sympathies. He bitterly condemned the feelings prompting so un-Christian a measure, adding, 'I look upon this Act of 1799 as one of the blackest the Church of Scotland ever passed, and I rejoice with all my heart that this motion has been made.' When we further add that shortly before this time Dr. Duff, then at home, had been using all his influence to induce Mr. Guthrie to proceed to India along with him, and that the latter had for a short time seriously considered the proposal, a clue to the depth of his interest in mission-work is discovered.

In June of that year decision was given by the House of

[1] Those who desire to obtain further information regarding that extraordinary Act and the debate preceding it in the Assembly of 1799, cannot do better than read Hugh Miller's articles on 'The Debate on Missions' in the *Witness*, from September 25 to October 9, 1841; or in the volume of his works on the *Headship of Christ*, p. 130.

Lords in the 'Second Auchterarder Case,' wherein Lord Kinnoul and Mr. Young sought to obtain a decree requiring the Presbytery of Auchterarder to take the rejected presentee on trials, and sanctioning his claim for damages in the event of their refusing to obey the order of the Civil Courts. The 'Lords' pronounced in favour of the pursuers. Lords Lyndhurst, Brougham, Cottenham, and Campbell—two of them with Scots blood in their veins, and the third intimately connected in many ways with Scotland—in their judicial opinions showed an unaccountable ignorance not only of Scots law, but of Scots history and customs; for, as Buchanan indicates, from one end to the other of their 'findings,' there is not to be discovered so much as one solitary reference to those laws by which the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland is declared and ratified, nor one single precedent adduced from the history of the Church to support the doctrine which this decision laid down.

As soon as this decree became known, Mr. Guthrie saw that the end was not far off. Considerable difference of opinion existed among the Non-Intrusionists as to the course now to be followed. One section, including amongst others the Revs. Begg, C. J. Brown, and Elder, contended they should remain in the Establishment until driven out, doing all the duties that belonged to them. Mr. Guthrie's ideas as to the duty of the Church now that the important principle had been settled that, *in certain circumstances*, the Courts of the Church were liable to be coerced by the penalties of law in the performance of their spiritual functions, appear to me to be characterised by a keener sense of ecclesiastical dignity and individual self-respect. He embodied his views in one word, 'Retire.'

After a 'Convocation' held in Roxburgh Church, Edinburgh, attended by four hundred and sixty-five ministers from all parts of Scotland, and at which the two great questions were thoroughly discussed: (*a*) 'What is our grievance, and the remedy for it?' (*b*) 'What, if that remedy be refused, is it the duty of the Church to do?' a definite plan

of action was finally decided upon. In this Convocation Mr. Guthrie took a prominent part. More than once his sagacity recalled the party to the paths of prudence and moderation, when even Chalmers and Candlish allowed the enthusiasm of the moment to carry them away from the highroad of wise self-restraint. I remember the late Dr. John Moir informing me that from several distinct sources he had heard the remark made, that Guthrie's tact and prudence at the Convocation had gone a long way towards turning what might have proved a lamentable deadlock between the Begg-Brown-Elder party and their other brethren into an harmonious agreement.

Well might Dr. Candlish say of Mr. Guthrie that he had been 'a tower of strength' to his party during the deadly conflict of the Disruption. His invariable cheerfulness, his exuberant spirits even in the darkest hour, his immovable faith in the Providence of God providing for the future—all tended to strengthen the courage of weaker brethren. 'With shame I say it,' said a godly Free Church minister to my father many years afterwards,[1]

'but I fear I should not have come out at the Disruption had it not been for Dr. Guthrie. My wife was a confirmed invalid, dying, as I thought, of an incurable disease; I had a family of nine young children, two of whom were threatened with pulmonary disease. I had a comfortable manse and a good stipend: was I justified in exposing these delicate plants to the inevitable hardships consequent on secession, I reasoned with myself? I chanced to meet Dr. Guthrie in the darkest hour of my depression, and mentioned my fears to him. He looked at me most sympathetically, but said nothing. The season was one of intense cold; frost had prevailed for several days. A row of starving sparrows was perched on a house opposite. At the moment I spoke, a coachman had been feeding his horses, and took the nose-bags from them preparatory to starting. One of them fell from his cold hands, and some of the grain was spilt on the ground. As soon as the carriage moved away the sparrows swooped down, and their joyous twitterings showed how they relished the food so strangely provided. For a moment Dr. Guthrie raised his eyes to heaven; when he turned to me they were brimming with tears: "My friend," he said, "the good God who has just fed these sparrows will give thy children bread."'

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[1] Recorded in his Commonplace Book.

And accordingly, it was in humble dependence that the God who feedeth the sparrows would not permit His servants to lack their daily bread that, on the 18th of May 1843, four hundred and seventy-four ministers, for the sake of what they unfalteringly 'believed' to be the principles of Christ's Covenanted Church, laid down their earthly all on the altar of conscience, and went forth to possess their new spiritual heritage. Ten weeks previous, the last hope of any redress of the ecclesiastical abuses had been extinguished, when the Government, in fulfilment of the intimation contained in Sir James Graham's reply to the Church's Claim of Right, denied the request preferred in Mr. Fox Maule's motion for an inquiry into the alleged grievances—a motion based on a petition from the Commission of the Church of Scotland. The Ministry, misinformed as we have seen by Dean of Faculty Hope and Dr. Cook, the Moderate leader, obstinately refused to believe the danger of secession to be as grave as represented, and declined to grant relief. This was the real signal for the Non-Intrusionists to gird up their loins and set their houses in order, for the hour of departure was at hand.

On Sabbath, 14th May 1843, Mr. Guthrie preached what was destined to be his last sermon in 'Old St. John's.' His text was, 'Here we have no continuing city,' and one who was present on the occasion informs me it was the most pathetic and solemn service he had ever heard. Twice the preacher's voice broke through overpowering emotion, and the sound of weeping was heard all over the church. The sorrow, however, was not for themselves, but at the thought of leaving that Zion they had loved so well, in whose stones they took pleasure, and whose very dust to them was dear. Thoughts of flinching from the ordeal there were none. On the morning of the eventful 18th May, as, with a friend, he was quitting the door of his house in Lauriston Lane, Mr. Guthrie turned round for a moment to his wife, and said in a resolute yet cheerful tone to that staunch and great-souled helpmate—'Well, Anne, this is the last time I go out at this door a minister of an Established Church.' He was right. When he re-

turned that night the Rubicon had been crossed, the great victory of principle over personal self-interest was won, and he was a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.

The scene of the Disruption is a familiar narrative to every Free Churchman. I do not attempt to describe what Dr. Buchanan and Lord Cockburn have embalmed and immortalised in language so glowing and felicitous. To their pages I refer the reader for the description of the solemn scene of separation on the part of these nineteenth-century Spartans; the anguish, yet the triumph, of their everlasting farewell to the church of their fathers; the glorious procession to Tanfield Hall between the closely packed lines of spectators, whose admiration was even too deep for cheers; the dignity, yet the devoutness, of their conduct throughout—all these are household words, and need not be recorded here. Suffice it to say that Thomas Guthrie was one of the leaders of that band of heroes who on the 18th May 1843 laid down their 'all' on the altar of conscience for the sake of principle.[1]

The admiration and wonder excited by the act thrilled like an electric shock throughout the country. Lord Jeffrey was reading in his library in Moray Place, when a friend burst in upon him with the news, 'Over four hundred of them are out!' In an instant the great critic's book was thrown aside. He sprang to his feet, saying, 'I am proud of my country! In not another land in the world would such a thing have been done.'

[1] My revered friend Mr. Mathew S. Tait, organiser, and for forty years first superintendent of the Ferguson Bequest Fund, is able to locate for me Mr. Guthrie's precise place in the procession. He occupied the centre place in the third row. Mr. Tait, who was then in the service of the Royal Bank of Scotland, had come to St. Andrew's Church to witness the final result of the day's proceedings. Just as he reached the gate, having pushed his way through the immense crowd gathered at the spot, he perceived the leaves of the inner door thrown back, and the departing ministers already appearing. First came the Moderator (Dr. Welsh), supported on either side by Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Gordon. In the second row were Dr. Candlish, Dr. Cunningham, and Dr. Macfarlan, and in the third Dr. Clason, Mr. Guthrie, and a third who, he thinks, was Dr. Begg, but on this point he is not certain. Mr. Tait stepped forward and shook Mr. Guthrie's hand, being the first to congratulate him on the step he had just taken.

CHAPTER VII

GUTHRIE THE FREE CHURCHMAN

GREAT as he had been as a minister of the Establishment, it was as a Free Churchman that Thomas Guthrie achieved his most splendid triumphs and obtained his widest recognition. No sooner was he liberated from the trammels of the State Church system and breathed the stimulating air of 'The Church of Scotland—Free,' than his whole nature seemed to receive a fillip. 'Opportunities reveal our capabilities as much to ourselves as to others,' says Rochefoucauld, and the aphorism holds true in the case before us. In the new circumstances wherein he was placed, Mr. Guthrie's intellect grew more robust and vigorous as he felt himself more and more regarded as a moulder of popular opinion. He became increasingly conscious of the powers wherewith Heaven had endowed him, but so far from the fact rendering him self-assertive or supercilious, it only caused him to be more scrupulously conscientious as to the discharge of his duties in the diverse spheres his activity opened up for him. The eloquence of his pulpit oratory became permeated with a bolder yet more impressive strain of feeling, his diction more picturesquely figurative and ornate. He threw himself with heart and soul into the work of building up the walls of the new ecclesiastical Zion, until it came to pass that when a duty had to be done, and no satisfactory individual was available to do it, Thomas Guthrie was invariably appealed to as the 'saviour' of the situation.

Characteristic of him it was, the moment the Disruption was an accomplished fact, to set about the reorganisation

of his own congregation as a unit in the new Free Church. The bread of kindness cast by him on the waters of bygone years now came back to him after many days. He had generously assisted the Wesleyans of Nicolson Square Chapel by preaching on more than one occasion in aid of their funds. The managers of that place of worship at this juncture came forward and unsolicitedly offered the use of the building to Mr. Guthrie and his people, until they were able to erect a church of their own. Needless to say the offer was thankfully accepted. To house the congregation which had followed their minister out of the Establishment a very large hall was required, and the Chapel, although spacious, was taxed to its utmost capacity. Upwards of ninety-five per cent. of the seatholders in Old St. John's had relinquished their connection with the Establishment, of his session all save two, so that the new church may be said to have started into existence almost full-fledged. The sum of £6000 was subscribed by the congregation for the erection of a new place of worship. A site was secured at the head of the West Bow—about fifty yards from Old St. John's, and therefore still in his former territorial parish,—and on the 18th April 1845 Free St. John's was opened. From the very outset Mr. Guthrie's congregation, though not one of the wealthiest, was certainly one of the largest in the city, its members and adherents being drawn from all classes in the community. Men and women celebrated in literature, learning, science, and the arts, distinguished judges and prominent lawyers, world-renowned physicians and warriors, landed gentry and members of the nobility, sat side by side with tradesmen and artisans, with Betty the cook and Sandy S—— the dustman—all hanging upon the 'golden speech' of this great orator, who united melting pathos of appeal to stern denunciation of indifference or irreligion.

Before many months were over the working machinery of the ecclesiastical organisation of St. John's Free Church was so efficiently adjusted in accordance with its pastor's

sagacious views of 'system and order in everything,' that he was able to be absent for weeks—nay, months—at a time, engaged upon the business of the 'Manse Fund' and other objects, and yet retain the comforting consciousness that his office-bearers and coadjutors were carrying on the work as effectively in his absence as in his presence. To give an idea of the far-reaching character of these efforts, I should like to quote the following paragraph from the *Memoir*:—

'Besides a Congregational Sunday School held in the morning, there was another of three hundred children gathered from the poor and squalid neighbourhood around, and conducted in the evening under the superintendence of David Duncan, Esq. Two senior classes were likewise held beneath the church: one, containing one hundred young women of the humbler class, was taught for years by Miss Greville (now Mrs. Hogarth), a member of the Church of England; the other, a class of from seventy to ninety working lads, who had otherwise been lounging on the street, was collected and conducted by one of the elders, Maurice Lothian, Esq., then Procurator-Fiscal for the county. While these were being taught downstairs, the church itself was occupied by Bible-classes for the young men of the congregation, taught by three young lawyers attached to Mr. Guthrie's ministry, viz. W. G. Dickson, Esq., now Sheriff of Lanarkshire, Thomas Ivory, Esq., Advocate, and John Carment, Esq., S.S.C.'

The immense crowds which had attended his preaching in 'Old St. John's' even increased in numbers when, as he was wont to say, 'he crossed the street.' So great were these gatherings, especially in summer when strangers from all parts of the world who passed through Edinburgh flocked to hear the Chrysostom of the Free Church, that regular seat-holders were being kept out of their pews. Accordingly the rule had to be made that strangers should only be admitted after the first psalm and prayer were over. Mr. Guthrie had now reached the maturity of his powers, and the result was an almost unique combination of acute rather than profound thought, with an intensely vivid glow of poetical imagination. Nature and her multiform beauties, man and his mysterious moral and spiritual attributes, were to him as open books whence he could

draw an exhaustless fund of impressive images and apologues calculated to appeal to every range of intelligence. Lord Cockburn thus describes Dr. Guthrie's preaching in the 'forties.'[1]

'Practical and natural; passionate without vehemence; with perfect self-possession, and always generous and devoted, he is a very powerful preacher. His language and accent are very Scotch, but nothing can be less vulgar; and his gesture (which seems as unthought-about as a child's) is the most graceful I have ever seen in any public speaker. He deals in the broad expository Ovidian page, and is comprehended and felt by the poor woman on the steps of the pulpit as thoroughly as by the strangers who are attracted solely by his eloquence. Everything he does glows with a frank, gallant warm-heartedness, rendered more delightful by a boyish simplicity of air and style.'

One other opinion I would quote, and though it bears the date of a few years subsequent, yet it may find a place here, to save referring to the matter again. The writer is an American visitor, the Rev. Dr. J. W. Alexander[2] of New York:—

'At two P.M. I went to Free St. John's. Strangers (how truly I comprehend the term!) are admitted only after the first singing. I found myself waiting in a basement with about five hundred others. At length I was dragged through a narrow passage, and found myself in a very hot overcrowded house, near the pulpit. Dr. Guthrie was praying. He preached from Isaiah xliv. 22—"Return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee." It was fifty minutes, but they passed like nothing. I was instantly struck by his strong likeness to Dr. John H. Rice. If you remember him you have perfectly the type of man he is; but then it is Dr. Rice with an impetuous freedom of motion, a play of ductile and speaking features, and an overflowing unction of passion and compassion which would carry home even one of my sermons—conceive what it is with his exuberant diction and poetic imagery. The best of all is, it was honey from the comb, dropping, dropping in effusive gospel beseeching. I cannot think Whitefield surpassed him in this. You know when you listen to his mighty voice broken with sorrow, that he is overwhelmed with the "love of the Spirit." He has a colleague, and preaches usually in the after-

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[1] Lord Cockburn's *Journal*.

[2] *Forty Years' Familiar Letters of James W. Alexander, D.D.* Constituting, with the Notes, a Memoir of his Life.—Edited by the surviving correspondent, Rev. John Hall, D.D. (New York, Charles Scribner. 1860.)

noon. As to manner, it is his own, but in general like Duff's, with as much motion, but more significant and less grotesque, though still ungraceful. His English, moreover, is not spoiled so much. The audience was rapt and melting. It was just like his book, all application, and he rose to his height in the first sentence. . . . Dr. Guthrie is the link between Evangelical religion and the aristocracy. People of all sects go. Nobility coming down from London and stopping here cannot pass without hearing him. They are willing to pay any sum for pews in order to secure an occasional hearing. Dr. G. called on me, and was very cordial.'

But Mr. Guthrie was not, as he had fondly hoped to be, allowed to settle down to steady congregational work. 'I am glad to get rid of controversy. I wish to devote my days to preaching, and to the pastoral superintendence of my people,' he remarked in a speech delivered in the first Free Church Assembly, a few days after the Disruption had occurred. Doubtless he believed that all calls of duty summoning him to other labours than that of preaching 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' now lay in the past, and that henceforward he would become the pastor pure and simple. But for the man who of all others could sway vast multitudes of his fellows not alone by his sermons, but in almost equal measure by his speeches, who at one and the same time could persuade by his eloquence, charm by his flights of fancy, and amuse by the iridescent play of wit and humour, the infant Church had important work to do. A fortnight after 'the great Exodus' he was sent as one of an important deputation to visit the chief towns of England, to explain the principles of the Free Church, and to solicit help for the new cause. His speeches during this triumphal progress —for the tour was nothing short of it—were regarded by competent judges as being as remarkable specimens of persuasive popular eloquence as had ever been delivered in England since the days of Whitefield. The well-known statesman Sir George Grey heard him speak on one occasion, and, after expressing his high admiration, said that Mr. Guthrie in many respects realised his conception of what the great French preacher Massillon

must have been, and he applied to him the felicitous epithet, 'The Scots Massillon.' Besides successfully arousing interest and sympathy in the cause of the Free Church, the deputation received substantial proofs of the admiration awakened by the self-sacrificing action of its members, in the promises of large sums of money. The most gratifying result of all their efforts, however, was the dispelling of those mists of malicious misrepresentation raised by the less generous of their foes, that the 'Secessionists' were a horde of ignorant fanatics, and that the 'flower' of the National Church's learning and culture had remained 'in.' Mr. Guthrie preached while in London in Regent Square Church. Among the audience was Lord Campbell—one of the Lords of Appeal who had given his decision in the Judicial Committee of the Upper House very strongly against the Church. The *Fife Sentinel* of the day reports that at the conclusion of the sermon he said to a reverend doctor sitting beside him, 'If this be a fair specimen of the ministers of the Free Church, it has nothing to fear.' The intellectual calibre of this deputation was of the very first order, including as it did Dr. Cunningham—a man of gigantic learning and great mental ability—and one or two other clergymen, all of notable reputation, all dignified, courteous *gentlemen*, and, above all, each one of them with his soul aflame with the living fire of a piety as sincere as it was intense.

This duty was for Mr. Guthrie only a preliminary foretaste of what was yet to be laid to his hand. The Free Church had scarcely been launched, when the fact became evident that a determined effort was to be made to stamp out the movement by refusing sites for churches and manses. Let it not be supposed that this persecution was to any great degree either proposed or promoted by the clergy of the Church of Scotland who had remained behind. Once the struggle was over, such men as Dr. Cook, Robertson of Ellon, and Norman Macleod, had nothing but admiration for a course they, however, considered a mistaken one. One or two of the more bigoted

Moderate ministers in rural districts may have countenanced a policy so contrary to the Christian principles they professed, but in general the refusal of sites was the result of personal hostility on the part of heritors who, as they said, 'did not wish these pestilent "highfliers" to gain a footing in any of *their* parishes.' Nor was this action in every case the outcome of blind, unreasoning animus against persons or principles. No heritor was more bitter and unyielding—unyielding even to a point far beyond the border-line of cruelty, when he compelled the Canonbie congregation, through his interdicts, to worship a whole winter on the highroad—than Walter Francis Montague, fifth Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Privy Seal in Peel's administration of 1842-46. But his action was dictated by a sincere desire to promote the welfare of Scotland's National Church, and to limit, as he erroneously thought, the radius of Dissent. We are sometimes apt to consider that actions involving hardships to ourselves or others proceed from sheer blind animus against us, when perhaps the 'cruelty' of which we complain is as much the outcome of clearly defined principles, as the patient endurance thereof which we either exhibit or admire.

This action of the heritors, however, awakened great indignation in Scotland. In no breast did the feeling burn more intensely than in Mr. Guthrie's, and he expressed himself with all his wonted vigour against the actions, but in no case against the actors. He deprecated personalities, and it is an interesting point to note that while he strongly condemned the cruelty of the deed, the doer is never referred to. Even over the Canonbie case, after he had visited the parish as one of the Assembly's deputies, and beheld on a cold, sleety, wintry Sabbath a sight which moved him even to his latest hour—the spectacle of upwards of five hundred of God's people worshipping Him under the broad vault of heaven, exposed to all the inclemency of that wintry day—he had no harder terms of reprobation to apply to the Duke of Buccleuch personally, than that 'I felt the deepest regret that a

nobleman so kind and generous as the Duke should have been led to put himself in a position, as I thought, injurious to his own standing in the country.'

To many of the rural districts of Scotland where difficulties regarding sites existed, Mr. Guthrie was sent as a deputy to convey to the people the sympathy of the Free Church, with the assurance that all was being done that was humanly possible to compel the heritors to accede to the request of the Church for sites. To many a faint-hearted and well-nigh despairing congregation Mr. Guthrie's presence and stirring words brought renewed courage and determination to wage the struggle with the weapons of patient endurance, and such remedies as the legislature might provide. When, under the Whig Government of Lord John Russell, a Select Committee was appointed 'to inquire whether, and in what parts of Scotland, and under what circumstances, large numbers of Her Majesty's subjects have been deprived of the means of religious worship, by the refusal of certain proprietors to grant them sites for the erection of Churches,' Mr. Guthrie[1] was selected along with Dr. Chalmers, Sheriff Graham Spiers, and others, to give evidence before it. The result was such an overwhelming testimony in support of the complaints of the Free Church congregations, that the Committee arrived at an unanimous finding in their report.

