

the hills; or sheer headlong south rain when the water trickled down our backs as we walked, and we splashed with sodden boots through boggy moorland. But whatever the weather, we took it all in good part. We were students on holiday, with no fear of senile ailments, and somehow allied to nature in all her moods, and loving her best when she adopted the whims and changes of the sex we despised.

But if the walk was good, the end was better. There was the sound of many waters as we had our "tubs"; and then the solemnity of a Christmas dinner, where our appetites gave a real religious significance to the meal. There is no line appeals so directly to me in Homer as that conventional one—"And we sat there the livelong day until the going down of the sun, feasting on abundant flesh and on sweet wine . . . and when the sun had sunk, then we laid us to rest upon the sea-beach." Only, being Scotsmen, we turned to smoking and theology as a more heroic form of relief. As our self-constituted "Committee on the Universe" discussed predestination, and higher criticism, and the *Summum Bonum*, one could almost imagine in the midst of the rustle of the wind in the trees outside, or the quiet patter of the rain, a gentle sign or a dry chuckle—nature thinking of our futures, or smiling at our boyish freakishness. But there it was that our university training had its finish added.

There was a village life, too, that counted on our Christmas joys. Once a year, at Christmas, our local Curling Club held its concert, and all the world turned out. Curling in Scotland, like so many other Scotch things, consists as much in sentiment as in practice; and your true curler finds solace for absent ice in actual dinners, more actual national beverages, and such social events as our concert. At our village, both platform and audience were characteristic. The platform—doctor or parson in the chair, the local banker prominent in the foreground, with a shrewd gleam in his eye, the village joiner and local orator prepared for votes of thanks, a few worthies who had qualified by age for the honour, and a visitor or two. The audience—some genteel rows in the dearer seats, the élite come not to enjoy but to countenance,—prim ladies, who blushed when their small brothers, still in the *primaeval* state, shouted with laughter at the vulgarest jokes, serious elders looking on with the attitude of uncomfortable virtue they had learned from a long life of well-kept Sundays, and we students. The villagers filled in the back with stir and vigor, exhibited in lusty cheers, and tremendous approval of the "funny" man in the programme, and derisive chaff, as the local "boozer" left the hall in the intervals to quench his undying thirst. The programme flashed from pathetic Scottish folk-songs, to cheap modern sentiment, and thence to the hopeless vulgarity which has too often claimed for itself the name of Scottish humour—as if Harry Lauder had displaced Walter Scott in his supremacy there.

But my exile's pen grows garrulous. These were the days that made us all; that was the country for which I'll count heaven a poor exchange. We Glasgow men have gone now to the ends of the earth; that was the call which came to all of us, and we would not have it otherwise—work, and enough of it, and a fight for the greater issues. But our Christmas fellowship fixed for us long ago our mother land, and the deeper our roots fix themselves in our new homes,