
In Memoriam

II

My father's undergraduate days were supremely happy ones. Each opening avenue of knowledge was a delight to his keen mind, and his powers enabled him to grasp clearly what was unfolded to him, and to retain accurately what he learnt. It was the golden age of Science. Darwin's "Origin of Species" had been published only four years before, causing one of the great revolutions in human thought, and Wallace, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, Pasteur and Lister were all in their prime. What more stimulating period could be conceived? And it was at the University he formed many of those wonderful friendships which were an outstanding feature of his life, and only closed with death, some of them after fifty years. He became one of a band of eight or ten delightful young men, who formed among themselves "The Club", for smoking and good comradeship, and who when they met were always overflowing with fun and almost child-like high spirits.

At that time everything was on a small scale at the University, and the students were all one body. My father regretted not a little the inevitable breaking up into cliques and societies which larger numbers afterwards necessitated. Owing to the small classes, the personal influence of the Professors was much stronger than it can be now, and one in particular became an ideal to William Ellis, and inspired an enthusiasm which undoubtedly affected his whole career. This was Henry Holmes Croft, who held the chair of Chemistry. Although he left Toronto when I was a child of three I always seem to have known him, I heard so much of him in my early days, and always in terms of the most affectionate admiration. I remember with what awe and interest I used to regard a lady who sometimes visited us, because she was Professor Croft's daughter, and therefore on quite a different