One by one the site-withholding heritors gave way, and by the year 1850 nearly all the Free Churches in Scotland had been built in fairly convenient positions.

But this great question was a bifurcate one. It had two 'legs,' the one scarcely of less importance than the other. Granted that the very existence of the new Church demanded that with the least possible delay edifices should be provided wherein its members and adherents could worship God in accordance with its standards. No sooner were these provided than the other prong of the fork had to be considered: where are our ministers to

[1] See his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on the Refusing of Sites.

be housed while they thus supply the ordinances of the Church to their people? Hard as it had been to relinquish the parish churches, sanctified as they were to many a minister's heart by the recollection of past outpourings of God's Spirit on their work, the wrench of bidding adieu to the manses had been even harder. They were endeared to them and theirs by reminiscences of bygone family felicity, by the memories of dear ones now passed within the veil, with whose laughter and pattering footfalls the walls had once resounded, but whose existence was only marked now by some green mounds in the churchyard, and the silent *hic jacets* of the dead.

On abandoning their comfortable manses, many country ministers had no other means of housing their families after the Disruption, save in some vacant cottage in the vicinity, or, conveying them to a neighbouring town, to rent a house out of such scanty savings as can be laid past out of a clergyman's stipend. Obviously, therefore, one of the first duties of the infant Church was to provide manses for its ministers in those districts wherein their work lay. Immediately after the secession was an accomplished fact, a committee was formed[1] for inaugurating 'a Manse Fund.' To the honour of the Disruption ministers, be it said, however, that they themselves laid an arrest upon the work of that committee, declaring that until the Church's necessary machinery was all in working order, they would not allow their personal comfort to be consulted. Such was only one instance out of many, characteristic of the unobtrusive heroism that ennobled many individuals whose lives were otherwise essentially commonplace.

But ere the close of the second year of the Free Church's existence, viz. 1844-45, her adherents had raised £697,000; her five great missionary schemes, with her Sustentation Fund, her College and School Building Funds, had all been organised and liberally responded to. The splendid generosity and self-sacrifice of her people, from

[1] *Memoir*, vol. ii. p. 86.

the peer to the peasant, had presented an object-lesson in 'sanctified giving' to the civilised world which had filled it with amazement. One scheme only remained to be undertaken, but it was of such cardinal importance as to involve within itself much of the future welfare of the Church. There was more than appeared at first glance in the remark made by Dr. Candlish, that the 'Manse Fund' was the ribs, if the Sustentation Fund was the backbone, of the Free Church's temporal wellbeing. But who would undertake such a task as to solicit ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS from a field of Christian benevolence which, in less than twenty-four months, had yielded such a harvest to the various reapers and gleaners that had gone forth as *six hundred and ninety-seven thousand pounds?*

For the Assembly to send any other delegate than its most effective pleader upon such a mission, at such a time, and over a field traversed by so many previous gleaners, would be to court failure. Who therefore was fitted for a task so difficult? Chalmers, the mighty Nestor and Demosthenes in one of the Church, was now too old for the wear and tear of such a campaign. To neither Candlish nor Cunningham did the special faculty belong which constitutes the persuasive 'clerical beggar,' to use Dr. Guthrie's own phrase. There was only one man who at the moment possessed the rare combination of an eloquent tongue, high enthusiasm, an inexhaustible fund of humour, profound knowledge of human nature, business capacity, unfailing patience and ready tact in seizing the most suitable times and seasons wherein to make appeals for help. That man was Thomas Guthrie, and it was due to the keen insight into character peculiar to Dr. Chalmers that the eyes of the Free Church leaders were directed towards him. To have sought such a mission would have been the last thing he would have done; to refuse it when laid upon him as a sacred duty would have been equally foreign to his nature. Yet he entered on the work with no slight misgivings. To ask £100,000 from people who had already subscribed so liberally seemed

even to him to strain liberality to the breaking-point. Were not the demands of the Free Church beginning to savour a little of the spirit of 'the daughters of the horse-leech,' whose constant cry was 'Give, give.' Such might have been the ideas, had the nature of the people been less noble, the objects for which the money was solicited less necessary. But Mr. Guthrie knew his countrymen, and as he often said in after-days, 'he never had a moment's doubt of the result after the first day.'

Thus in May 1845 Mr. Guthrie began that great undertaking which was to complete the external framework of the Free Church—the Manse Fund. His efforts on behalf of it were gigantic, his success phenomenal. His appeal to the constituency whence he hoped to draw the funds was characteristically humorous:—

'By building manses you will complete our ecclesiastical machinery, and give the Free Church a permanence in the country which it would not otherwise possess. Some one, a foe to our Church, said to a friend of mine in Glasgow: "Well, we had some hope you would all go to pieces and be driven out to sea after the Disruption. When we saw you build churches we had less hope; when we saw you build schools we had less still; but when you have built your manses, you will have dropped your anchor and there will be no driving you out." I would much rather have stayed at home with my own flock and my own family. I have had enough of speaking and travelling and fighting, and I am tired of it. Were it not that I have reason to believe I am the last "big beggar-man" you will ever see, and were it not that the cause has all my sympathy and deepest interest, I would not have undertaken it.'

His *sympathy*! Ah, there was the secret of his marvellous success as a special pleader in the cause of the Manse Fund. From the very inmost depths of his great, big, tenderly sympathetic heart, every word of every appeal he uttered came welling forth. None better than he knew the martyr-like sufferings through which many of the Free Church ministers passed in the years immediately subsequent to the Disruption. 'Gentlemen' of cultured instincts and refined sensibilities, delicate ladies, and

tender children, were compelled to crowd together into some humble cottage in the parish, where that minister once had been surrounded with every comfort. Laborious students, whose days and whose nights had been spent in their libraries, were often compelled, for lack of space, to make the hillside their study, the grove their oratory. The sights Mr. Guthrie witnessed while itinerating through the country from Shetland to Solway, pleading the cause of the Manse Fund, made an impression upon him time could never efface. His feelings were harrowed with the scenes of suffering he could not relieve. But, at the same time, his warmest admiration was awakened by the mute patience that heroically endured anguish untold for conscience' sake—anguish whereof the physical privations were held of less account, as compared with the abandonment of homes whose every room was eloquent with memories of the dear and of the dead.

Those who heard Mr. Guthrie at the outset of his mission, and again at its close, stated with some degree of surprise that, if eloquent at the start of his 'pilgrimagings,' he was well-nigh overpowering towards their finish. No need for wonderment at the reason. He had looked upon such sufferings among his country brethren as wrung his very heart, and made the comfort of his town home almost unbearable to him. He had seen the saints of God who, for Christ's Crown and Covenant, had sacrificed on the altar of conscience all that the world holds essential to the sweetening of life, dauntlessly standing at the post of duty, while in several instances they realised that their renunciation of the comforts of home to face privation, cold, out-of-doors services in winter, insufficient meals, and the thousand-and-one hardships that befell the rural ministers in the Disruption year, entailed their death-sentence as surely as though signed and sealed under judicial warrant.[1] The silent heroism of these men thrilled him with admiration, but also with an infinite

[1] This was literally true in the cases of Mr. Baird of Cockburnspath, of the two M'Kenzies of Tongue, and of at least four others.

sense of compassion. Often when weary, exhausted, and suffering from the first premonitory symptoms of that disease which all too soon was to render mute the eloquent voice—nay, when others would urge on him the advisability of rest for a few days—he would shake his head and reply: 'The Manse Fund cannot be delayed. The remembrance of those suffering saints banishes sleep from my eyes o' nights.'

The sum aimed at had been £100,000—one-half to be available at once as a Central Fund to meet pressing present needs, and the remainder to be called up gradually as required. The number of manses required was seven hundred. Each congregation was to receive from the Fund a grant of £200, on the understanding that it raised the remainder of the cost locally, or at least by its own exertions. The Highland ministers were to have their wants supplied first, save such exceptions as were of unusual hardship elsewhere; secondly, the Lowland country parishes were to be attended to; third, ministers in the smaller towns; and lastly, ministers in the large towns and cities. Such was the scheme formulated by Messrs. Paul and Meldrum, the conveners of the Manse Fund.

No light responsibility, therefore, rested on Mr. Guthrie. Though he had a few misgivings at the outset, they did not last, as I have said, beyond the opening day of his campaign. Let us permit him to speak for himself:—

> 'I have spent,' he said, when addressing a huge meeting in the City Hall, Glasgow, 'three of the happiest days I ever spent in my life in this city. I have gone from house to house and from counting-room to counting-room, and I have found no cold looks, but genuine kindness. I have been often told, "O Mr. Guthrie, there is no use making a speech, we are quite prepared for you, sir: where is your book?"'

He had considered, and his brethren among the leaders of the Church had shared his view, that if he secured £1500 as the result of his first day's work, it would form a good augury for the future that the sum aimed

at would be realised. But when the result of his first appeal to any individual produced £1500, and when the sum-total of that first day's efforts came nearer £5000 than £4000, Mr. Guthrie, feeling all doubts disappearing like morning mists before the sun, determined to aim at £100,000 as the amount of the original or Central Fund. No one will ever know the hardships this devoted servant of God went through when pleading the cause of the Manse Fund. But when all was over, when he was able to announce in the General Assembly of 1846, amid a deafening storm of applause, that even his second minimum had been far surpassed, and that the grand total of subscriptions to the Manse Fund collected by his year's work amounted to £116,370, his reward came to him not in those cheers and applause, pleasant though they were, but in the silent pressure of his hand, in the words of thanks spoken in tones broken with emotion, in the grateful gaze of eyes brimming with tears of joy from brethren, whose future comfort he had secured beyond all possible doubt. The Manse Fund was the greatest of Mr. Guthrie's many great services to the Free Church. It is his memorial, his monument, *aere perennius*, whereby he shall be imperishably commemorated while the Free Church preserves her corporate existence. After such labours, well might he say, 'I have now only one request to make of the Church, and that is—that they would let me alone.'

But during those years, 1843-46, when his hands were so full of ecclesiastical work, he never neglected his duties as a husband, a father, and a good citizen. As much time as he could spare he spent in the bosom of his family—no father fonder than he of his children, no parent more beloved in turn by those for whose welfare, in both a spiritual and a temporal sense, he was so solicitous. 'The Guthries' was the happiest home I was ever in,' said a lady now a missionary in the East, 'and the Doctor [Guthrie] was the merriest of them all.' His religion was as sunny as it was sanctifying. He had no

sympathy with that grim creed which condemns innocent gaiety as wanton levity, and regards 'a grave deportment' as the cardinal evidence of a Christian character. Sanctified happiness and harmless amusements, he maintained, have their rightful niche in the Christian economy.[1] In their place and season they are to be encouraged rather than repressed. This was Mr. Guthrie's carefully formed opinion, and he accounted that day shorn of some of its brightest moments in which he was not able to spend some time in sharing the innocent pleasures of his sons and daughters. 'Show me his family and I shall tell you what kind of father he is,' says Firdausi the Persian, and the passionate devotion wherewith his children even to this day cherish the memory of him who is gone, is proof sufficient that Thomas Guthrie was one 'of noblest virtues full compact.'

[1] See his admirable booklet on *Popular Innocent Entertainments*, published under the auspices of the Scottish Temperance League.

CHAPTER VIII

ARABS—BEDOUIN AND CITY

ACCIDENTAL circumstances are often the seedlings whence spring the stately trees of beneficent institutions. To such an origin the scheme still known amongst us as 'Dr. Guthrie's Original Ragged Schools' was due.

'Strolling one day' (probably in 1845 or 1846) 'with a friend among the romantic scenery of the crags and green valleys around Arthur Seat' (says the subject of our sketch), 'we came at length to St. Anthony's Well, and sat down on the great black stone beside it to have a talk with the ragged boys who pursue their calling there. Their "tinnies" were ready with a draught of the clear cold water in hope of a halfpenny. By way of introduction we began to question them about schools. As to the boys themselves, one was fatherless, the son of a poor widow; the father of the other was alive, but a man of low habits and bad character. Both were poorly clothed. The one had never been at school; the other had sometimes attended a Sabbath-school. By way of experiment I said, "Would you go to school if, besides your learning, you were to get breakfast, dinner, and supper there?" It would have done any man's heart good to have seen the flash of joy that broke from the eyes of one of them, the flush of pleasure on his cheek as—hearing of three sure meals a day—the boy leapt to his feet and exclaimed, "Ay will I, sir, and bring the haill land[1] too"; and then, as if afraid I might withdraw what seemed to him so large and munificent an offer, he exclaimed, "I'll come for but my denner, sir!"'

This may be regarded as the first step towards the origination of a movement, the benefits accruing from which have been simply incalculable. But although Mr. Guthrie was the eloquent apostle of the Ragged School

[1] *haill land*: the whole tenement.

System, although he formulated many improvements on the original design, with characteristic honesty he was always careful to disclaim the credit of being the founder of the scheme. As is well known, that belongs to the Portsmouth cobbler, John Pounds, as far as England is concerned, and in Scotland to Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen. These two men, independently of each other—nay, unknown to each other—had been wrestling with the problem aptly stated by Charles Dickens[1] as 'an effort to introduce among the most miserable and neglected outcasts some knowledge of the commonest principles of morality and religion; to commence their recognition as immortal human creatures before the gaol-chaplain becomes their only schoolmaster; to suggest to society that its duty to this wretched throng, foredoomed to crime and punishment, rightfully begins at some distance from the police office.' As appeared from the conversation he held with the boys at St. Anthony's Well, Mr. Guthrie's conception of a 'ragged school' was one where, along with education, both sacred and secular, food, clothing, and industrial training should be gratuitously supplied. This was a development of the idea entertained by John Pounds and Sheriff Watson, whose scheme, however, contemplated the supply only of food as the incentive to learning. The former 'was sometimes seen hunting down a ragged urchin on the quays of Portsmouth and compelling him to come to school, not by the power of a policeman, but of a—*potato!* He knew the love of an Irishman for a potato, and might have been seen running alongside an unwilling boy with one held under his nose, with a temper as hot and a coat as ragged as his own.' But Mr. Guthrie not only proposed to save the children of the City Arab class from the contamination and misery of their surroundings for so many hours a day—to save them, moreover, from drifting towards their inevitable goal, the jail—through association with criminal companions; he aimed also at teaching them some kind of trade along with their educa-

[1] Letter to *Daily News*, 1846.

tion, so that they might be able to earn their own living, and not be compelled to prey on society.

The City Arab presents many features of analogy with his prototype, the Bedouin of the desert. Of these none is more striking than his dislike of restraint. Great tact and skill are essential in dealing with him, lest you scare where you hoped to secure. In such a quest Mr. Guthrie was not averse, like Pounds, to displaying the wisdom of the serpent as well as the gentleness of the dove in order to lay hold of promising subjects. But I am anticipating.

The fact is noteworthy that Mr. Guthrie's first efforts to follow in the footsteps of Pounds and Watson ended in failure and disappointment. He invited his own office-bearers to embark on the scheme, but they dreaded the responsibility and declined. The disappointment, however, was a blessing in disguise. Had his first attempt been a success, the Ragged Schools movement might have been merely a sectarian, perhaps only a congregational, scheme in place of the wide-spread, catholic organisation that claimed support from all creeds and classes.

From his congregation he appealed to the general public. His celebrated first *Plea for Ragged Schools*[1] was the result of this disappointment. He published it in February 1847 with fear and trembling, as he stated in a letter to a friend, inasmuch as he was entirely without experience in literary work. 'I remember,' he says, 'of returning home after committing the MS. to the printer, and thinking, "Well, what a fool I have made of myself!"' He was not long in being undeceived. No sooner was the 'Plea' published than its eloquence and its sincerity, its utter lack of any claptrap or rhetorical self-glorification, its simple statement of mournfully patent facts, and its suggestion of a remedy that seemed at once feasible and adequate, caused it to strike a responsive note in many sympathetic hearts. The very enthusiasm—of which in his humility he

[1] *Seedtime and Harvest of Ragged Schools*, by Thomas Guthrie, D.D. (the three Pleas bound in one volume). Edinburgh: A. and C. Black. 1860.

had felt half ashamed—and the unstudied character of its appeals constituted its charm. Before a fortnight had elapsed letters of thanks, of sympathy, of admiration, and others enclosing substantial pecuniary help, poured in upon him from all quarters of the compass, as well as from all classes in the community. His doubts disappeared; the opening battle of the Edinburgh Ragged Schools was won.

I may state here that in addition to delivering many speeches and lectures, to giving evidence before a Parliamentary Commission, and to 'interviewing' Cabinet Ministers and statesmen innumerable on the theme so near his heart, Dr. Guthrie published 'three' masterly 'Pleas' explanatory of the principles on which the 'Original Ragged Schools' were conducted, and in favour of them being extended to all the great cities in the kingdom. The three booklets in the triune volume *Seed-time and Harvest* constitute a magazine of facts and figures indispensable to all interested in the work of the reclamation of our juvenile city waifs. In these 'Pleas' Guthrie the philanthropist is seen at his best. Apart from their extrinsic value in the accuracy of the statistics he furnishes—information of importance to the social reformer and the criminologist[1]—the 'Pleas' possess an intrinsic value in their literary merits, in the charm of their graceful English style and vivid imagery, and, finally, in the 'life-likeness' of the scenes described. In these he appears as a great literary *genre* painter. At times his pictures seem steeped in a Salvator Rosa gloom of sorrow, sin, and suffering when depicting the sights and haunts of that poverty and vice whence the children were drawn; anon suffused with the tenderest tints of love and of sympathetic joy, when portraying the happiness of lives dragged from the maelstrom of crime to be consecrated to useful ends.

[1] Professor Lombroso of Turin, the author of many standard works on criminology, Dr. Antonio Marro, and Dr. Corre have all spoken in high terms of Dr. Guthrie's 'methods' in endeavouring to create what they term a new 'atmosphere' for the children of criminal parents.

The *first* 'Plea,' as I have stated, appeared on February 20, 1847, the *second* on 10th January 1849, the *third* on 25th April 1860. The ground was no sooner broken than a favourable review of the first 'Plea' appeared in the *Witness* from the pen of Hugh Miller, followed a day or two after by a leading article, wherein the work of Dr. Chalmers with his 'territorial scheme' and of Dr. Guthrie with the Ragged Schools was compared and discriminatingly eulogised. To Hugh Miller a project such as this now formulated by his pastor warmly commended itself, and to the hour of his lamented death the editor of the *Witness* was the staunchest of advocates in favour of the new system.[1] The immediate outcome of 'Plea No. 1' was a preliminary meeting of those interested in the movement, held on March 24th, under the auspices and patronage of the Lord Provost, Mr. Adam Black. At that meeting Mr. Guthrie gave an outline of the tentative framework of the scheme, as the matter presented itself to his mind, adding with a humility as rare as it was graceful, 'My friends and I who originally moved in this matter are desirous to be lost sight of, and to be merged in a general committee containing a full and fair representation of all classes in the community.' A general committee was thereupon nominated by the Lord Provost, who, at Mr. Guthrie's request, took care to place upon it representatives of all classes of the community, of all creeds present at the meeting, and of all shades of politics.[2] By this committee a constitution and code of rules for the association was prepared and laid before a great public meeting in the Music Hall on 10th April. At this gathering, after an eloquent appeal from Mr. Guthrie, the constitution of the new organisation was approved, and the society thereupon took shape.

[1] In his review of the 'Plea' (*Witness*, Feb. 20), he styles it 'a singularly interesting pamphlet in which we promise a treat of no everyday kind to every admirer of graphic pictures, lively illustrations, vigorous sense, and unsophisticated feeling.'

[2] No Roman Catholics attended the meeting, and therefore none were included on the committee.

Meanwhile letters laudatory to himself and eulogistic of his project poured in upon him from many of the leading men of the day. Scarce a journal in the country but reviewed the 'Plea' and praised its aims, even the *Edinburgh Review* devoting one of its articles to a warm appreciation of the beneficent motives underlying the plan.

Francis Jeffrey, Lord John Russell, W. E. Gladstone, John Stuart Mill, and others also acknowledged copies of the pamphlet, and in many cases sent subscriptions towards the funds of the Association. Space debars me dwelling longer on the circumstances of the inception of this great scheme. Suffice it to say that premises were secured on the Castlehill, children were induced to attend, and success seemed certain when, within ten weeks of the commencement of the undertaking, a difference of opinion arose, based on those sectarian cleavages which have been Scotland's curse for the past two hundred years.

The controversy turned on the meaning attached to certain words in the Constitution and Rules of the Association. These read as follows:—

> 'It is the object of this Association to reclaim the neglected or profligate children of Edinburgh by affording them the benefits of a good, common, and Christian education, and by training them to habits of regular industry so as to enable them to earn an honest livelihood, and fit them for the duties of life. The general plan on which the schools shall be conducted shall be as follows:—
>
> 'To give the children an allowance of food for their daily support.
>
> 'To instruct them in reading, writing, and arithmetic.
>
> 'To train them in habits of industry, by instructing and employing them daily in such sorts of work as are suited to their years.
>
> 'To *teach them the truths of the Gospel, making the Holy Scriptures the groundwork of instruction*.'

