

abject, crouching, trembling, pleading form: is this? A dagger is raised, grasped in a stern, strong hand; look at the clenched teeth and the savage eye; ah, there is scant mercy in thy face, Norman Leslie and Cardinal Beaton must shrive himself in haste. It was a cruel deed; we defend it not, but the times were fierce and hard, and hard and fierce too were the passions of men.

The victory is won; truth has fought and triumphed, and walks abroad, gentle as a delicately nurtured woman. The voice of Knox is no longer that of the cataract, striking terror to the hearts of tyrants—he denounces no longer. His name is still a tower of strength, but his limbs tremble and his voice is feeble, and his hand shakes, but the soul still young and ardent, is no longer fit companion for the frail clay cement. No; and so the epitaph—true and immortal, thanks to Lord Morton for these great, simple words, spoken over his grave, "*Here lies one who never feared the face of man.*"

Thus was our Church baptized in blood, rocked amid civil broils, rudely and roughly handled, yet has she grown up a goodly child—loving and oh how beloved! The child of many sufferings, but every suffering resulting in a triumph. Papacy could not crush you; prelacy fought hard and foul, but could not get your birthright. From every fiery trial you emerged firmer and stronger-voiced, till your enemies without hope gave up the contest. What or where was the secret of thy strength? The firm faith and the united hearts of a resolute people. Church of our fathers! we ought to love thee. Thou hast done much for us and for the world. To thee belongs the saintly Welsh—fearless as a lion in the face of mere human authority,—no anchorite more unwearied in nightly vigils and unceasing prayers. George Buchanan claims thee, the Scaliger of Scotland, a giant in ancient lore, the most accomplished Latin historian since the days of Livy—illustrious translator of the Psalms—stern but faithful tutor of a foolish king. Melville, the graceful and elegant, but sometimes the time-serving. Henderson, the acute, the clear, the honest and earnest Henderson. A crowd of martyrs claims thee, who in the words of the poet

"Lived unknown,

Till persecution dragged them into to fame,  
And chased them up to heaven."

Come we down to modern days; thy ornaments were the strongest intellectual phalanx in the face of Europe. Robertson the learned, the philosophic, the laborious, the great historian, the eminently good man. