

loud and, to unaccustomed ears, discordant din was the music to which John Fletcher attuned his song. It represented to him the web of life, and awakened in him many deep-lying thoughts concerning the things of this life and that which is to come.

In that quiet and happy home, surrounded only by benign and holy influences, the child Robert Burns Fletcher, or Rob, as he was familiarly and tenderly called, grew and throve body and soul, giving promise even in his childhood of a fine manhood graced by gifts above the common. For some time Mary was haunted by the terror lest his mother should one day turn up and wrest her treasure from her; but as the years went by this fear, of course, became less haunting and real to her. Other anxieties, however, took its place. While the child had much that was lovable and sweet in his disposition, he at times revealed a terrible and passionate temper, and a vindictive disposition which occasioned them both the greatest concern. They loved him too dearly to spoil him altogether, and the wholesome discipline insisted on by John, who had himself learned at the hands of a somewhat stern father the priceless lessons of self-control, did much to counteract the natural bent of the child's nature.