The cause of this contention arose out of the last 'regulation.' One of those hornets of society, an anony-

mous writer in one of the Edinburgh newspapers, stated with the utmost assurance that Roman Catholics were excluded from the school. That charge being proved false by the logic of facts, the ground was changed and the assertion made that the original scope of the constitution of the society was being covertly changed and the school so conducted with regard to religious instruction, as *virtually* to exclude Roman Catholic children. Notwithstanding the indignant disclaimer by Mr. Guthrie and the acting committee of such action or intention, the fact became evident that a serious difference of opinion existed among the committee, as to whether the Bible should be read in the schools, or the education be limited entirely to secular subjects. The controversy, which had already agitated Aberdeen and Dundee, was now broached in Edinburgh. The majority of the committee agreed with Mr. Guthrie that the Bible should be read in the Ragged Schools; otherwise, if religious instruction were to be relegated wholly to the home sphere, these unfortunate waifs, whose only home was a hell on earth, would receive none.[1] An influential minority, however, numbering amongst them Lords Dunfermline and Murray, Professor Gregory, and others, and assuming the title 'Liberal Protestants,' took the opposite view, that religious instruction should be given separately by Protestant and Catholic clergy or teachers, to children whose parents professed these distinctive creeds.

On July 2, 1847, another great public meeting summoned by the Lord Provost was held, at which the advocates of the opposing views severally stated their opinions. The speech of Mr. Guthrie was not only beyond question the ablest of the day, but was one of the finest he ever delivered. The occasion, and all that was contingent upon his successful vindication of his case, seemed to inspire him. Wit, humour, sarcasm, cogent reasoning,

[1] Let it be remembered that at this time Sabbath-schools were very rare, and as far as the poorer districts of Edinburgh were concerned, were unknown.

melting pathos, and persuasive eloquence, were all present in it. Even Lord Murray, his opponent, characterised it as 'a marvel of splendid oratory.'

But all his efforts were fruitless. Secession was inevitable. Accordingly, the supporters of the 'secular' view 'hived off,' and established another school called the 'United Industrial,' conducted on the principle of joint secular and separate religious instruction. Though the loss of the influential friends who thus withdrew was to be deplored, the matter did not in the least injure the 'Original Ragged Schools.' The controversy had tended to diffuse a knowledge of its principles and aims among classes of society to which its appeals might not have penetrated. As a consequence, money and supplies of all kinds poured in, until Mr. Guthrie jocularly remarked, 'Our weakening was our strengthening; one or two more discussions and we might begin to lay by money for a rainy day.' Nothing seemed to depress or diminish his energy, while his versatility was just as wonderful as his vitality.

At this time, when one would imagine all his powers concentrated on the development of his Ragged School scheme, he could nevertheless turn from it to assist his brethren, by preaching at the opening of their new churches, when the mere fact of his presence was certain to attract larger crowds than otherwise would have assembled; also to plead the cause of the Wesleyan Missions, to protest against any relaxation of Sabbath Observance, to take his share in Presbytery, Synod, and Commission of Assembly work, and yet to maintain at its high standard the quality of his Sabbath discourses, as well as to fulfil all other necessary pastoral duties. To discharge these functions with the ability, assiduity, and popular acceptance ever attending his efforts, showed a rare power of mental concentration, coupled with a most versatile adaptability to circumstances.

To detail the whole of Mr. Guthrie's work in the cause of Ragged Schools would require all the available space

in this volume. He was the philanthropist born, not made. To the day of his death, this movement, next to the high and holy duties of his ministerial office, held prime place in his heart.[1] Among the very last speeches he made was one in 1871 on behalf of these 'Schools,' in which, moreover, he intimated his unfaltering adherence to the principle of the Bible as an element in the instruction supplied; or, as he put it, 'The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible—the Bible without note or comment, without the authoritative interpretation of priest or presbyter—as the foundation of all its religious teaching, and of its religious teaching to all.' By the end of 1847, three Schools had been established in Edinburgh under the auspices of the 'Original Ragged Schools Association,' with a total attendance of two hundred and sixty-five children. In 1849, in his second 'Plea,' he implored fresh assistance, as the work was increasing so enormously that the existing Ragged Schools were inadequate to overtake the juvenile destitution in Edinburgh. He appealed to the statistics furnished in each annual report to bear testimony to the success achieved; while in the fifth report, that for 1851, he joyfully records the fact that two hundred and sixteen children trained in his 'Schools,' were then known to be earning their living by honest industry.[2] From Governor Smith, also, of the Edinburgh Prison, one of his warmest admirers and staunchest supporters, he received this additional proof of the beneficial influence of the system, that whereas in 1847 more than five per cent. of the total number of prisoners in Calton Jail were under fourteen years of age, viz. 315 out of 5734, in 1851 the proportion had fallen to *less than one per cent.*, viz. 56 out of 5869. 'From careful observation of the operation of the Ragged Industrial Schools,' wrote Mr. Smith, 'I can have no

[1] On his deathbed he tenderly and touchingly commended the Ragged Schools to the interest and care of his family. Nobly have they fulfilled their trust.

[2] See the annual reports of the Schools for full details of the progress made.

doubt they have been the principal instruments in effecting so desirable a change.' Cheering evidence this to the noble-hearted founder that his labours were being followed by results so unmistakable.

So marked a success fully warranted an appeal to Government to obtain the insertion of a clause into the Minutes of Council on Education embracing the Ragged Schools, in order that they might receive aid out of the public funds. The institutions were conferring great benefit on the community; why then should not the radius of their beneficent influence be extended by Government supplementing what private endeavour had commenced? The directors of the Edinburgh Original Ragged Schools, therefore, decided to send an influential deputation to London to interview Lord Lansdowne, President of the Privy Council. Upon this deputation the leading place was, of course, assigned to Dr. Guthrie. His name was well known in London, and his great services, both as a Free Churchman and philanthropist, appraised at their true value.

The welcome he received, accordingly, was most enthusiastic. Immense crowds flocked to hear him preach or address meetings, even on a week-day. 'What's wrong? Is there a house on fire down that street, or is the Queen in town?' said one Londoner to another, when he saw dense masses of people completely blocking one of the metropolitan thoroughfares. 'Oh no, it's Ragged Schools Guthrie addressing a meeting, and all London is on the trot to hear him.'[1] The remark was no more than truth. From royalty to the 'roughs' for whom he was labouring, peers, members of parliament, merchant-princes—in a word, the rank, wealth, beauty and fashion, as well as the *élite* of its intellectual and spiritual life—all flocked to hear him, and hearing, were captivated. Not even Lord Lansdowne escaped the fascination. His lordship received the deputation in his official capacity, and was visibly impressed by the eloquence and earnest-

[1] A paragraph from a London weekly.

ness of the speaker, as well as by the facts adduced:—'One of my friends told me afterwards,' says Dr. Guthrie, 'that I was sitting on a chair three times the breadth of the table away from him when I began to address him, but that as I got on, I edged nearer and nearer, till at last I was clapping him on the knee. I gave it to his lordship in a speech nearly an hour long, at which he seemed lost in astonishment.'

No wonder he was so, when informed, on the most irresistible statistical authority, that each criminal costs the country on an average £300, that before reaching the age when crime has become habitual, the Ragged Schools take one of these boys off the streets, and place him in an institution, clothe, feed, train, and educate him, then hand him back to society a useful and valuable member of the community, while the whole cost of doing so is only £25. If, on the other hand, he is left to pursue his evil courses, the State does not finish with that boy, either by hanging or by penal confinement, under £300. Lord Lansdowne could not fail to perceive on which side the advantage lay, and I may add that what was true in 1850-51 is even more so to-day. The upshot of the interview with the President of the Privy Council was that Dr. Guthrie was asked by Lord Lansdowne to place his statements in 'black and white' and to forward them to his lordship. Thus took shape the famous *Memorial*, printed and despatched to the Government in 1851.

Largely as a result of the spirited efforts of Dr. Guthrie in this direction, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1852 to inquire into 'the condition of criminal and destitute juveniles in this country, and what changes are desirable in their present treatment in order to supply industrial training and to combine reformation with the due correction of juvenile crime.' Before this Parliamentary Committee Dr. Guthrie was requested to give evidence, and gladly complied in February 1853. His examination was a lengthy and a searching one, but

the amount of information elicited from him surprised the members.[1]

On every phase of the question they chose to examine him, he was able to adduce facts previously unknown to them, and to substantiate them by reliable statistics. The upshot of all, to Dr. Guthrie's great delight, was that the Parliamentary Committee reported (*a*) that reformatories, instituted and supported entirely at the public expense, ought to be established; and (*b*) that the existing Ragged Industrial or preventive schools ought to participate in the benefits of the national grant, under the administration of the Committee of Council for Education. This was encouragement and reward for Dr. Guthrie's long years of persevering, self-denying effort. He and his friends, basing their claims on the Committee's report, vigorously pressed their case on the attention of the Government. Owing in large measure to the statistics Dr. Guthrie was ceaselessly collecting and forwarding to Lord Lansdowne, Parliament at length was induced to move. Two Acts were passed: the first, known as 'Lord Palmerston's Act,' applicable to *criminal* children; the second, introduced by Mr. Dunlop (Dr. Guthrie's friend) and known as 'Dunlop's Act,' dealing with *vagrant* children. Together they fulfilled, in large measure at least, what was considered necessary by Dr. Guthrie, to give magistrates 'powers of commitment,' whereby promising cases might be sent to the Schools even in the face of parental opposition, when such parents or guardians were found unfit to be intrusted with the care of these children. The pecuniary aid so earnestly desired was also afforded. By a Minute of Privy Council, dated June 1856, a capitation allowance of fifty shillings per annum was granted for every child in the certified Industrial Schools, *whether committed by a magistrate or not!*

Dr. Guthrie's satisfaction was now complete. His great scheme was being slowly but surely realised. Meantime he was unwearied in pressing its claims upon the

[1] *Vide* Official Report of the evidence taken before the Commission.

attention of all classes in the community. At no small expenditure of time and energy, in days when travelling was not attended with the comforts and conveniences of these latter years, he visited all the large towns in England and Wales, as well as in his native country, establishing new Ragged Schools, as well as extending the sphere of operation of the old; and whithersoever he went, meeting enthusiastic receptions, as the great philanthropist who, in the words of an optimistic admirer in the *Witness*, 'bids fair to banish crime from our land by the simple expedient of training destitute juveniles to earn their own living.' Far and wide his name was carried on the wings of countless grateful blessings, until 'Ragged Schools Guthrie,' as he was styled by the *Daily News* after his great lecture in 1855 in Exeter Hall, London—a lecture characterised as 'the high-water mark of his powerful and pathetic oratory'—became a familiar name all over Europe.

Nothing daunted his courage, no reverse dimmed his cheery faith that 'Our Father doeth all things well.' The disappointment was great when, after one year's trial, the Privy Council Minute was recalled, and in the new one issued in December 1857, the capitation grant was reduced from 50s. to 5s.; but it only nerved him to greater exertions.[1] Up to London he went, stirring up popular interest in the cause through his eloquence, interviewing Ministers and influential statesmen, and finally bombarding the Government position of *non possumus* with the 'Third' and greatest of his 'Pleas for Ragged Schools.' Wisely he decided to issue all three appeals in one volume under the heading, *Seedtime and Harvest of Ragged Schools*, and it was when reviewing the little volume in the issue of September 28, 1860, that the *Times* paid the following tribute to him:—

'Dr. Guthrie is the greatest of our pulpit orators, and those who have never heard him will probably obtain a better idea

[1] See article in the *Times* on this sudden change of policy in December 1857.

of his wonderful eloquence from his work on Ragged Schools than from his published sermons. . . . They [the Pleas] are the most finished of his compositions, and are well worthy of his fame. It is impossible to read them unmoved. . . . We are inclined almost to rank him as the greatest living master of the pathetic.'

But all his efforts could not induce that incarnation of the Utilitarian, the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, to unloose the national purse-strings. In 1861, the Industrial Schools Act became law, whereby even the reduced capitation grant of five shillings was lopped off, and only those children in the Industrial Ragged Schools *that had been committed by a magistrate* were to receive any grant. Although the grant in question was greatly raised, Dr. Guthrie's Schools would benefit by it only to a very small extent, inasmuch as the proportion of 'committed' to 'uncommitted' children was exceedingly small.[1]

To many a philanthropist such a blow to his hopes would have been staggering. Not so Dr. Guthrie! The moment he realised that further knocking at the Governmental door was useless, he wheeled round and appealed to the general public. At the Social Science Congress held in Glasgow under the presidency of Lord Brougham, Dr. Guthrie delivered an address in the 'Punishment and Reformation Section,' which elicited warm encomiums from the aged President. The effects of it were visible a month or two afterwards, when a public meeting was called in Edinburgh 'to consider what steps should be taken to meet the serious deficit of £700 in the funds for the year of the Original Ragged School, caused by the withdrawal of the Government Grant for non-committed children.' At this meeting Dr. Norman Macleod made one of his lofty Christian appeals to the charity of the community not to allow the Schools to perish. He was followed by Dr. Guthrie; and both of these noble orators, each peerless in his own specific type of eloquence, produced a profound

[1] From the Privy Council Report for 1861, we observe that in the year in question 6172 children were in attendance at the Ragged Schools in Britain, of which only 242 had been committed by magistrates.

impression on the Edinburgh public. Their united efforts were irresistible. In place of £700 as requested, that public meeting realised £2200. We next find him in 1861 attending a conference of the friends of Ragged Schools, held at Birmingham under the presidency of Sir John Pakington.[1] On that occasion he made another telling speech when moving the second resolution, which deplored the fact that, while destitute children formed so large a class in the community, no educational aid in any equitable or adequate proportion is given for their education from Parliamentary grants.[2]

For five years more he fought on with heroic persistency. At length, largely owing to his efforts, in 1866 a new 'Industrial Schools Act' was passed, by which these establishments were placed on a much more satisfactory footing, through increased facilities being given to magistrates for committing children accused of petty thefts, as well as destitute or vagrant children not accused of any actual crime. By this means, through the increased number of 'committed children,' the Ragged Schools benefited to a much larger degree. Dr. Guthrie continued to agitate as long as life lasted in the interests of that vast mass of ignorant and destitute children who, being 'uncommitted,' are beyond the pale of any of these statutes. Death, in fact, met him while strenuously urging that an amendment should be made in the Education Act of 1872 to meet this crying need. When the mighty voice was silent and the great heart stilled by 'the Shadow feared of man,' the destitute children of Edinburgh lost a friend whose like their class will never see again. He laboured much because he loved much those whom no other heart loved so well and with whom no other worker sympathised in equal degree. He has long ago passed to his rest. Monuments and statues become soon forgotten, but in the 'Original Ragged Schools' his descendants have the assurance that his works will imperishably 'follow' him.

[1] Afterwards Lord Hampton.

[2] *Vide* Official Report of Conference published in 1861.

Meantime, from 1846 to 1849 St. John's Free Church continued to increase in numbers, in efficiency in Christian work, in sanctified liberality. Mr. Guthrie had the blessed consciousness to cheer him that he was surrounded by a band of prayerful workers, who bore him up daily and hourly, by their prayers before the throne of grace, that he might be sustained with divine strength amidst his manifold labours.

In 1849 his people, as well as his many friends all over the world 'from China to Peru,' were delighted to hear that his ancient Alma Mater had conferred on him the degree of 'Doctor of Divinity.' His writings, while not characterised by striking theological scholarship, are distinguished by that broad catholicity of culture which, for the peculiar work laid to his hand, was of infinitely more service to him than if he had been a profound authority on the Hebrew points, or versed in the 'variorum readings' of all the Codices. By Dr. Guthrie the degree was valued, not for the added prestige it conferred on himself, but because thereby honour was paid to the clergy of the Church whose interests to him were so dear.

But amid all this noble and self-denying work, the congregation of St. John's was called upon to pass under the shadow of a great anxiety. Their beloved minister was brought once more to the gates of death. The anxieties and colossal labour attached to the Manse Fund Scheme and to the initiation of his Ragged School System, exhausted even the vitality of his strong, muscular frame. Symptoms of serious cardiac affection began to disclose themselves. Leave of absence was eagerly allowed to him both by congregation and Presbytery, in the hope that a few months' cessation from work might restore all. But at the end of the term he was, if anything, worse than before. Clearly a lengthened rest, undisturbed by anxieties of any kind, was imperatively essential. Drs. Miller, Alison, and Fairbairn urged him to give up active work for a year or two, and then to accept the assistance of a colleague. For a time he refused to make application.

At length he became so ill that he had no choice. After three months' rest, on January 23, 1848, against all his friends' advice, he attempted to preach. With the utmost difficulty he got through the service and had to be assisted from the pulpit. He never entered it again for nearly two years—until Sabbath, 7th October 1849. When he did so, it was as collegiate minister of St. John's, along with the Rev. Dr. Hanna.

CHAPTER IX

GUTHRIE—THE APOSTLE OF TEMPERANCE

THE night was cold, wet, and cheerless in the winter of 1841. A tempest had been raging all day, and as evening closed in the storm increased rather than moderated its violence. An Irish car, with two Scottish Non-Intrusionist clergymen and an Edinburgh lawyer in it, had been toiling across the wind-swept stretches of County Tyrone, as the road winds along from Omagh to Cookstown. The occupants, as well as the driver—a strong, ruddy-faced Milesian with laughter and good-humour peeping out of every line of his countenance—were soaked with the drenching rain. Half-way, a small roadside inn was reached, into which the clergymen went, ordered whisky and hot water, and made toddy. Out of kindness to the car-driver they called him in and offered him a rummer of the steaming liquor. To their surprise he warmly thanked them, but declined it. 'Plaze your riv'rence, I am a teetotaler, and I won't taste a dhrop.' He was one of Father Mathew's converts to total abstinence. Lo, what mighty results are obtained from humble causes! One of these clergymen was Thomas Guthrie. The example of the car-driver deeply impressed him. The lesson was never forgotten. Gradually the seed of conviction germinated, producing the assurance that if a man intends to become a social reformer, he must commence by being an abstainer, inasmuch as the cause of nine-tenths of the destitution and crime in our large cities is—drunkenness!

Before Dr. Guthrie became a philanthropist, therefore,

he had been for some years a strong advocate of total abstinence. While no bigot on the question, he ever sturdily maintained that strong drink was the deadliest weapon used by the devil to ruin humanity. 'I have four reasons for being an abstainer,' said Dr. Guthrie: 'my head is clearer, my health is better, my heart is lighter, and my purse is heavier'; to which may be added this other remark made on another occasion, 'I would rather see in the pulpit a man who is a total abstainer from this root of all evil—drink, than a man crammed with all the Hebrew roots in the world.'

He gives a very graphic account of his first appearance as an abstainer at a dinner-party given by Mr. Maitland of Dundrennan, at which Lords Jeffrey and Cockburn with their wives, and others of the *élite* of Edinburgh literary and legal society were present—people who might have heard of teetotalers, but certainly had never seen one before, and some of whom never dreamed of denying themselves any indulgence whatever for the sake of others:—

'But by my principles I was resolved to stick, cost what it might. So I passed the wine to my neighbour without its paying tax or toll to me often enough to attract our host's attention, who, to satisfy himself I was not sick, called for an explanation. This I gave modestly, but without any shamefacedness. The company could hardly conceal their astonishment. But when Jeffrey, who sat opposite to me, found that in this matter I was living not for myself but others, denying myself the use of luxuries to which I had been accustomed that I might by my example reclaim the vicious and raise the fallen and restore peace and plenty to wretched homes, that generous-hearted, noble-minded man could not conceal his sympathy and admiration. He did not speak, but his look was not to be mistaken, and though kind and courteous before my apology, he was ten times more so after it.'

This incident, which occurred in all likelihood in 1845, was the initial act in a profession of total abstinence which lasted nearly as long as life itself.[1] No sooner did he

[1] During the last year or so he was imperatively ordered by his doctor to take a certain quantity of stimulants every day. For a time he refused, but at last had to yield.

begin his great philanthropic labours on behalf of the Ragged Schools than the opinion, formed as the result of his unwearied visiting in the Cowgate, Grassmarket, and West Bow, when pastor of the territorial parish of St. John's, that drunkenness was the prime enemy of the Church of Christ—an enemy to which all the other vices were auxiliaries and subordinates—became settled conviction.

Against an enemy so omnipresent and so powerful, Dr. Guthrie neither sought nor gave quarter. While never a fanatic or extremist, imposing his views on all alike, and denouncing those who did not agree with him, his testimony to the necessity of temperance principles for young men beginning life was unqualified and unceasing. 'When you get religion dying, drink is like a fungus growing on the rotten tree; when religion begins to revive, along with it revive temperance and total abstinence societies. To a young man beginning business, to be an abstainer is as good as £100 a year of additional capital.'

He was unwearied in his efforts to induce the legislature to make, and the municipal authorities strictly to enforce, stringent yet fair laws for the regulation of the liquor traffic. He denounced Sunday trading, and contended every licensed house should be closed at the very latest at ten o'clock. He protested against the crime of serving drink to young lads, and said the father who sent his children into the public-house to fetch beer ought to be severely punished, as exposing the moral health of his offspring to contamination. How many of the legislative seeds he sowed long years ago have now sprung up and borne golden grain for the reaping of to-day? By deputations to those in authority, either in London or Edinburgh—deputations whereof, in nearly every case, he was chosen the spokesman,—by numerous public meetings, by the institution of temperance and total abstinence societies, he sought to diminish or stamp out this national curse.

Inebriety was, of course, much more prevalent in the days when Dr. Guthrie lived and laboured than now. We

are becoming a more 'sober' nation, not made so by legislative enactments, but by the steady diffusion of education, of popular science, and by the cultivation of that saving grace of common-sense which presents the case to a man in this way that, apart from all religious and moral considerations, on the low ground of £ *s. d.*, sobriety is preferable to indulgence, while total abstinence is better than all. I wish to emphasise the fact that we largely owe what moral and social improvement there now is to the labours of Dr. Guthrie, and such as he, forty or fifty years ago—noble-hearted men who, in a good cause, had the courage to be singular, when such singularity entailed not a few disadvantages, and even a faint *soupçon* of disapproval.

In the temperance field, as in that of social reform, Dr. Guthrie's 'works' live after him. He was one of the earliest 'teetotalers' in the Free Church, and stood nearly alone: he lived to see the profession of such principles as were implied thereby becoming, if not incumbent on, at least expedient for each minister to adopt. Along with the late Drs. Grey, Burns of Kilsyth, Horatius Bonar, and one or two others, he founded the Free Church Temperance Society, and was spared to see it become one of the strongest of the Church's institutions. He sympathised warmly with the formation, by his dear friend, James Miller, Professor of Surgery, of a Students' Temperance Society in connection with the University of Edinburgh. More than once, Dr. Guthrie addressed the members of the association in words of sound practical wisdom; and he frequently invited youths belonging to it, whom he knew to be alone in Edinburgh, to spend an evening at his house. Another group of young people whom he rejoiced to meet were the Normal School students. To them he, in like manner, spoke more than once on the subject so near his heart—appeals instinct with wit and humour, yet withal permeated by that rarest of all virtues in a humorous speech, common-sense.

As I have said, Dr. Guthrie was never a bigot in enforcing his own opinions on others. None more clearly than

he recognised the right of each man to hold his own opinions. He was always ready to co-operate with all classes of temperance reformers. Though personally holding firmly by the principle of total abstinence, he joined many leading citizens in founding in 1850 the 'Scottish Association for the Suppression of Drunkenness,' in which there was scarcely an abstainer save himself. In order to interest the public in the work of the Society, the members determined to issue a series of short, pithy statements upon the subject in question, and what remedial measures seemed demanded. His two 'Pleas for Ragged Schools' had shown him the unsuspected power he possessed in literary composition. Therefore we find him opening the series—to which, as he says in a letter to the Hon. Fox Maule, Drs. Candlish, Norman Macleod, Begg, Lindsay Alexander, and others, were to contribute succeeding numbers—with a pithy pamphlet, 'A Plea on behalf of Drunkards and against Drunkenness.'

To many the fact may be of interest that, although the 'Association for the Suppression of Drunkenness' has long since passed away, it was able to effect one reform, and that was to contribute in a very large degree to the passing of the legislative measure known as the Forbes-Mackenzie Act, which still forms the basis at least of our present Scots Licensing Laws. In the securing of that excellent Statute, Dr. Guthrie materially assisted by voice, pen, and personal influence, and in the minutes of more than one of the temperance societies of Scotland there still stand expressions of grateful thanks to the great orator who so powerfully aided the efforts of social reformers by his eloquence. His pamphlet appeared in 1850, a few months subsequent to his restoration to health after his severe illness of 1848-49; and he followed it up with three New Year Tracts, 'New Year's Drinking' (1851), 'A Happy New Year' (1852), and 'The Old Year's Warning' (1853).

But this was not all. So impressed was he with the ravages committed by this social cancer, so saddened by the cases coming under his knowledge of wives mourning

the moral shipwreck and degradation of husbands, of husbands bewailing their wives, of fathers and mothers bowed to the dust by the ruin of sons and daughters, of sons and daughters lamenting the fall of parents, that he determined to address a series of sermons to the community at large, particularly to that of the great city wherein his lot was cast. In these he aimed at setting forth the duty of parents and guardians in training the rising generation in the principles of total abstinence. The sermons were afterwards published under the title, *The City—Its Sins and Sorrows.* Both when delivered as sermons and in their book form, these discourses exercised a widespread influence. To this I can bear personal testimony. Away in far-distant Australia I chanced to meet a wealthy Scots squatter. In conversation this estimable Christian, whose charities and benefactions were almost princely in their liberality, informed me that when in Edinburgh he had been rushing headlong to ruin through intemperance and other vices. His friends had despaired of him, when by chance he wandered one day into Dr. Guthrie's church when he was preaching that remarkable series. The young man was arrested at once, he listened spellbound, and at the close was greatly impressed. He left the church, and all through the week struggled to drown the voice of conscience by plunging into dissipation. But on Sunday, he could not refrain from again attending Dr. Guthrie's sermon. This time, he confessed, he went much the worse of drink. But as the orator proceeded, every sentence seemed to sting the youth like a fiery dart, until at last, when the great preacher, bending over the pulpit, uttered in tones of exquisite sweetness and pathos these words—'There are few families among us so happy as not to have had some one near and dear to them either in imminent peril hanging over the precipice, or the slave of intemperance altogether sold under sin.' He could endure the torture no longer, and bursting into tears he hurried from the place. 'Never shall I forget,' he said, 'either the words or the

tones of overpowering yearning with which they were pronounced. I could not rest. After the most miserable night I ever spent, I called to see Dr. Guthrie early next day. His fatherly kindness still further broke me down, and when he had knelt with me at the throne of grace, and offered up a prayer, the like of which I never heard before or since, he bade me farewell, inviting me to return and see him; but I never did so. Two weeks after I was on the ocean, on my way to these fair lands under the "Southern Cross," but now you will understand how it was I could not restrain my emotion on hearing you name Dr. Guthrie.'

I could cite numerous cases, never yet published, that have come to my knowledge, of men and women arrested either by the sermons or the book, *The City—Its Sins and Sorrows*. One of the most brilliant members of the Canadian legislature, whose eloquence was the admiration of the Dominion, informed a friend of mine, 'Had it not been for Guthrie's *Sins and Sorrows*, I should have been lying in all likelihood by this time in a drunkard's grave.' Testimonies such as these are assuredly evidence irrefragable of the permanent character of the work achieved in temperance reform by Thomas Guthrie.

I have already said more on this head than I intended. Suffice it to add that, although in his later years able to do less than before and certainly much less than he desired, to aid the cause of temperance, he never ceased to urge on young people, and especially on young ministers, the importance of becoming abstainers. One of the most scholarly of Free Church ministers informs me that, spending an evening at Dr. Guthrie's house about a week after he was licensed, and chancing to mention that he had resolved to become an abstainer from motives of conscience, as thereby he would have greater freedom in impressing the principles of temperance on others, Dr. Guthrie rose, and with much solemnity laying his hand on the young licentiate's head, he said, 'May the God of our Fathers, the God who has been to me a buckler and a sure

defence in every day of trouble, be the same to you, and make you a mighty blessing in extirpating this hideous disease from our land.' 'I felt,' said the minister, 'as though the dying saint—for this was within a few months of his death—were laying on me the work he had done so long. It was a consecration—a setting apart, and from that day to this I have fought the battle of total abstinence wheresoever it raged.'

It is seven-and-twenty years since Dr. Guthrie passed to his rest. New temperance apostles have come to the front, but I question if any of them have quite filled the niche occupied by him. In comparison with Gough—who was his contemporary for some time—Dr. Guthrie's temperance speeches appealed to a class over whom Gough had no influence, the educated and refined portion of the population. He might not possess the whirlwind eloquence of the great American orator, but his effective range was infinitely wider. The late Professor Blackie said 'he had heard Dr. Guthrie deliver speeches on behalf of temperance which, in all the higher characteristics of oratory fell little, if at all, short of Demosthenes.' The work he accomplished in the cause of temperance (1) in Society, (2) in the Free Church, (3) in influencing the Town Council of Edinburgh, (4) in placing the Legislature in possession of such a body of facts and statistics of priceless value, as aided them to come to some decision with regard to licensing legislation, is such as to entitle him to one of the highest places in the ranks of temperance apostles.

Meantime his congregational work was ever upon his mind. After his serious illness, and when the verdict of the doctors became known, his congregation determined that a colleague should be appointed to relieve him of a portion of it. Notwithstanding that the Free Church had set its face against collegiate charges, at that epoch of her history at least, the circumstances here were felt to be altogether so exceptional, that the General Assembly at once granted the request of the congregation, and, after

some little delay, the Rev. William Hanna, LL.D., son-in-law and biographer of Scotland's greatest ecclesiastic next to Knox—Dr. Chalmers,—was appointed in 1850 as Dr. Guthrie's colleague and successor. For fifteen years they worked together in harness with that brotherly accord and mutual consideration only to be expected from two men of such intellectual gifts and deep spirituality. Dr. Hanna was aware of the precarious nature of his colleague's health, and that a rather alarming opinion had been given regarding it, by Sir Andrew Clark, the Queen's private physician, to Dr. Alexander Guthrie of Brechin.

Beautiful indeed it was to behold how solicitous for his 'partner's' health was Dr. Hanna when the warning contained in Sir Andrew Clark's opinion was made known. Dr. Guthrie on his side was no less 'affectionately' kind, so that when the separation at length came in 1864, on the senior colleague's heart-affection becoming so pronounced as to preclude the discharge of regular pulpit duties, Dr. Hanna could write of him:—

'It was my happy privilege, counted by me among the greatest I have enjoyed, of being for fifteen years his colleague in the ministry of Free St. John's, Edinburgh. To one coming from a remote country parish, ten years' residence in which had moulded tastes originally congenial with its quiet and seclusion, into something like a fixed habit of retreat, the position was a trying one—to occupy such a pulpit every Sunday, side by side with such a preacher. But never can I forget the kindness and tenderness, the constant and delicate consideration, with which Dr. Guthrie ever tried to lessen its difficulties and to soften its trials. Brother could not have treated brother with more affectionate regard.'

His family was also increasing, and he deeply felt the responsibilities laid on him as a father in view of the temptations of the great city. He was wont to say, when returning from mourning with those that mourned the bereavement of loved ones, that his Heavenly Father had been peculiarly gracious in this respect to him, inasmuch as the angel of death had never folded its wings over his roof. Seven sons and four daughters were born to him and his beloved

spouse, twenty-four years elapsing between the births of the eldest, the late Rev. D. K. Guthrie, Liberton Free Church, Edinburgh, and of the youngest, 'wee Johnnie,' who after twenty months' abode on earth winged his way back unto the heaven whence he came. This was the only occasion that Dr. Guthrie had to sorrow over any of his offspring predeceasing him. When to him the summons did come to leave those scenes of earth wherein he had played so prominent a part, it was by an unbroken phalanx of stalwart sons that he was borne to his rest, the babe that had passed away in early infancy constituting all that could be called a gap in the circle round his family board. As they grew up to boyhood, youth, and finally to manhood, his anxiety was that they should be good rather than great men. 'True greatness lies in goodness,' he would say, 'and the greatest man is he who, with all his greatness in the eyes of the world, nevertheless in the presence of his Saviour becomes as one of those little ones of whom it was said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."'

During that period, 1849-1855, the catholicity of his sympathies caused him to make many friends in every walk of life and in every class of society. With Lord Jeffrey he had enjoyed some delightful intercourse. After the death of the Judge, Dr. Guthrie was asked to conduct the religious services at the funeral. This he did, and it was the only occasion whereon he wrote a prayer and committed it to memory. 'I was anxious,' he said, 'to avoid the use of one word that could hurt the feelings of the family; on the other hand, I was bound in duty to my Master to say nothing that would encourage scepticism.' The prayer was a very impressive one, and was styled by Wordsworth, who was present and heard it, 'a sublime apostrophe to the Almighty.' At this time, also, it was that the intimacy with the family of the Duke of Argyll commenced, which continued unbroken, a treasured privilege on both sides, until the day of his death. With Lord Southesk, the Right Hon. Fox Maule, afterwards

Earl of Dalhousie, the Duchess of Sutherland, and others of the nobility he had much pleasant intercourse; while with many of the highest dignitaries in the Church of England, from the Bishop of London, Dr. Tait, afterwards Primate, and Dr. Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, to the Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Milman, and the Dean of Westminster—'the beloved Stanley'—he entered upon relations of close friendship only severed by 'life's last consummation.'

Many of England's greatest statesmen were not ashamed to consult him on the subjects to which he had devoted so many years of earnest study—juvenile crime and destitution and their remedy, pauperism and its treatment, temperance and how to legislate for it, etc. From him Lord John Russell, the Duke of Argyll, Mr. Gladstone, John Bright and others, received carefully verified statistics and ideas founded upon the unimpeachable evidence of facts, which they were able to utilise in legislating for the welfare of our great nation. He was never a party politician in the proper sense of the word.

> 'I am a Conservative in conserving all that is good; I am a Liberal in advocating a wise liberality as regards Government funds towards all institutions that aim to make men better, soberer, and wiser; and I am a red-hot Radical in seeking to uproot everything tending to disgrace the grand old name of Briton.'[1]

In Scotland, after the last lingering echoes of the 'storm and stress' of the Disruption had died away 'into the infinite azure of the past,' he was eager to be on terms of familiarity and friendship with his ministerial brethren of all denominations. 'Guthrie has room in his heart for all Churches,' said the late Dean Ramsay of Edinburgh; while one of the leading members of the Catholic Apostolic Church remarked with regard to his freedom from bigotry, 'Dr. Guthrie only needs to know that you love the same Saviour that he loves, to care one straw which of the "isms" you belong to, or whether you belong to an "ism" at all.'

[1] Extract from one of his Ragged School speeches.

CHAPTER X

GUTHRIE AS THE FRIEND OF EDUCATION AND OF MISSIONS

To trace with the same fulness as in the case of Dr. Guthrie's connection with the Ragged Schools and Temperance movements, his labours on behalf of all those others wherewith he was associated, would require more space than now is left to me. Scarce a cause was there whose aim was the achievement of social or religious reform, which, if its motives were worthy, did not receive from him unstinted and unwavering support. National Education in all its diverse ramifications, Home and Foreign Missions, the Union of the Churches, Sabbath Observance, Young Men's Christian Associations, the Bible Society, Female Protection, the Housing of the Working Classes, Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Shorter Hours for Shop Employés, the Saturday Half-Holiday, and many other schemes of Christian service and of benevolent amelioration of hardship—all benefited by his spirited appeals and his contagious enthusiasm. His speech in condemnation of slavery at the time of the visit of Mrs. Beecher Stowe was said by her to have rivalled the efforts of Daniel Webster. Only to one or two of these outlets for his energy can I refer. Let this chapter be devoted to his work in Education and on behalf of Missions.

Dr. Guthrie was a firm believer in education as, next to religion, the great lever for raising the moral tone of the world. 'Let the legislature affirm that children as members of society have a right to protection from the injury of ignorance, and take security that they receive, where

nothing more can be given, at least a good secular education.'[1] He was never weary pointing out that the Romish Church, by the persistent ignorance in which, at that time at least, she kept the lower classes belonging to her communion, was offending against the common rights of humanity, adding: 'An ignorant community is too often a decaying community, and can that be denied of Spain, Italy, and the Republics of the Spanish Main?'[2]

Such then were Dr. Guthrie's views regarding education as a principle. Let us note the form of it he desired to see established. I need not refer to that excellent system of parochial education, first formulated by the efforts of John Knox—a system which for nearly three hundred years raised Scotland to the proud position of possessing the best organised scheme of 'popular' education in Europe,[3] serving for all practical purposes of instruction until the middle of the nineteenth century. A new order of things, however, was being evolved, consequent upon that rise of the democratic spirit which resulted from the Reform Act. All the old institutions were being again thrown into the testing crucible of specific utility. Among them was the Scottish parochial system of Education. Many of its principles were obsolete when considered in the light of that widening of the thoughts of men which is

[1] *Out of Harness*, by Rev. T. Guthrie, D.D., p. 246.

[2] Curious corroboration of this saying has just now (February 1900) been furnished by M. Ives Guyot, in the well-known Parisian journal, *Le Siècle*. He says: 'We must uncatholicise France—that is our bounden duty; if we do not, we shall promptly sink to the level of Spain. But how are we to do it? The great majority of the people feel the want of a religion. But modern history shows the decline of the Roman Catholic nations and the rise of the Protestant peoples. As we compare their relative situations, we are bound to conclude that France has everything to lose by remaining Catholic; she has everything to gain by becoming Protestant.' Note that 27 per cent. of the Catholics in France can neither read nor write.

[3] In his first Report on Education presented to the Free Church Assembly in 1843, Dr. Welsh said: 'No Church aspiring to be National could be fulfilling its mission, if it were not providing for the religious training of the young, from the lowest Elementary School to the first institutions of science and learning.' It was in pursuance of this spirit that the Free Church at the outset included Logic and Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy in its curriculum.

continually taking place. Nothing in either thought or matter is absolutely permanent and stable. Inasmuch as a new system of Education, therefore, was every year becoming more imperative, seeing that the old parochial scheme was no longer able to overtake all that was required of it, in order to keep pace with the development of scholarship and culture after the Disruption, Dr. Candlish and a large section of Free Church ministers considered they were bound to institute a fresh system, which, while it occupied the same relation to the new Church as the parochial did to the Establishment, should nevertheless be superior in adaptability to the wants of the age. Another reason inducing Dr. Candlish and his friends to do as they did, was the fact that many parish schoolmasters, having thrown in their lot with the Free Church, and thus lost their appointments, had a sort of tacit claim on the Church for employment.

Against this scheme Dr. Guthrie and Dr. Begg protested vigorously. They maintained that for the Free Church to saddle itself with a huge and complicated educational machinery was not only an inexpedient course, and one tending to absorb funds that might be more beneficially employed otherwise, but that by doing work legitimately the duty of the State, they were, in reality, delaying the establishment of a truly national system of education. This common-sense way of looking at things, however, met with fierce opposition from Dr. Candlish and his party. I have no desire to rake up the ashes of long dead controversies, but there can be little doubt that Dr. Guthrie and his companion, with those who thought with them, were for some years exposed to no little obloquy and misrepresentation.

The Free Church had in the matter of education shown a renewed example of splendid liberality, in providing £50,000 for her School Building Fund—a Fund owing much to the energy of Dr. Robert M'Donald of North Leith. In the year 1847—the one in which the Government of the day offered to give grants in aid of all Schools with whose

efficiency it was satisfied, leaving the active conduct of them in the hands of the parties by whom they had been instituted, provided religion should be taught—the Free Church might be said to have six hundred and fifty Schools under her charge, of which five hundred and thirteen were receiving support from her, directly or indirectly.[1] Hard indeed it was to think that enthusiasm so noble could yet be misdirected! Yet the scheme was a mistake, and like any other merely sectarian system of education which conflicts with the popular ideal of a national scheme, was foredoomed to failure.

For Dr. Guthrie to take up a position of antagonism to such men as Drs. Candlish and Robert Buchanan—church leaders of single-minded probity and calm, balanced judgment—was not done without strong reason. But all through his life Thomas Guthrie loathed the rôle of the hide-bound partisan. 'Because I see eye to eye with a man on one topic, is that any reason why I am straitly bound to stifle conviction, and agree with him in everything? That is reverting to Pre-Reformation Popery and the subjection of the individual Will,' he replied in one of his letters to a respected minister who wrote to him asking him why he opposed the scheme of Free Church schools. The case of Dr. William Gunn, one of the masters of the Edinburgh High School, admittedly also one of the ripest scholars and best teachers in Scotland, but whose views were in favour of a national as opposed to a denominational scheme, still further widened the breach between Dr. Guthrie and the Education Committee of the Free Church. Dr. Gunn had been appointed to one of the Government Inspectorships connected with the Free Church schools. He had resigned his position in the High School, and was about to take up his duties, for which no man was more competent, when his election was suddenly cancelled. There is nothing to be gained by timorously covering up

[1] *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland*, by Norman L. Walker, D.D. This is a volume every one should read who desires to peruse an impartial presentation of the Free Church case.

the mistakes of public men. Let them be fairly faced and admitted. That cancellation was due to the influence of the Education Committee of the Free Church, and to a letter written by Dr. Candlish in his capacity as Convener! 'A more disgraceful job was never perpetrated,' wrote one of the Edinburgh newspapers of the day, and every fair-minded man will say the same. Dr. Candlish lived to regret the step, and had the manly courage to admit the error, but by that time the heart-broken victim had passed to that bourne where fallible fellow-men would no longer be his judges, and where to praise and blame alike he was oblivious.[1]

I mention this matter to show the keenness of party feeling in the Free Church at the time. Dr. Guthrie championed Dr. Gunn's claims to the last, and his remonstrance addressed to Dr. Candlish is inspired by a noble disinterestedness and lofty indignation:—

> 'I never liked controversy all my days, and such experience as I have had of it does not recommend it to me. I frankly say for myself that I have found it indispose me for higher duties, disturb my peace, stir up the baser passions of my nature, and expose the parties engaged in it to the risk of quarrels and alienated affections. I am now less disposed for it than ever; and last of all, I am thoroughly averse to have any controversy with *you*.'

In opposition, therefore, to his former friends, Dr. Guthrie worked unceasingly in favour of a *national* system of Education as distinguished from the 'parochial' or Established Church scheme and that supported by the Free Church. Not that he refused to admit the excellent work done by Free Church schools and teachers. 'I do not deny,' he wrote, 'and am happy to know that our Free Church schools have done much good: still I thought they were founded on a wrong basis, in such a country as ours, at any rate.' What distressed him most of all was that, while denominational schemes of education tended to widen the breach between the different

[1] See the *Scotsman* of the time for fuller details.

Churches, out and beyond the influence of any Church, a multitude of children were growing up in Scotland wholly without instruction. Writing to the Right Hon. Fox Maule, he said:—

'I long and pray for the time when such unfortunates (those outside any denominational scheme) will be educated by the State; nor from such a prayer will I ever come down to consider schemes of sects. I don't care, if the people are saved, whether the scheme crack the crown of St. Giles, or hurl Free St. John's down the West Bow. *I love my Church as well as any one, but I love my country more than I love my denomination.*'

There spoke the true patriot. Guthrie is never so great as when he breaks away from the icy fetters of sectarianism!

In view of securing a comprehensive system of Education for his country, Dr. Guthrie took an active part in founding 'The National Education Association of Scotland,' composed of men of all creeds and parties, who were, however, united in this one patriotic endeavour. In connection with his work on the Committee of this Society, he had an interesting correspondence with the Duke of Argyll, to whom Scotland largely owes the final settlement of this vexed question in the Education Act of 1872. In a letter to the Duke dated February 18, 1850, he indicates one of the essential principles in any system of Education, and one that is prominent in the Act which has worked so well in Scotland, viz. that of *local control*:—

'I believe that the sure way of having any scheme vigorously managed is to give those a considerable power at least in the management of it who have a deep stake in the matter. The parents have the deepest stake in the schools, and we may rest assured they will watch and work them better than parties who have but a remote interest in their success.'

At last, induced by the representations of Dr. Guthrie and others of the Scottish clergy and laity, the Government agreed to take up the question, and in 1854 a measure for a national scheme of Education in Scotland

was introduced into Parliament by the Lord Advocate (Moncreiff), afterwards Lord Moncreiff. Though not agreeing in every detail with the principles of the proposed measure, Dr. Guthrie lent to it his support. Many who knew and trusted him as a social reformer, but who knew nothing of the scope of the Bill, became its supporters solely from the belief they entertained that he would favour nothing but what was beneficial for the nation at large. He was at this time in constant communication with the Government on the subject. As showing the value they attached to his support, we find the Lord Advocate writing in April 1854 to him: 'I must press upon you the importance—to you I may not say the duty—of giving decided utterance to your real opinions. You have only to make one of your manly, fearless addresses, and you will confirm more waverers in the House [of Commons] than all the Voluntaries can shake. . . . Depend upon it, names weigh far more than numbers up here, and you and Adam Black would single-handed make all the agitators kick the beam.'

But in the Bill in question, as well as in the six other measures dealing with National Education in Scotland, which were introduced into Parliament between 1854 and 1872, the principle which ranged all the sectarian differences of opinion in the country upon either the one side or the other was the presence or the absence of religious teaching in the schools. Two extreme parties existed, one of which stood out for no Bill which did not enact the use of the Bible and Shorter Catechism by express statute; the other would oppose any Bill which made allusion to the teaching of religion at all. Between these poles of opinion were grouped other differences, and the problem was how to reconcile them. Nor was the matter settled until the great Education Act of 1872.

Dr. Guthrie took an active part in preparing the way for Lord Advocate Young's Bill of 1872, which is still, with some modifications, our educational system of to-day. In keeping with Dr. Guthrie's liberality was it that, in order to avoid giving offence to any phase of faith whatsoever,

he should warmly support the provision that religious instruction, without being either 'prescribed or proscribed' by the Act, should be left to the decision of local boards. His heart's desire was to see the Bible read in the schools, and he knew that to secure this something of less moment had to be conceded. Never did his practical sagacity make itself more manifest. So valuable was his opinion considered, and so urgent were many official and private friends of the Act that he should make some definite expression of his views regarding it, that within ten months of his death he had to yield to their importunity, and in his famous 'Letter to my Fellow-Countrymen' pronounce a warm eulogy upon it:—

'Can any man in his senses believe that the Bible-reading, Bible-loving people of Scotland will thrust the Word of God out of their schools? Lend your hearty support to a Bill which, conserving all that is good in our parish schools, will carry the blessing of education into every mining district, dark lane of the city, and lone Highland glen.'

Fit words are these to close the record of Dr. Guthrie's labours on behalf of Scottish Education! His words have come true. The Bible has not been banished from our schools, through religious teaching therein being left an optional matter in the hands of the local School Boards. On the contrary, this wise provision has reconciled sectarian factions, and brought peace and harmony where formerly discord and animosity prevailed.

With such catholic sympathies as Dr. Guthrie possessed, to say of him that he was the friend of Foreign and of Continental Missions may savour of a truism. Still more will this seem so if we extend the remark to Home Missions. The 'Evangelist' of 'ragged schools,' the man whose scheme had brought more light into wretched young lives than any other—his interest in Home Missions may be taken as a thing in course. When labouring in the Cowgate and in his territorial charge of 'Old St. John's,' he was a 'home missionary' in the noblest sense of the word.[1]

[1] See his *Sketches of the Cowgate.*

Nor when circumstances forced him out of 'slum work' pure and simple, to become the eloquent pastor of Free St. John's, neither few nor seldom were the glances of half-regretful yearning he cast across the street, at that sphere wherein his whole heart had been centred. From the day he set foot in Edinburgh to begin Dr. Chalmers's great territorial scheme, until his latest hour of life, Dr. Guthrie was an intense believer in the value of Home Mission work. By voice and pen, from pulpit and platform, in presbyteries and assemblies, in books and journals, he continued to fight the battle of the evangelisation of the masses. In nearly every volume he wrote, he impressed the fact upon his readers that the world must be won for Christ, by bread for the body as well as bread for the soul.

But in Foreign and Continental Missions the intensity of his interest has not been so generally recognised. The grandeur of his services in other fields has eclipsed the lustre of his labours in these, although his work on behalf of the Waldenses was such that his name to this day is blessed by the inhabitants of the Vaudois Valleys. The extent of his sympathies seemed only limited by the field of Christian missionary effort. Soon after he went to Edinburgh, as we have seen, so keen was his interest in the schemes of the apostolic Duff for the evangelisation and education of the teeming millions of Hindostan, that he contemplated accepting the offers of the latter to proceed thither. Only the consciousness of heathenism nearer home and the representations of Chalmers as to its paramount claims upon him led him to decline. But from that hour his heart was stirred within him whenever the cause of Foreign Missions was mentioned, and some of his finest speeches were delivered in their support. After the Disruption his enthusiasm seemed to wax rather than to wane. In 1845 we find him announcing a donation through himself, from a wealthy Wesleyan friend, of £500 in aid of the Foreign Missions schemes of the Free Church. At Dr. Duff's second visit home in 1852 we notice from contemporary press reports that the great missionary was

speaking in Free St. John's on his favourite theme, and that Dr. Guthrie 'also gave an address.' In his Moderator's opening sermon in 1863, when closing his year of office, he made a stirring reference to Foreign Missions and their importance to a Church, saying in words that have often been repeated, 'Foreign Missions beget Home Missions.' After his release from active ministerial work, he seemed to find a joy in doing all he could to aid in the spread of the Gospel in foreign countries.[1]

In Continental Missions his chief claim to the gratitude of all Christian people was in his advocacy of the needs of the Waldensian Church, whose bitter persecutions at the hands of Rome he could never contemplate without keen indignation. Though in the second General Assembly of the Free Church he had been named as one of the committee appointed to correspond with foreign churches, it was 1856 before he was able to take a trip abroad. At that time he visited Switzerland and the Alps in company with Dr. Cunningham, Principal of the New College—a tour which lived in his memory, roseate-tinted, for the remainder of his life. Chamounix, Interlaken, Fribourg, Lucerne, Brussels, and Ghent were all in turn visited, and the pleasure he felt is to be estimated by his remark to any one who said he had not seen the Alps: 'Not seen Switzerland! then save up as much money as will take you there. You will get a new revelation of the Creator's glory. I say to everybody, See the Alps before you die.'

In 1861 he returned to Switzerland to take part in the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at Geneva. Here he had the satisfaction of preaching in the city of John Calvin. From Geneva he went to Sion in the Rhone valley, thence to Zermatt, and finally to the celebrated châlet on the Riffelberg, after which the party returned slowly home. Then in 1864 he travelled through Brittany, making Quimper his headquarters. With many French Protestants he was on terms of friendship—the Monods; MM. Fisch, Bersier, Bost; Professors St. Hilaire and

[1] See *Sundays Abroad*, one of the most delightful of his works.

La Harpe; Drs. Merle D'Aubigné and Gaussen. While he journeyed on the Continent to admire its exquisite scenery and to visit with delight its churches, its picture-galleries, and its objects of antiquarian and historic interest, he liked to have a definite end in view. Hence he often travelled as a deputy to some of the Continental Protestant Churches.

It was in this capacity he first visited the Church of the Waldensian Valleys—a Church which henceforward he was to champion from pulpit, platform, and press. In 1865, when he first visited the Vaudois, he was so charmed that he wrote home:—

> 'This land of most beautiful and sublime scenery has associations and memories surpassing in moral grandeur those, perhaps, of any country on earth, save the Holy Land. No Church has ever suffered for the truth or maintained it as this has done. With breathing-times, the Waldenses were persecuted often to the death for nearly four hundred years.'

But his sympathy was not confined to words. On his return home he became one of the founders of the Waldensian Aid Society; and from 1868 to 1872, accompanied at one time by Dr. Revel, President of the Waldensian College at Florence, and later by Signor Prochet of Genoa, he itinerated through a large part of England and Scotland pleading the cause of the Vaudois Church. Mainly through his exertions some thousands of pounds were raised annually. Drawing-room meetings in the houses of the nobility and society leaders, where he could speak freely regarding the urgent need for help, became a valuable means of extending a knowledge of the movement. Amongst the last addresses—nay, I believe the very last—he made, was one in aid of this cause at the house of his friend, Mr. D. Matheson, Queen's Gate, London. No wonder that when a champion so powerful lay dying, 'fervent prayer was offered for his recovery in every parish in the Waldensian Valleys, and that his death was mourned as that of a well-loved friend.'[1]

[1] Remark made by Dr. Stewart of Leghorn, Moderator of the Free Church, when referring to Dr. Guthrie's death.

Nor was his interest in the Colonial and American Churches less keen. In 1857 he was urged to visit Australia, and the people 'by the long wash of Australasian seas' rejoiced to learn he was to be with them. But health reasons debarred him, and to the regret both of himself and the Antipodean Churches he was unable to go. So, too, as regards America. Though he had many friends there, notably Drs. Alexander, Adams, Cuyler, Talmage, and others whose invitations were frequent and pressing, he never made out the journey. In 1867, along with the late Principal Fairbairn and the Rev. J. Wells, Dr. Guthrie was deputed by the General Assembly of the Free Church to represent them to the Presbyterian Churches of America. A mighty reception awaited him on the other side. On the 6th April 1867, accompanied by his wife and son Charles,[1] he embarked on the Cunard steamer *Scotia*, bound from Liverpool to New York. But after two days of the voyage had been passed, he was obliged to leave the vessel at Queenstown, the anguish he had endured in the interim having been intense. As the *Memoir* puts it, 'the peculiar heart affection from which he suffered made the air of a ship's cabin at night intolerable to him.' Disappointed though he was, he felt that to persevere would, in all probability, be to permanently cripple even that measure of health he then enjoyed.

And so it came about that Dr. Guthrie was able to visit the Church neither in Australasia nor America. But as though his heart went out to these corners of the vineyard all the more because he was unable to visit them, his interest in the Colonial and American Presbyterian Churches continued unabated to the end. When he heard in 1872 of the growth of the Presbyterian system all over America, by churches all of which looked back fondly to the 'land of the mountain and the flood' as their common parent, he said with a tremor in his voice, 'Worthy daughters of a worthy mother—many daughters have done virtuously but ye have excelled them all.'

[1] Now Mr. C. J. Guthrie, Q.C., Advocate at the Scottish Bar.

That period of Dr. Guthrie's life from 1855 to 1864, when his active ministerial labours were brought to a close, may be said to have been, in many respects, the most richly beneficent of all others in great and manifold acts of religious and philanthropic achievement. In the epoch of his life lying between his fifty-second and sixty-first years, or, in other words, just before his final break-down in 1864, he appeared, as it were, to have reached the maturity of his gifts, the supreme range of his broadly human sympathetic affinities. Late in developing as his genius was, its full efflorescence came when already he was well up in years.

During the epoch in question, his fame became world-wide, through the catholic character of his labours. The agencies that sought his aid were almost as varied and manifold as human nature itself. His eloquence was now admitted, even by so competent a critic as the *Times*, to be unsurpassed in Britain. It had lost the ornate—sometimes the over-ornate—exuberance of earlier years, and had become more tempered by reason and judicious taste. His best friends had to admit that of old his platform oratory sometimes took the bit in its teeth, and in the excitement of the moment sacrificed common-sense to a witty epigram, a telling story, or a brilliant *bon-mot*. But in those later years, the lucid lamp of his sagacious judgment burned supreme over all. His oratory was now less the efflux of strong feeling than the reflection of his lifelong experience. The effect, therefore, became increasingly powerful, as well as increasingly permanent. Chalmers alone can be said to have excelled him as an orator, but that was rather due to the fact of the peerless intellect of the former, ranging as it did with giant stride over wellnigh the entire realm of human knowledge, impressing into the service of his eloquence the aid of a culture almost universal. Chalmers appealed to the emotions through the intellect, Guthrie through the imagination. The former overpowered by the lightning flashes of his superb mind, the latter by the pictorial

vividness of his fancy. Guthrie exhibited many points of resemblance to the great French pulpit orators Bourdaloue and Massillon. The subject of our study possessed in rich measure Bourdaloue's gift of choosing the aptest language to express his meaning—a quality wherein the great Jesuit preacher stands unrivalled among the orators of his nation. But he also shared Massillon's power of infusing the most exquisite pathos and a strain of the subtlest sympathy into his sermons and speeches, without any seeming premeditation or design. Whitefield's vehemence and Boanergic energy he did not much affect, nor had his style of pulpit oratory any resemblance to the cultured grace and sinuous smoothness of the late Canon Liddon. In fact, Dr. Guthrie's eloquence was so entirely a part of himself, and not a mere accomplishment, that when asked by an English clergyman to give him some hints as to the improvement of his pulpit speaking, the Doctor replied, 'My dear sir, I know no more about oratory or eloquence than I do about navigation. You might just as well ask me to teach you how to steer a ship. I write or think out my sermon; I carefully impress it on my mind, and then I pray God to enable me to deliver it to His praise and glory.' What the *Times* said of his oratory sums up the whole matter:—

'Dr. Guthrie is essentially an orator, and his skill lies precisely in the most wonderful but also the most evanescent faculty of the orator—in the art of passionately appealing to the imagination rather than to the reason. His effect on his hearers is magical. Once within his circle we cannot but listen, and as we listen we love the man. He does not argue—he describes, he luxuriates in description; he makes his description fascinating by the feeling which he throws into it in a gesture, in a look, in a pause, in a tone, as well as in glowing words and thrilling sentences.'[1]

Adequately to realise the numerous points at which his sympathies touched the manifold life of society and of the churches—for his energies were never confined to his own—one has to select a sample year out of those 'nine,' and

[1] *Times*, Jan. 2, 1858.

pass in review the work he achieved in it. In doing so we must keep before our recollection that at this time he was the collegiate minister of one of the largest congregations in Edinburgh; that he never neglected any item of pastoral work; that he maintained a constant supervision over his great scheme—the Ragged Schools; and that he was the magnet that drew many strangers to Edinburgh, to most of whom courtesy and hospitality had to be shown. Yet that man, during these nine years from 1855-64, achieved annually such a vast record of work as to make even the most diligent despair. Of a truth he exemplified the aptness of the saying, that 'it is always the busiest man who has the most time.' His year of Moderatorship in particular was one when the burden he sustained was simply Atlantean.

It was in 1862 that his Church decided to confer upon him the only honour at her disposal, and, because the only one, on that account ranking with the highest—the Moderatorship. The selection was unanimous, and was received with an unbroken chorus of approval by the public. He made a courteous and dignified 'chief,' firm in maintaining the discipline of the chair, yet exhibiting consummate tact and common-sense, in which his ready humour and playful satire were not without their use in restraining excited ecclesiastical disputants. The Earl of Dalhousie, in seconding the nomination made by Dr. Candlish, said, 'In honouring Thomas Guthrie, this Court will confer honour on itself.' The *Caledonian Mercury* said: 'It must be regarded as a happy circumstance that a divine so eminently distinguished for broad catholicity of spirit should this year have presided over the Free Church Assembly. There is, if we may so characterise it, a humanity about the Christianity of Guthrie—as there ought to be about the Christianity of every man—that commends him to all sects and classes of British society.'

Long was his year of Moderatorship remembered. He had followed in the chair three of the most outstanding —Chalmers excepted—of the great fathers of the Free

Church—Cunningham, Buchanan, and Candlish. But without exaggeration may the remark be made, that the three addresses delivered by Dr. Guthrie during his term of office were amongst the most remarkable in the history of the Church. That famous passage in his closing address, so full of broad humanitarian sympathy, I cannot refrain from quoting:—

'There are three powers—the Press, the Platform, and the Pulpit; and if the talent and genius of the country go into the first two, it will be a bad day for the Church and for the country, when our pulpits are proverbial for dulness, our Sabbaths for weariness, and when the highest of all professions has the smallest of men to fill it; when the power of moulding public opinion is gone from the pulpit. That will be a calamity to us; and I call on the Free Church, and the people of every denomination, to avert that calamity, and never to starve the pulpit of the Christian Church. . . . Did our youth some years ago leave titles, estates, luxurious mansions, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and brides, and throw themselves on the shores of the Black Sea, and on frost and famine, and pestilence, and the iron shower of death before the walls of Sebastopol? Did the highest and the noblest of the youth of our country do that, and shall piety blush before patriotism? Shall Jesus Christ call in vain on our youth for less costly sacrifices? I trust that the words I have uttered will stir up children of genius and talent to give themselves to the ministry of the Word. I have served my Master now for more than thirty years: I am grown grey in His service, but I can say that even when I saw how much richer I might have been in other professions, and when I felt the greatest hardships of my life, I never regretted my choice. I have been a poor servant; I have a thousand infirmities on my head, and sins, . . . but, fathers and brethren, poor servant as I have been, I'll stand up this day for my Master and say, "Christ has been a blessed and a gracious Master to me." To Him, with confidence, fathers and brethren, I now commend you all.'

Alas! little did those who heard those eloquent sentences in the Moderator's closing address foresee that when the Assembly of 1864 met, one of its items of business would be, to consider the retirement, through ill-health, of her brilliant son, and to give assent to arrangements that would close the lips, as one of her regular ministers, of Dr. Thomas Guthrie.

CHAPTER XI

FINAL YEARS OF ACTIVITY—FROM MOUTH TO PEN

In October 1863, Dr. Guthrie wrote: 'I have arrived slowly at the opinion that I must get out of harness. More than any supposed or knew, but those within the walls of my own house, my work has been a toil to me, and one which is getting heavier each year. Now I am forced to call a halt. *My heart has got bad again.*'

The ominous intimation contained in the last sentence explained all. The great preacher was a doomed man. Guthrie's power, as I have already indicated, lay in his electric energy and enthusiasm. Whatsoever he did, he had to do it with his whole heart, soul, strength, and mind. That was all very good, but meantime the engine of his ceaseless activity was exhausting his reserve force, and putting a strain on the heart no organ could long endure. The opinion of Sir Andrew Clark showed that he had taken, in 1847, a very grave view of Mr. Guthrie's case; yet, on the understanding that he was 'to take things easy,' he had been allowed to resume work. As soon preach moderation to a tornado and expect it to listen to you, as to enjoin on Dr. Guthrie, to diminish his expenditure of vital energy in the discharge of his duties. If he worked at all, he had to work with his whole heart, and at the highest possible pressure.

Even his medical advisers, however, had no conception how ill he really was until a minute examination was made. Professor Sir James Simpson, Professor Miller, and Dr. Warburton Begbie all agreed that cardiac disease of a very aggravated type was present, due to overwork, and that

absolute rest and withdrawal from public work was imperative. In fact, Dr. Begbie, on completing his examination, said that such was the state of his pastor's heart's action, that the wonder to him was he had not seen him drop down in the pulpit.

Sorrowfully Dr. Guthrie accepted the intimation that his work as a preacher was over, and that the scene of his oratorical triumphs would know him no more. In a letter addressed to the 'Congregation of Free St. John's,' he took leave of them, in terms that brought tears to many eyes, and which can scarcely be perused even now without emotion. To the congregation it came like a thunderclap. The decade immediately preceding his retirement had been so filled with notable achievements on the part of their minister, had been so crowded with splendid projects for the amelioration of the lot of stricken humanity, that his people, with reason, looked forward to many years of pastoral labours amongst them. Now all was at an end. Can they be blamed if, with regretful grudging, they said, 'Had he done less for others, whose only desire was to see how much they could make by him, he would have had many more years among us, who love him for himself alone.'

The parting was a sad one. Although he was prepared to have made his resignation final in every sense of the word, and thus left the congregation free to choose their own course as regards the future, they would not accept such a proposal. As pastor *emeritus* he retained a nominal connection with Free St. John's to the day of his death. Though no longer receiving any allowance from the congregational funds, an arrangement was come to whereby he was enabled to draw his 'dividend' from the Sustentation Fund of the Free Church, as well as to retain his seat as a member of the Edinburgh Presbytery. Some slight misunderstandings, arising out of trivialities, for a time created a little friction between a few members of the kirk-session and himself, in which, unfortunately, his colleague, Dr. Hanna, became involved. But such a

contretemps, when smoothed away, only evinced how deep and sincere was the affection on both sides lying under any apparent estrangement. By December 1865, Dr. Guthrie could write to Dr. Hanna: 'I propose to call on you at ten o'clock to-morrow—not that we may discuss or even touch on the past, but, burying it in oblivion, resume our intercourse as of old.'

Situated as he was, however, the question now came to be, how was the minister *emeritus* of Free St. John's to live? He had never been a man who could save money. Whilst he had an abhorrence of debt, and always made his income suffice for his wants, he had not been in a position to lay by much for what is figuratively known as 'a rainy day.' His family was large and their education was expensive. He had, moreover, literally obeyed the Scriptural injunction, 'Use hospitality one to another without grudging,' and his table had been almost an open one 'to the household of faith.' His income, never more than £550 per annum, was therefore no more than sufficient for his needs. If, then, he declined to receive aught from the congregation, where was his support to come from? There is a delightful verse in the metrical version of Psalm xxxiv. 10, which has always seemed to me one of the most quaintly satisfying of promises in all Scripture—

'The lions young may hungry be,
And they may lack their food;
But they that truly seek the Lord
Shall not lack any good.'

This was the position of Dr. Guthrie. The God of his fathers, who had provided for him and his hitherto, would not leave them to want. And so circumstances proved.

As though in anticipation of his retirement from active work in the pulpit, a far-seeing and sagacious London publisher, Mr. Alexander Strahan, had offered to establish a high-class religious periodical, to which the best writers would be asked to contribute, on the condition that Dr. Guthrie agreed to assume the editorship. As the contents were intended for Sabbath perusal, the name proposed to

be given to the publication was the *Sunday Magazine.* For a time he hesitated. Though he had already published several works whose popularity evinced that he could 'shpake as well wid his pin as wid his tongue,' as an enthusiastic Irish admirer said, he felt a diffidence in entering on a sphere for which he had passed through no preparatory training. But when he was assured that his old friend Dr. Blaikie would be associated with him as assistant editor, and that the publisher himself would act as 'sub-editor,' he realised that here was the provision made for him by the Almighty Father whose bounty feeds the sparrows, and at the same time gives bread to the sons of men.

Dr. Guthrie had already written a good deal in religious periodicals, especially in *Good Words*, under the editorship of his friend Dr. Norman Macleod, and his contributions were eagerly sought after, for their picturesque brightness, their apophthegmatic pithiness, their world-wise common-sense wedded to their 'other-world-wise' spirituality.[1] He had also, in addition to his *Three Pleas* on behalf of Ragged Schools, subsequently reissued, as we have seen, in one volume, under the title *Seedtime and Harvest*, published in 1855, his *Gospel in Ezekiel* —a volume of sermons dealing with the suggestions of Messianic Advent and Atonement as given in Ezekiel xxxvi. 16, 38, and constituting a rich magazine of Christian doctrine and stimulating Christian practice, couched in that vivid style so familiar to his auditors. In 1857 appeared *The City—its Sins and Sorrows*, a series of discourses on the vice and misery present in our large cities, and by its powerfully realistic pictures and almost Dantean delineation of the horrors of profligacy and destitution, forming a strong argument in favour of Home Mission work. In the following year came his third volume, *Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints*, as

[1] I do not take into account the numerous 'isolated' or 'single' sermons and speeches which were published at the request of his congregation or friends. Our attention is directed only to his 'books.'

illustrated in a series of discourses from St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians—discourses replete with exquisite gems of religious thought in a setting of rich poetic diction. These were succeeded by *The Way to Life* and *Speaking to the Heart*, the former a series of twenty-one sermons on a variety of topics, but all dealing with the doctrine of Redemption; the latter consisting of twelve not over-long 'essays' (rather than discourses), on subjects of cardinal importance to every child of humanity, who has the faintest jot of realisation as to his moral and spiritual responsibilities.

These works, with a short 'Life' of Robert Flockhart the Edinburgh Street Preacher, prefixed to the *Autobiography* of that humble but highly honoured servant of the Saviour, were all the volumes published by Dr. Guthrie prior to his assuming the editorship of the *Sunday Magazine.* Many editions of them had been sold. People who had never heard the Free Church 'Chrysostom' preach, were thus able to enjoy his picturesque presentation of current Christian doctrines in their own dwellings, and yet feel some touch at least of that mysterious witchery he exercised over all who came within the radius of his influence.

When we glance at the preliminary prospectus of the *Sunday Magazine*, and note the somewhat ambitious rôle the editor marks out for his periodical—

> 'to make the Sunday a more pleasant as well as a more profitable day to thousands; to make our magazine plain to common people without being vulgar, interesting to cultivated minds without being unintelligible to men of ordinary education; to make good our entry into cottages as well as drawing-rooms; to be read by people of all Christian denominations; to be of no class, of no sect, of no party, but belonging to all, and profitable to all'—

one feels inclined to smile at his naïve sanguineness. But time proved the truth of his anticipations. Strahan had rightly judged that 'edited by Dr. Guthrie' would be an announcement to conjure with. The success of the *Magazine* was phenomenal even with such a rival as *Good*

Words in the field, and the sale of the early numbers exceeded 100,000.[1]

The reason of this success was that Dr. Guthrie, besides securing the best writers in all the several departments as contributors, wrote largely himself in the pages of the periodical. To its columns he gave of his best, and in many of his letters of that period he expresses intense joy that when the pulpit had been closed to him as a sphere of labour, the press had been opened up, where he could plead for the schemes so dear to his heart. He soon caught the journalistic readiness of composition and the knack of uniting rapidity of production with a high standard of excellence. During the eight years of his editorship, scarce a number appeared that had not some contribution of his own in it. He wrote the opening article in the first number. Ten days before his death he corrected the proofs of *The Leper's Lesson*, which was published when he had really passed away. Many of his books appeared first in serial form in the *Sunday Magazine*—such as *Man and the Gospel* (1865), *The Angels' Song* (1865), *The Parables* (1866), *Our Father's Business* (1867), *Out of Harness* (1867), *Early Piety* (1868), *Studies of Character* (1868-70), *Sundays Abroad* (1871)—to be published afterwards in book-form.

The audience he addressed each month in this way was enormous, and his popularity never waned until the end. Each of the volumes named above is characterised by all Dr. Guthrie's peculiar eloquence, his minuteness and accuracy of observation, his spirituality, his lofty moral grandeur and power of ethical stimulation, his catholic benevolence and his love of his fellow-men. The more one reads of Guthrie, the more do we realise the fact already alluded to in this sketch, that if he was great as a preacher he was even greater as a man. The *Sunday Magazine* proved a *blessing* to many in the

[1] Dr. Macleod and Dr. Guthrie were never *rivals* in the real sense of the word. They assisted each other, and were firm friends to the last.

highest and best sense of the word, and from 1865 to 1873 Thomas Guthrie's personality was impressed on every page of it.

Dr. Guthrie was late in life in discovering the literary faculty he possessed. The *First Plea for Ragged Schools* he regarded as owing its success to the intrinsic interest attaching to the subject. But when the *Gospel in Ezekiel*, *The City—its Sins and Sorrows*, and finally *Christ the Inheritance of the Saints*, had all proved works of conspicuous popularity from a publisher's point of view, facts were too strong for his incredulity, and he was obliged to admit that perhaps after all, God might have work for him to do with his pen.[1] From that hour he began to take greater pains in polishing his periods and touching up his style. Significant is it that his latest work, *Sundays Abroad*, was as successful as any of its predecessors, proving that his popularity was of no evanescent quality. To this day 'Guthrie's Works' are in demand by those who desire that pure spiritual food which is neither highly spiced with the 'ologies' nor piquantly seasoned with the 'isms,' but presents to death-deserving sinners, in all sincerity and truth, the cardinal doctrine of our faith, that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.'[2]

One of the most remarkable characteristics of Dr. Guthrie was the perennial freshness of his sympathies. To the end of life he never lost the faculty of interesting himself in any new movement that promised to benefit his fellow-men either temporally or spiritually. The interest taken by him in the question of Union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians is a case in point. We have seen how pronounced an Anti-Voluntary he was, when minister of Arbirlot, and how

[1] 'I wonder Dr. Guthrie did not discover his literary faculty twenty years before he did,' said the late Dr. Tweedie; 'if he had, his usefulness would have been trebled.'

[2] 'In both his pulpit work and his books Dr. Guthrie is rather the divine than the theologian.'—Rev. Pastor Gavazzi.

he got to grips with 'Potterrow John' himself—the redoubtable Ajax of Voluntaryism—over the assaults made by the latter on the State Kirk. Many persons have contemptuously asked what dependence could be placed on the views of a man who in 1834 and 1838 spoke of Voluntaryism with contempt as 'that blessed Voluntary system,' yet in 1843 was counselling Dr. Macfarlan to see to it no bar was inserted into the Free Church standards that would preclude Union with the Secession Churches.

But those who sneeringly made this remark failed to perceive that Dr. Guthrie's position, in place of lying exposed to the alternative charge of being either illogical or vacillating, was really the result of rational development along the lines of the very same principles he had championed against the Voluntaries before the Disruption. Note what he says in his Moderatorial (Closing) Address in 1862 :—

'I am for union with the United Presbyterian Church ; I am prepared to welcome that Church to-morrow with all my heart, and I wish that these doors were now thrown open and I saw them come marching in. *I believe I shall live and die holding the principle of an Establishment*, but the United Presbyterian Church *does not ask me to give it up*, . . . but is willing to make it a debatable ground on which we shall agree to differ. *I believe our successors will not hold the high Established principle that we do* ; but I got it with my mother's milk, and I am to carry it with me to the grave.'

Where, then, is there illogicalness in the position above assumed? It constitutes only another proof of Guthrie's catholicity of sentiment, while the prophecy regarding the views of successors has been curiously but absolutely fulfilled in the unanimity prevailing in the Free Church with respect to the felicitous Union now pending[1] with the United Presbyterian Church.

As regards the former Union movement, which, taking its rise formally in the year 1862, was protracted by

[1] May 1900.

regrettable differences of opinion until 1873, when the negotiations were broken off, Dr. Guthrie supported the proposed incorporating coalescence of the two bodies with all his wonted enthusiasm. Sectarianism was detestable to him, and he endeavoured by voice, by pen, and by personal influence to do all he could to promote the contemplated change. In addition to the *ex cathedra* references to the subject in his Moderator's Addresses, during the 'Ten Years' Coquetting,' as the period of the negotiations has been termed, he delivered several speeches in favour of Union, and moreover published a pamphlet entitled *An Unspoken Speech*, or *Plea for Union*,[1] which, by its wise moderation, its calm judgment, its clear-sighted reasoning and perception of the real principles at issue, produced a profound impression throughout the Church. As is remarked by his sons in the *Memoir*—'Dr. Guthrie would, even at the risk of a partial secession from his own Church, have gone through with the Union on which his heart was set. "It clouds the evening of my days," he said, "to think that we cannot, while retaining our differences, agree to bury our quarrels in a grave where no mourner stands by."' His hopes ran high that in the course of time the opposition to the Union would diminish. Alas! he died while matters were still in a state of uncertainty and indecision. Although he doubtless would have regretted that incorporating Union was not achieved, yet for the measure of progress accomplished in the historic General Assembly of 1873 he would devoutly have given thanks; for to him, as to all advocates of Union, the passing of 'The Mutual Eligibility Law' would have presented itself as laying a secure foundation for future incorporation. The careful sifting of principles, rendered necessary in order to prepare the basis for 'Mutual Eligibility,' proved the oneness of the negotiating Churches, and demonstrated

[1] Published by A. and C. Black in 1867. Consult also his speeches at the 'Centenary Services at the Wallace Green Church' (Berwick-on-Tweed), November 12 and 13, 1871.—*Berwick Advertiser* Office.

beyond a shadow of doubt that the United Presbyterian Church held, as substantially as the Free, the great doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, and the responsibility of civil rulers with respect to religion and the Church of Christ.[1]

To the last, Dr. Guthrie hoped against hope to see Union consummated in his lifetime; and among the last letters he dictated were those to his friends, Dr. Candlish, Dr. Blaikie, Dr. C. J. Brown, earnestly enjoining upon them not to leave aught undone to bring about a consummation so devoutly to be desired.

I have designedly left to the end of this chapter any reference to a circumstance which afforded an admirable gauge of the feelings entertained towards Dr. Guthrie by the community at large. After his resignation of the active pastorship of St. John's had been accepted with deep regret by the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh, and when the fact became known that he received nothing from the congregation, a movement was set on foot to place his circumstances on such a basis, that the man to whom the Free Church owed so much might be freed from all financial anxieties. Already, at a period earlier in life—to wit, after his exertions on behalf of the Manse Fund—a suggestion had been made to present him with some token of the gratitude of so many in the Church, for his mighty exertions to ensure their comfort. But as soon as Dr. Guthrie heard of the proposal to collect money to purchase a manse for the 'Big Beggar Man' of the Manse Fund, he wrote to the Convener of the Committee appointed to collect subscriptions, begging that the scheme might be dropped. His reasons were as noble as they were generous, viz. that the time was one of great public depression, and that many of the

[1] In some of his letters to his friend, the Rev. D. Cairns of Stitchel, the brother of Scotland's noble son, the Rev. Principal John Cairns, D.D., Dr. Guthrie expressed himself in terms of great sorrow at any opposition to the Union being shown. He also wrote to my father—who was opposed to the Union—begging him to reconsider his position.

Church's schemes were languishing.[1] Not until 1856 would he allow any movement of the kind to be commenced, and then he only consented when he learned that many of his fellow-ministers were deeply hurt that he would consent to receive no expression of their gratitude. For the last seventeen years of his life, therefore, he occupied a villa[2] in a suburb in Edinburgh, one of whose attractions in his eyes was that part of the purchase-money was a thank-offering to him from his country brethren.

The scheme, however, which took shape after his resignation, was of an altogether different character. To it the whole community was invited to subscribe. When he retired from active service, the entire Church mourned, and he was followed by the sorrowful benedictions of hundreds—nay, thousands—who loved the preacher much, but the man more. The conviction was felt, however, that the circumstances of the man, to whom not only his own Church but the community at large owed so much, were far from being in a satisfactory state. To relieve his mind from the apprehensions of a poverty-haunted old age, and yet do so in a way to prevent his sturdy Scots independence from rising in arms at any suggestion of charity, was the problem before the promoters. His letter to the congregation had made the matter clear that his stoppage of active duties only referred to permanent ministerial labours, and that he hoped in the new sphere of periodical literature still further to serve his Master. Such a step was, of course, more or less experimental, and the fact remained to be seen whether that health which incessant activity for a period exceeding thirty-five years had undermined, would endure the unwonted strain put upon it.

On the grounds, then, of relieving his mind from all financial cares, while he sought for convalescence, either

[1] Business of all kinds had been paralysed by the effects of the railway crisis in the previous year (1847).

[2] That historic villa has now been swept away to afford space for the erection of huge tenements.

complete or comparative, and while he still strove to do what work the Lord laid to his hand, the Committee, composed of men of all creeds, classes, and conditions, ranging from the Earls of Dalhousie, Shaftesbury, Carlisle, Kintore, and Southesk, the Lords Bishops of London and St. David's, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, down to humble clerks and tradesmen, asked his acceptance on February 21, 1865, of a 'Testimonial of Admiration and Esteem' consisting of £5000, accompanied also by a silver tea and coffee service.

The most gratifying feature in connection with the subscriptions to this 'Testimonial' was that they came, practically speaking, from all ranks in life, all ages, and wellnigh all parts of the world. Dr. Guthrie had no difficulty, therefore, in accepting a testimonial the subscribers to which were of a character so cosmopolitan. There had been previous expressions of gratitude and regard tendered to Drs. Cunningham and Candlish. They had been largely promoted by Free Churchmen, and given to the recipients as Free Church leaders. But Dr. Guthrie's 'Testimonial' had nothing to do with either Churches or Chapels. It represented the most catholic and cosmopolitan tribute of esteem a Scottish Dissenting minister had ever received.

In presence of a brilliant gathering, representative of the nobility, wealth, arts, science, and fashion of 'the grey metropolis of the north,' held in the Royal Hotel on February 20, 1865, and presided over by the Lord Provost, the 'Testimonial' was handed over to Dr. Guthrie. His reply was dignified and impressive. In the spirit wherein it was offered, the testimonial was accepted. 'Next to the approbation of God, of my blessed Master, and of my own conscience,' he said, 'there is nothing on which I set so high a value as the assurance this testimonial warrants me to entertain, that I have won a place in the hearts of other Christians besides those of my own denomination.'[1]

[1] See report of presentation in *Scotsman* and *Daily Review* of February 21, 1865.

Of this feeling in the hearts of all classes in the community, from the highest to the lowest, he received many evidences during the remaining years of his life. Reports of illness drew inquiries from castle and cottage alike, from our gracious Sovereign as the highest lady in the land, to the Ragged-School children whom, when none cared for, he loved and cherished as a father. Conspicuous also was the sentiment at the time of the marriage of the Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne in 1871, when, alone among Scots Dissenting clergymen, Dr. Guthrie received an invitation to the ceremony, and had the honour of being presented to the Queen. This may have been due in some degree to his lifelong friendship with the Duke and Duchess of Argyll—a friendship so close, so sincere, so based on mutual regard and admiration, as to lead His Grace after Dr. Guthrie's death to write to the sorrowing widow a letter of sympathy as noble in its sentiments as it was touching in its sorrow :—

> 'I need not tell you,' he said, 'that we all quite *loved* him, for a nobler nature there never was. This was also the feeling of our dear mother the late Duchess of Sutherland, whose nature was one thoroughly to appreciate your husband's.'

But I prefer to see in it, from Her Majesty's subsequent solicitude after his health when already the Death Angel was hovering over him, that desire to distinguish the meritorious with marks of her appreciation which has always been characteristic of her who will go down to history as 'Victoria the Good.'

CHAPTER XII

'. . . Last scene of all
That ends this strange eventful history.'

The closing year in the life of those near and dear to us who have passed 'behind the veil,' is always recalled with the bitter-sweet hopelessness of regretful reminiscence. What the Romans termed *desiderium*, and De Quincey 'the yearning too obstinate for one irrecoverable face,'[1] usually centres round the sayings and the doings of the last year in the existence of the departed. 'This time last year our loved one was doing so-and-so.' And thus doth Sorrow feed on Sorrow, until Time, the great Consoler, blunts the edge of its hungry desire.

To the family and friends of Dr. Guthrie, the last year of his life was inexpressibly painful. Early in 1872 he had gone to London with the view of visiting certain of the leading metropolitan charities, in order to write about them in the *Sunday Magazine*. He made his investigations, dined with the Benchers in the Middle Temple, and in reply to the toast of his health delivered one of his raciest and wittiest speeches, which Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn declared was the finest after-dinner speech he had ever heard; preached for the Rev. J. T. Davidson, and addressed an audience of three thousand in the Minor Agricultural Hall, Islington; attended the Thanksgiving Service in St. Paul's for the recovery of the Prince of Wales, and actually wrote that his health was better at that moment than he had ever known it to be.

Yet scarcely had he returned to Edinburgh in March

[1] De Quincey's *Autobiography*, p. 33.

than that season of good health showed signs of being but evanescent. As the *Memoir* says:—

'An undeveloped gastric attack hung about him throughout that month and the one following, which, though it did not prostrate him at the time, predisposed him to the rheumatic affection which as summer advanced aggravated the disease from which he had so long suffered.'

He was able, however, to go to London in May to attend and officiate at the marriage of his fifth son, Alexander, who had come over from San Francisco. His daughter was to be married in June, and the week before that event took place he wrote to a lady friend his plans for the next two years:—

'Some days after Nelly's marriage, which, God willing, comes off next week, we will set off for Lochlee. About the middle of November, Mrs. Guthrie and I set off for Rome: we shall return home about the beginning of May 1873. We then embark in August for Yankeedom, to attend the Evangelical Alliance; and from the Eastern States we'll go to San Francisco, remaining there till March '74. This we propose, ever seeking to remember the good old adage, "Man proposes, but God disposes." If I am spared to carry out these plans, I think I shall then cease my wanderings on the face of the earth, and live quietly *till they carry me home*.'

The 'carrying home' was nearer than he thought! Long before these plans had time to come to fruition in fulfilment, the silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl was broken, and the spirit had returned unto the God who gave it.

The final breakdown in his health took place in June 1872. The day after his daughter's marriage, he attended the funeral of his erstwhile foeman but, later on, his beloved friend, Dr. Norman Macleod—a man who, when he passed from us, left not his equal behind in those peculiar gifts and graces which had distinguished him. Dr. Guthrie, however, was able to proceed to Lochlee—that mountain retreat far from towns, trains, and tourists, in the northern part of his native Forfarshire and in the very heart of the Grampians, where within the solitudes of a deer forest, and on the banks of a small,

deep, but very picturesque mountain lake, buried amidst birch-woods, was the lonely cottage which Lord Dalhousie permitted him from 1849 to 1873 to occupy rent free. No sooner did he reach Inchgrundle than he was laid prostrate.

> 'Here I am in bed,' he wrote, 'under what I may say is new to me, a rheumatic attack. I think I must have got it on the day of Nelly's marriage. Then I was wearied and worn out the next day attending Norman Macleod's funeral, and the result of all these things—*rheums*, which have got worse and worse, refusing to be arrested, far less removed.'

Dr. Guthrie was an enthusiastic as well as an expert angler, for the exercise of which sport Lochlee and its streams offered excellent facilities. He was wont, during spare hours, to pursue the gentle art of Walton, early and late. To a dear friend he wrote in 1849:—

> 'We are all *fishing daft* here: my brother Patrick says that between us all together he cannot get a word of rational conversation—nothing but "trouts, baits, hooks, bobs, drags, flies, dressings, hackle, and tackle." This morning we had our boat grinding off the beach by a little after five, and brought home seven pounds weight of trout.'

Besides herring-sized trout and char, Lochlee also contains the great 'lake trout' of Scotland (*Salmo ferox*), and in learning to play monsters of six, seven, and even eight pounds weight, Dr. Guthrie speedily became one of the most skilful anglers of his day.

He was also fond of riding and driving. He rejoiced to feel 'a good bit of blood' beneath him, and he knew how to gauge the 'points' of a horse as well as most dealers. An eager botanist, likewise, he acquired quite a special acquaintance with the Alpine flora of the Grampians. As his sons state, he would often come in from his walks at Lochlee with a miniature nosegay tastefully arranged, containing saxifrages, trientalis, pinguicula, polygala, rockrose, oakfern, and others of his favourites, maintaining that no Covent Garden bouquet was half so beautiful.

With pain his wife and family perceived that these sports and pursuits, of old his delight, were this year quietly demitted. 'We could not hide from ourselves that much of the wonted *spring* was gone. He planned our various mountain expeditions, but no longer proposed to join us.' In a word, for the first time in twenty-two years, Lochlee had failed to recruit his spent energies, and those around him sorrowfully realised that at last the shadow of an overwhelming sorrow was slowly but surely falling athwart their lives. With the usual interest he displayed in the affairs of the Free Church Continental Mission, he had agreed to supply the preaching-station at Rome, along with two other eminent Scots ministers, Dr. Macgregor of the Church of Scotland and Dr. John Ker of the United Presbyterian Church. He looked forward to a pleasant season in the Eternal City and to brotherly intercourse with his friends from the two other denominations, while many in Rome were on the *qui vive* to hear the preacher-philanthropist whose fame was so world-wide. But long before the date of departure, he had become so much worse, that intimation had to be given of his inability to fulfil his promise.

Deeper grew life's twilight shadows around him. As he was only too evidently becoming worse rather than better at Lochlee, his medical advisers ordered him to Buxton. For a time he rallied there, and hopes were entertained that the cardiac disease had been checked. On his return to Edinburgh in the autumn his friends were overjoyed at the improvement, and with sanguine anticipations that the peace and quietness of Lochlee might complete what Buxton had begun, they saw him return to his Highland retreat.

While there, on Sabbath, 25th August 1872, he preached what proved to be his last sermon. To hear him on that occasion were H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, the Lord Chancellor (Cairns), and many distinguished personages who were for the time the guests of Lord Dalhousie. Side by side they sat with the honest farmers and simple

peasantry of the district—all equally hanging upon the words of the orator, now pouring out his last fervid appeal on behalf of his Master. A brilliant man of letters only recently removed from us, who formed one of the audience on the occasion, stated that all through that impassioned and impressive discourse he could not prevent the thought continually recurring to his mind, that Dr. Guthrie was preaching 'as a dying man to dying men.' His text was taken from Hebrews x. 38: 'The just shall live by faith,' and more than one who heard him said the sermon was one of his best. Like the dying cygnet of old Greek fable, he poured forth his grandest strain at the last. As the *Memoir* remarks, when he descended from the pulpit on that peaceful autumn Sabbath, he had closed his forty years' ministry. Little did those who walked away silent and softened from Lochlee Church that day realise that the mighty voice to which they had just been listening would be heard by them no more. His work was now completed. 'Servant of God, well done!'

On returning to Edinburgh in September, to the surprise of many of his friends he insisted, like Hezekiah, 'on setting his house in order' in view of all contingencies. Though he looked well, and though, humanly speaking, he appeared to have made an excellent recovery, he must have had some premonition that the last turn on the road of life was already in sight. Suddenly, without warning, the blow fell in the last week of September, when an attack of congestion of the lungs prostrated him, and from that time until the 24th February 1873, when the end came, Thomas Guthrie knew he was a dying man. Though the congestion yielded to the skilful remedies applied by his family medical attendant, Dr. W. Cumming, in consultation with Sir Robert Christison and Dr. Warburton Begbie; though he slowly fought his way back to some degree of strength and general improvement, while wellnigh all Scotland, and friends over the length and breadth of Britain, awaited the daily bulletins, Dr. Guthrie himself did not entertain any illu-

sions about his condition. 'The first summons has come, the second only tarries awhile.'

But when 'the second summons' still tarried, and when he actually appeared to be so distinctly gaining in strength as to be able to walk up and down once or twice in front of his house, he seemed to take heart of courage once more, and expressed the hope 'he *might* yet pull through, even though it should be at the price of wintering abroad.'[1] During the dull, grey days of late October and early November the slow progress towards the measure of convalescence hoped or was checked; the digestive system, sympathetically affected by the heart, began to fail, food lost its relish, and again the insidious enemy commenced to make headway. Insomnia supervened, until sleep was only obtainable by means of chloral, and the restlessness inseparable from the disease was accompanied by an indescribable feeling of faintness or sinking, even when sleep was falling upon him, that caused slumber to be regarded with dread in place of delight. 'For four months continuously it was necessary for some of his family and attendants to sit in the room with him through the night, trying to beguile weariness and induce "natural repose" by reading to him in a monotonous tone, or by softly singing a psalm or hymn.'[2]

Nothing impressed those around him at this time more than the courage and serenity wherewith he contemplated the future. The latest symptoms were so fatal in their significance, that to his medical attendants as well as to himself, they conveyed the intimation that only one termination could be looked for. But the constitutional strength of his frame was remarkable, and that saddest of all sights had to be endured by his loving family—the spectacle of a conflict between physical strength and disease. Yet the spirit seemed every day to rise more triumphantly superior to the ills of the flesh. His interest in all that was going on in the world around was unabated.

[1] Letter to Miss Salt, daughter of Sir Titus Salt.
[2] *Memoir*, vol. ii. p. 473.

The daily newspaper was read by him or to him, according as his health permitted, and each item of intelligence, political, ecclesiastical, literary, and scientific discussed with undiminished keenness and attention. His numerous friends who visited him found his intellectual powers as acute as ever, while his spiritual unction and depth of religious fervour seemed rather to increase than to diminish as the vital forces failed. Up to within ten or twelve days of the end he was occupied with his *Autobiography* and the affairs of the *Sunday Magazine*. He manifested deep interest in certain details of Ragged-School work, and both by mouth and by letters he earnestly impressed on the brethren of his own denomination—Drs. Candlish, Hanna, Duff, Blaikie, Brown, etc.—the importance of leaving nothing undone to consummate the Union between the Free and the U.P. Churches. While the body was steadily losing its vital energy, the light of the soul seemed to burn ever more steadily and lucently, until merged at length into the supernal brightness of the perfect day.

After four months of tedious suffering in Edinburgh, as a last resource he was moved, on the 31st January 1873, to the genial climate of St. Leonards-on-Sea, in the hope that, as of old, change of scene might rally the failing powers. A cheerful, sunny house was secured, where he could look out on the blue expanse of waters, and both see and hear the 'multitudinous laughter of the waves.'[1] For some days the novelty of the surrounding scenes stimulated his relaxing energies. He delighted in the daily drives, and, as the *Memoir* informs us, would often stop to chat with the quaint old Sussex fisher-folk of the ancient port of Hastings, and to purchase zoophytes, algæ, and other specimens of natural history prepared by a widow in the village. But after the first few days even the indomitable will of the man, and his hunger after knowledge of all kinds, could no longer battle with the deadly complication of diseases that was sapping his

[1] De Quincey considered that the '*ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα*' referred as much to the *sound* as the *sight* of the waves.

strength. On the 16th February he returned from his drive very much exhausted. As he was being carried into the house from the carriage, he turned his head and cast a wistful, lingering look backwards upon the sunny landscape and seascape around him. 'What a beautiful world our Father has given us!' he murmured. It was his farewell to Nature's scenes he had loved so fondly for these seventy years. When the door closed behind him, he had looked his last on the loveliness of earth.

To all, the fact was now evident that the end was only a question of days. His family were, therefore, summoned and gathered around him. Feeble though the body had become, his mind still kept clear and unclouded. His spiritual state was tranquil and composed, and he joined earnestly and devoutly in the religious exercises which the local clergy of the Anglican, Congregational, and United Presbyterian bodies conducted by his bedside. He remained much in secret prayer also, experiencing evidently great consolation in the thought that however deep might be the guilt of the sinner, the atoning power of the Redeemer was more than sufficient to cancel all. More than once he was heard to ejaculate, 'O Most Mighty and Most Merciful! have compassion on me, once a great sinner, now a great sufferer.' Again and again, too, he repeated those lines of Toplady—

> 'Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to Thy Cross I cling.'

Meantime the intimation of his dangerous condition had been flashed over the length and breadth of the land. Once more, from the highest to the lowest in the social scale of the British community, a wave of sympathetic devotion to the philanthropist who had done so much to succour the most friendless class in our great cities, rolled down towards the peaceful southern watering-place, where he lay fighting his last battle with death. Cheered though he was by the universality of the expressions of sympathy which reached his family and friends, he was likewise

profoundly humbled. 'What have I done to call forth such a tribute as this? All I have done was but a tithe of what I ought to have done.' But from Her Majesty down to the poor London costermonger, whose brother had been rescued by Dr. Guthrie, and whose only manner of testifying his gratitude was to call his trusty donkey 'Dr. Guthrie,' all sections of the community felt that in the dying man there was passing away from earth one of the noblest Britons of his age.

And so the weary conflict went on all through that last week. Not a murmur escaped him. 'What are my pains,' he said on one occasion, 'to those my Saviour endured on Calvary for me?' The only sign that he allowed to escape him of the physical distress through which he was passing, was an ever-increasing longing to be released from the infirm tabernacle of the flesh, that he might see his Lord.

On Admiral Hamilton entering his room a day or two before his death, and remarking, 'Do you know, I think you are looking better, Doctor?' he replied, 'Ah, then, a good man comes with evil tidings!' On the same day, referring to his little son that died in infancy, he said, 'Johnnie was a sweet lamb, though he didna like me: he was long ailing, and aye clung to his mother. Ay, though his little feet never ran on earth, I think I see him running to meet me at the Golden Gate.' On the Saturday before he died, when already the shadows of death were beginning to steal over the vital powers, he motioned that his grandchild, Anita Williamson, might be lifted up and placed on the bed beside him. He feebly kissed her chubby little hand and murmured, 'God bless you, my bonnie lamb, both for time and for eternity!'

On Sabbath, 23rd February, the issue was seen to be one only of a few hours. His weakness was so great that the pulse could not be detected, yet he could still listen and enjoy the reading of portions of Scripture and 'hymns.' Prayer was offered for the dying saint at nearly all the churches and chapels both in St. Leonards and

Hastings, and the thought appeared to comfort him that he was being borne up to the throne of grace on the wings of supplication.

Weaker and yet more weak he grew every hour. In the afternoon he had sent a message to his old friend the Rev. James Robertson, Newington U.P. Church, Edinburgh, but since then had not spoken for some hours. After night had fallen, his eldest son,[1] fearing lest the power of speech had already left him, murmured gently in his father's ear—'Christ is still your staff and your comfort, father?' The loved name of his Redeemer pierced through the gathering mists of dissolution. The dying man opened his eyes once more, and in an emphatic whisper said '*Certainly!*'

Thereafter he spoke no more, but the benediction of eternal peace seemed to settle upon his features as he passed into a deep slumber. One or two members of the family, worn out with incessant attendance, and not apprehending any immediate change, retired to snatch a short period of repose. The others sat grouped around the deathbed watching the slow approach of the King of Terrors. Gradually the hours slip by, but on the expressive countenance of the dying man, trace of terror there was none—nothing, save a glorifying of the expression of heavenly rest and resignation. Two o'clock on the morning of the 24th was approaching. Still the watchers maintained their vigil. At that moment, his faithful Highland maid, who had been scanning his face intently, whispered, 'Surely the wrinkles are all being smoothed out.'

Yes, she was right. The 'Shadow of Death' had come at last, and was already bending over the old man to lay that summoning kiss upon his lips which needs no second. The family knelt around the bedside as his eldest son commended the passing spirit to the care of a loving Redeemer. There was only a gentle sigh as of infinite restfulness, then the spirit of Thomas Guthrie winged its

[1] The Rev. D. K. Guthrie of Liberton.

way from earth, to where beyond these voices there is peace!

. . . .

Dr. Guthrie's death evoked an outburst of sorrow all over the world such as rarely attends the demise of any clergyman or philanthropist, however distinguished. Not a journal in the 'Three Kingdoms' but published a long obituary notice detailing his life and labours. Many of these were written by the leading authors of the day; while in the United States, Canada, South America, South Africa, India, Australia, and New Zealand, the same volume of sorrowful sympathy was outpoured. Nay, even in France, Germany, and Italy, the leading newspapers paid their tribute to a departed hero who had worthily played his part in the great world-battle with destitution, sin, and suffering.

On Friday, 28th February 1873, the remains of Dr. Guthrie were laid to rest in the Grange Cemetery. Save on the occasions of the interment of Dr. Chalmers, Sir James Simpson, and Professor Blackie, during the last half-century Edinburgh has never witnessed such a funeral. All classes in the community were represented there. All the honour his fellow-citizens, official and non-official, could evince towards his memory was paid. But best tribute of all was that coming from the poor of the city and the orphans of his Ragged Schools. 'He was a father unto us in very truth,' said one old man who had seen better days, and had been a sort of humble pensioner; 'men may come and men may go, but it will be long before we get the like of Thomas Guthrie again.'

And this was in great measure what formed the burden of the numerous funeral sermons that were preached on his life and its lessons, on the succeeding Sabbath. Perhaps the best and noblest panegyric pronounced upon him was that uttered by Dr. Candlish when preaching the memorial discourse in Free St. John's,—'*Friend and brother, comrade in the fight, companion in tribulation, farewell! But not for ever. May my soul, when my hour comes, be with thine.*'

CHAPTER XIII

CRITICAL—GUTHRIE AS ECCLESIASTIC, PHILANTHROPIST, AND MAN

'What constituted Guthrie's greatness?' is a question often asked nowadays by the younger generation that has grown up in the twenty-seven years that have elapsed since he passed away. To give a satisfactory answer is by no means easy. All the world admits him to have been a man of genius, a great and gracious personality, looming large against the historic background of his age. When, however, we come to analyse the constituents of his greatness, the puzzle presents itself.

To either wide or exact scholarship he never made any pretensions. His books, despite their charm, contain not a scrap of formal doctrinal teaching to earn for him the title of 'theologian.' He was neither a great Church leader like Chalmers or Cunningham, nor a brilliant ecclesiastical dialectician and organiser like Candlish or Rainy. As he said of himself, in the controversies of the Church, he was 'oftener found at the guns than at the wheel.' Then, as a philanthropist, there have been men whose services in the cause of humanity have been as great as his, yet whose names to-day are utterly forgotten. As an educational reformer also, he was so far ahead of his time, that men like Candlish and Buchanan failed to appreciate his catholicity of outlook, and on some occasions, when he declined to allow Disruption dissidences to debar him from extending and receiving the right hand of Christian fellowship to and from Established Church ministers, they were inclined to think his liberality savouring of laxity of principle. With sectarian exclusiveness he had not an iota of sympathy.

As a pulpit orator, moreover, he was undoubtedly great, but in his day there were at least six other preachers whose claims to rival him in that department he would have been the first to admit; while as a pastor he did no more than hundreds of his fellow-ministers were doing with equal acceptance. What, then, was the secret which made the name of Guthrie one that has been for a generation enwreathed with the sincere benisons of his fellow-men? To my mind it was his versatility that constituted his magnetic influence over widely diverse temperaments. 'One of the most gracious personalities it has been my fortune to meet, whether *of* the Court or *out* of it,' said Mr. Gladstone to Canon Liddon when the news of his death was made public. 'That man would make me religious whether I would or not, if I associated much with him,' said a condemned murderer to Governor Smith, after a visit paid to him by Dr. Guthrie at the request of the Jail-Governor.

The subtle union of many noble qualities, rather than the outstanding possession of any especial one, made Guthrie what he was. As Fénelon was reported to have made friends for life by the manner in which he pronounced their name, so Guthrie bound closely to him men of the most antagonistic types, because each seemed to discover in him points of sympathy and affinity with himself. His broad humanity, united to intense earnestness of conviction and to transparent truth, rendered him ready to concede to others what he demanded for himself.

Guthrie the 'ecclesiastic,' however, was utterly distinct from Guthrie the 'philanthropist,' and Guthrie the 'man' differed in many particulars from both. To understand the limitations of the *man*, we must take into account the lifelong trial it must have been for his tolerant catholicity to be so closely associated with the sectarian exclusiveness of certain sections of post-Disruption Free Churchism. If he were not so intensely fervid in the support of some of those minor principles which, nevertheless, certain of his brethren considered as well-nigh essential to salvation, it

was because he strove always to reduce points of difference between denominations to a minimum, preferring rather to discover in how many points they agreed than in how many they differed. As he remarked in one of his books when touching upon this very subject, 'a river cannot be both broad and deep.' The simile may be applied to himself—his broad catholicity prevented his depth of conviction ever becoming so profound as to degenerate into bigotry.

'Guthrie the Ecclesiastic,' therefore, must not be held synonymous with 'Guthrie the Free Churchman.' Whilst one of the most loyal of her sons, he was never one who gloried in being nothing else, and who exalted her system of Church Government at the expense of other denominations.

Many people marvelled at Dr. Guthrie's interest in religious societies and work—nay, in churches—that seemed to lie wholly outside the sphere of his active sympathies. Guthrie found truth in all the creeds, and no finer words were ever spoken by him than those he uttered in one of his Moderator's Addresses—'Wheresoever we find Christ the Saviour worshipped in sincerity and in truth, let us welcome these worshippers as brethren in Christ.' The prime fact in the world's economy, as it was the prime doctrine in its theology, was to him the Atonement. Never would he allow that cardinal historical fact with its accompanying complement, the 'Resurrection,' to be relegated to a secondary position, or to any other position than as both the Efficient and Final Cause—to quote a distinction of the Scholastics—of human progress and development in modern times. As he puts it in one of his sermons:—

> 'One of the dangerous tendencies of these times is to thrust Calvary and its Cross into the background, to modify, and by modifying to emasculate, Paul's grand saying, "I am determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Many people know Christ, but not Him crucified . . . the sacrifice for sin and the Substitute for sinners.'[1]

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[1] *Our Father's Business.*

Guthrie's spiritual instincts were so keen, yet at the same time so catholic, and his desire for unity among all who named the name of Christ so earnest, that minute differences of doctrine were lost sight of in securing the greater desideratum of the consolidation of all sections of Christ's Kingdom. On his deathbed he said:—

'I have no sympathy with Broad Church views, but there is a sense in which I am a Broad Churchman. There are some men who have no faith in the salvation of any beyond their own narrow sect. My belief, on the contrary, is that in the end there will be a vastly larger number saved than we have any conception of.'

Furthermore, Dr. Guthrie's interest in Free Church Schemes, and his herculean labours on their behalf, were not due to any such narrow motive as merely to put his Church in the first place as a great missionary agency, or to show to the world 'what *we* can do.' So unworthy a stimulus provoked the lash of his sarcasm, when he heard such sentiments expressed in Church Courts. When Dr. Guthrie championed a scheme such as Home and Foreign Missions, he did not solicit aid by telling his audiences that the Established Church had planted a church here and a preaching-station there, or that the United Presbyterians were breaking ground somewhere else and we must not let them get ahead of us. In the spirit of Paul, who rejoiced in the fact that Christ was preached, though it was done of contention and to add affliction to his bonds, Dr. Guthrie rejoiced to hear of any Church extending its boundaries. 'Give God the glory,' he would say; 'Christ and His Cross are preached, and whether the human instrument be Presbyterian, Baptist, Wesleyan, or Episcopalian, is quite a secondary consideration.'

Again, with regard to Dr. Guthrie's pastoral work, he discharged it not merely as a duty to be performed with perfunctory monotony, but as a privilege demanding the exercise of his highest powers. Cast-iron routine is the curse of vital congregational religious life. There are

some churches where the people are, in a spiritual sense, as dead as a palæozoic fossil. And what is the reason? Because the minister does his work like a prisoner on the treadmill, without the introduction of a jot of variety to break the deadly reign of routine. Where there is sluggishness in the pulpit there will be somnolence in the pew, and routine is the nursing-mother of dulness. Against such practices Dr. Guthrie, from the earliest days of his ministry, set his face. 'I don't care about being the minister of a *large* church,' he said on one occasion, 'but I do wish to be the minister of a *live* church.' He had his desire gratified. Both in Arbirlot and in Edinburgh his congregations were characterised by the possession of the best kind of religious life, that which diffuses itself abroad in far-reaching effort for the welfare of others. He repeated at Free St. John's what he had initiated at Arbirlot, viz. all kinds of religious, social, and literary agencies for the employment of the Christian efforts of his people. Aggressive religion is the only practical religion, and Dr. Guthrie's motto was 'Something for every one to do, and every one engaged upon something.'[1]

Though he was able to take but little active part during the later years of his ministry in the numerous agencies started under the auspices of his congregation, he was the mainspring that kept them all in motion, even to the end. If he were a great pulpit orator, he was also a great parochial organiser. His sagacity and common-sense always came to his aid on occasions when a zeal without discretion led some of his members to rush into schemes that did not promise to be successful. 'A very good suggestion,' he would say in such circumstances, 'but with the machinery at our command I fear it would hardly get as fair a chance as it deserves.' His tact and his exquisite courtesy, even to the humblest members of

[1] This is the principle of the Salvation Army. But long before William Booth was heard of, Dr. Guthrie had been practising this principle in connection with his congregations.

his flock, endeared him to them all. Any one who had a proposal to make with regard to the working of the congregation, was convinced that from one individual at least, and that one his minister, he would not receive a scoff or a rebuff.

Though never assuming the position of a Church leader, he was regular in attendance on the meetings of Presbytery, Synod, Commission, and Assembly when momentous questions were raised. True, he rarely interposed with a set speech in any of the great debates, save perhaps when Education was under discussion; but some of his happiest impromptus, some of his most humorous touches that amused and delighted both sides, without leaving a rankle of irritation behind, were delivered in little speeches of two or three minutes in duration, wherein he would sum up the two sides of the question in some delightful *jeu d'esprit*, which oftentimes averted angry controversial scenes.

Be the subject what it might, Dr. Guthrie was always in favour of moderate courses. 'Truth never lies in extremes,' he remarked in one of his Ragged School speeches—a saying which smacks of John Stuart Mill's famous dictum that truth is generally to be found midway between the two opposite poles of belief. Even with respect to the retention of the Bible in the Ragged Schools he was prepared to have made many compromises short of forbidding its use altogether, if the secular party had been prepared to do the same.

Viewed as an ecclesiastic, Dr. Guthrie's character and work entitle him to a very high place among the clergy who have been associated with Edinburgh. Were I asked to sum up in one word his *nature* as it impressed an outsider, I should reply 'Christlikeness.' Not exactly 'saintliness,' for the latter implies a certain element of 'passive goodness' which scarcely realised one's idea of Guthrie. He was the aggressive, militant champion of the Cross, ready to do battle to the death with the powers of evil, poverty, and suffering, eager both to account all things but

loss and to suffer the loss of all things for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

Broad in his spiritual sympathies, catholic in his interpretation of Christian doctrines, lofty in his ideal of personal goodness, unsparing in lashing his own weaknesses, but gentle as a woman in dealing with the moral or spiritual infirmities of others, he was one of those types of character which appear in the world at intervals, as if to prove to men that it is possible to 'live' Christ as well as to 'love' Him, and that the 'Master' asked nothing beyond the capacity of humanity, when He enjoined upon His disciples that imitation of Himself which is the essence of true religion.

Closely allied with Dr. Guthrie's labours as a minister, and owned by God with almost equal success, although the time wherein he was engaged in it was so much shorter, was his work as an author. The good he was able to achieve by his pen while editor of the *Sunday Magazine* was great, but will not be realised in its fulness until the day when the hidden things of earth are made plain. Apart from his periodical writings, a good deal of which was of merely temporary and ephemeral interest, he wrote in all sixteen larger works, reckoning the *Three Pleas for Ragged Schools* as one volume, and not taking account of the pamphlets he published on Industrial Schools and the 'Union Question.' These sixteen volumes, beginning with the *Gospel in Ezekiel* and ending with *Sundays Abroad*, form a valuable library in themselves of popular evangelical teaching. Of the professed or professional theologian there is, as I have said, no trace. The writer is simply talking face to face with his reader, even as formerly he had been face to face with his congregation—for most of the papers were originally delivered as sermons—and the result achieved is, a depth of impression rarely experienced outside the walls of a church. Space will not permit me to deal with these books in any detail. I only can add that those who have yet to read them for the first time have a rich spiritual as well as intellectual treat in store:—the *Gospel*

in Ezekiel, for its picturesque presentation of Scripture history and the lessons to be drawn therefrom, dealing with the problems and perplexities of this present worka-day world; *The City—its Sins and Sorrows*, with its awful pictures of the degradation and misery in our great centres of population; *Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints*, as a study of the great mystery of the Love of Christ and of the benefits accruing to us from sincere acceptance of the Covenant of Grace; *The Way to Life*, as a practical application of the scheme of salvation to the needs and necessities of the everyday world around us; *Speaking to the Heart*, with its simple yet effective demonstration of the applicability of Christ's attributes to heal the sorrows and the sufferings of the deepest dyed of sinners; *Man and the Gospel*, wherein the pricelessness of the Cross of Christ as a safeguard and panoply against all the temptations and assaults of the Evil One is proved by the testimony and experience of God's saints; *The Parables*, in which the apologues spoken by Our Lord are read in the light of present-day trials and temptations, and the conclusion drawn that their force and application is just as cogently appropriate to-day, as when the God-man uttered them beneath the sunny Syrian skies; *Our Father's Business*, with its lessons to commercial men, in common with all others, that religion is a thing of the counting-house and the market as well as of the church and the meeting-house; *The Studies of Character from the Old Testament*, with analogies drawn between the Bible heroes and the men and women of to-day—all these, with the other works I have not named, for spirituality of aim and purpose, beauty and cogency of thought, prodigal profusion of metaphor and illustration, scorn of falsehood and oppression, pathos and sympathy when dealing with the afflicted and heart-sore, are as unique in *their* own way as Dr. Guthrie individually was unique in his. They are still read, and will continue to be read, for that note of keen human sympathy which one finds on every page, and

for their vigorous assertion of the grand old truths and cardinal doctrines of our faith.

'Guthrie the Philanthropist' was even more widely known on the Continent of Europe and in America than 'Dr. Guthrie the Preacher.' In fact, the amount of work the organiser of the 'Original Ragged Schools' succeeded in accomplishing, and the frequency with which he appeared before the public, led to the belief on the part of some that 'Thomas Guthrie' and 'Dr. Guthrie' were two different persons. Dr. Guthrie, in fact, achieved as much work in the cause of the Ragged Schools as would have sufficed for many a man's life's labour. Yet this was at the very time when he was standing forth as one of the champions on the temperance side; at the very time, too, when he was fighting against the narrow Sectarianism of denominational education; at the very time, in fine, when he was making a determined effort to secure shorter hours for shop-employés, and, along with his friend Dr. Begg, was agitating for 'better homes for the working classes.'

As a philanthropist Dr. Guthrie looked first to relieving temporal necessities before touching spiritual needs. 'You cannot get a fellow-creature to see the felicity of the scheme of salvation whose idea of felicity at that moment is bounded by the horizon of a threepenny loaf.' Hence, in all his efforts to relieve the misery arising from crime and destitution, he began with the stomach to reach the soul. Starvation and salvation do not constitute a promising combination for a philanthropist to work upon. Although hunger and holiness in monkish times appear to have produced results by no means despicable, when we regard the labours of the early Franciscans and Cistercians, whose *menu* was summed up in one scanty meal per day of pulse and bread; in these degenerate days the experience of all philanthropists, from Howard to Booth, has been that moral and spiritual reformation among the lapsed masses, in nine cases out of ten, is dependent on—or rather the result of—the relief of temporal necessities.[1]

[1] *In Darkest England, and the Way Out*, by General Booth of the Salvation Army.

Dr. Guthrie's Ragged School work constitutes a page in the history of social reform which is not the least bright with encouraging prospects for the future. He had the strong practical sagacity of his countrymen to guide him in formulating the scheme of operations which was laid before his committee and accepted by them entirely. He made the 'course' or 'curriculum,' if I might use the term, in vogue at the Ragged Schools, not merely of an educational but of an industrial or technical character, by which lads were trained manually as well as mentally, and furnished with a trade as well as with scholastic tuition. His common-sense was visible at every turn. A dreamy theorist he never was. 'How will the theory work out in practice?' was always the first question after any new idea had been propounded. He was a capital man of business, which perhaps he owed to his early banking experiences, and was as skilful in financing as in formulating his schemes. To this day 'Dr. Guthrie's Original Industrial Schools' remain in as flourishing and progressive a state as ever.

But as I have said, Dr. Guthrie was not a one-sided philanthropist. His charity was as catholic as his religious sympathies. Hence we find him throwing himself heart and soul into such widely diverse ameliorative movements as the Missions to Cabmen and to Lamplighters, the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Act, the establishment of night-schools for shop lads, which, singularly enough, by revealing to him the 'white slavery' of these assistants, started him on one of the most successful crusades he ever waged, 'Shorter hours for Shop-Employés and a Saturday Half-holiday.'

In the high and holy work of seeking to save the heart-broken victims of seduction from drifting into the deeper hell of prostitution—nay, in winning many from the last-named class itself—Dr. Guthrie and his noble wife achieved a success which is little known because it touches upon a subject so delicate.[1] In the 'Home for Fallen Women' at Alnwick Hill, near Edinburgh, his interest was deep and

[1] See *The City—its Sins and Sorrows*, p. 22.

constant. Over many of the women from that institution whom he assisted into respectable situations, where they could, as it were, begin the world again, he watched with a solicitude tender as a father's. When one of them, Mary Craig, lost her life in heroically saving from drowning the child of the family wherein she was nurse, the eulogy he pronounced upon her was one of his finest flights of eloquence.

He took a deep interest also in the affairs of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and his appeals for contributions to this excellent institution always met with a liberal response. For some years he was a manager of it, and never failed to visit it at least once a month. Another charity of which he took a leading part in administering the affairs for a time was the Blind Asylum. In more than one of the reports his name appears as one of the directors, along with his friend Mr. Dymock.

All societies whose aim was the relief of the destitute poor received his whole-hearted help. To the 'Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick,' the 'Edinburgh Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society,' the 'House of Refuge and Night Refuge' (Queensberry House), the 'Society for the Relief of Indigent Old Men,' and many others too numerous to mention in detail, he not only gave his services as a director or member of committee, but in several instances preached Charity Sermons in aid of the funds, by which the institutions benefited materially in a pecuniary sense.[1]

Wherever distress or suffering was brought under his notice, Thomas Guthrie at once took steps to mitigate or remove it. His great heart ached when he contemplated misery for which he could supply no remedy. 'I 'm sure you must be often swindled and deceived with regard to a lot of these cases you are so constantly relieving,' said a cynical Philistine to him one day with a sneer on his lips. 'Perhaps so, my friend, notwithstanding all the precautions we take,' said the Doctor quietly; 'but I would rather

[1] See the Annual Reports of the institutions referred to.

be among the Good Samaritans who relieve suffering even at the risk of being sometimes deceived, than be among the priests and Levites who talk, and criticise, and sneer, but take care to pass by on the other side.'

The philanthropy of Thomas Guthrie, in a word, did not proceed from a mere sense of obligation. He did not relieve suffering or destitution because he thought it becoming or fashionable so to do. No arrow in his quiver of sarcasm was too sharp to employ in transfixing such low motives when he came across them. 'Be sure you value the high and holy privilege of charity,' was a phrase he frequently used. It expresses the motive of all his philanthropy. He did as he would have desired to be done by: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so unto them.'

Thomas Guthrie—the 'Man'—had laid to heart Solon's dictum, 'Know thyself.' Better than most men he had gauged the limits of his own capacity, and knew exactly what he could and what he could not do. Never do we find him attempting anything beyond his powers. He never failed in anything he essayed, because he never essayed anything wherein failure was probable. I have more than once referred to his profound sagacity and common-sense, because these, along with his vivid imaginative force and intense realism, were the chief characteristics of his genius. Knowing precisely what his powers could effect, and to what extent he could rely upon them, he never strayed outside his own domain.

Furthermore, his buoyant nature made work light to him. As he never regarded it as a task, but as a supreme pleasure, inactivity was to him the irksome burden, not work. Each day was carefully mapped out in advance, and when he did not succeed in achieving all he desired, he took himself to task. Each night, as he remarks in one of his letters, he reviewed the actual achievements of the day, as compared with his 'purpose' or scheme. It was this habit of piecing out his time and giving to each

moment some duty to be done, that enabled Thomas Guthrie to accomplish the numerous items of business whose discharge he so cheerfully undertook. But this very delight in work, while it made duty easy and self-sacrifice light, also led him to persevere at his post, when the physical frame was exhausted. Weariness he did not seem to feel, languor had no effect upon him. Only when the deadly anguish of his cardiac disease brought him in more senses than one to his knees, did he come to realise the fact that for years he had been doing three men's work and burning the candle at both ends.

Guthrie influenced his age and his fellow-men as much by his life as by his works. 'Guthrie the Man' was found to practise in life what 'Guthrie the Preacher' inculcated in precept. Had he been less sympathetic, had his broad humanity touched the sorrow-seamed existence of his fellow-men at fewer points of contact, he might have felt less call to spend and be spent so completely in the cause of ameliorating the lot of destitute and despairing *brethren*. But in that case he would have graven his name less deeply on the hearts of his countrymen. The intensity of his devotion to their cause was manifested by the fact that he was shattered in health at the comparatively early age of fifty-nine. To act otherwise than he did, however, would have been foreign to his nature. Besides, he would have fallen short of his own ideal of right. His lofty enthusiasm in the cause of the friendless and downtrodden prevented him from feeling aught but delight in suffering for those whom he sought to save. Literally with the price of his own life did he pay for the souls and bodies of those pariahs whom he succeeded in snatching from moral and spiritual ruin.

But, like the Divine Master he served, he never shrank from the sacrifice. His enthusiasm carried him through all. As early as 1848 he knew that work at the high pressure at which he was running would sooner or later entail certain death. For a time he tried to labour at

'half-speed,' as he called it. The result was unsatisfactory in every sense. He had then to choose his alternative. Did he flinch, or decide to leave the perishing juvenile and adult waifs to their fate? No!—'THE WORK THAT MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH GIVEN ME TO DO, SHALL I NOT DO IT?'

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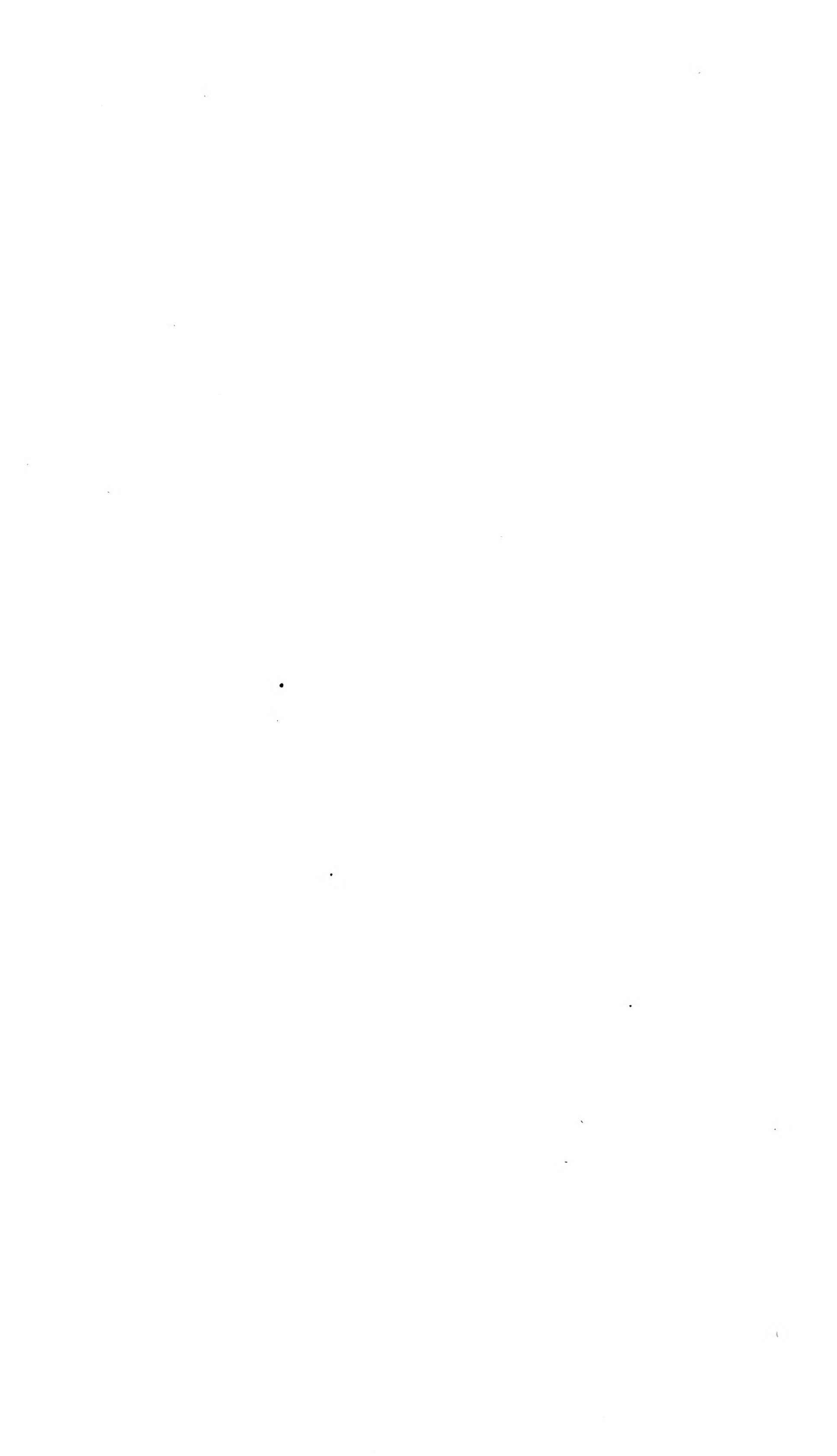
Whyte, John, 18.
Wilberforce, Bishop, 11.

YOUNG, LORD, 110.



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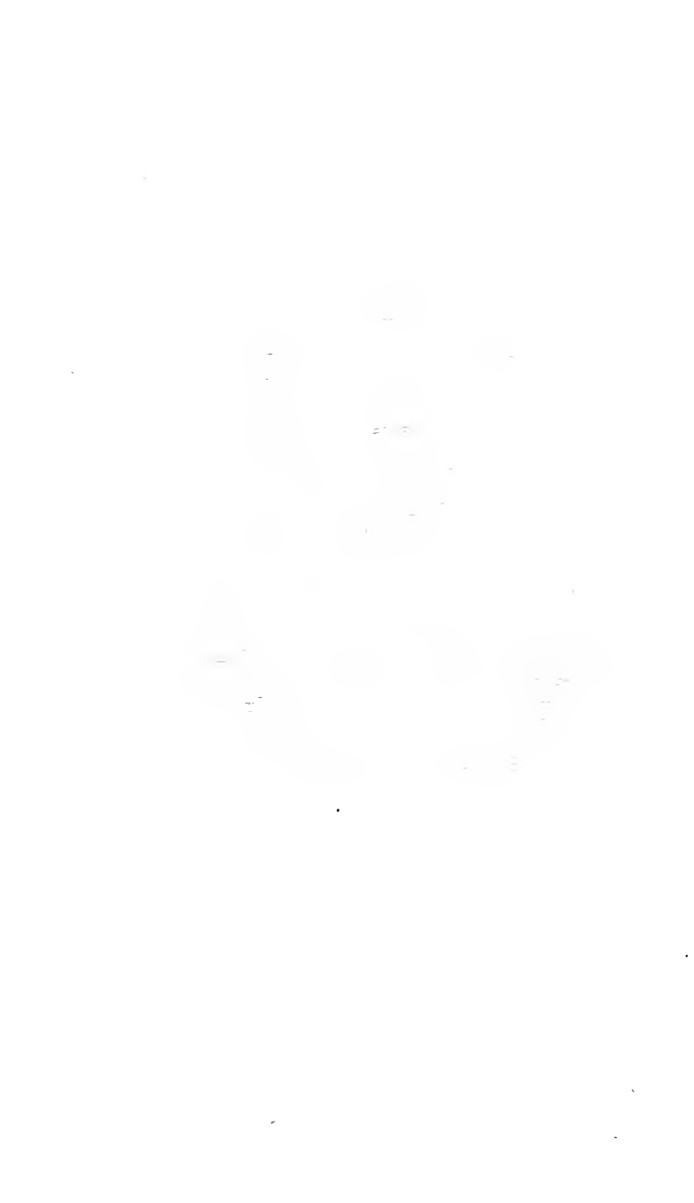

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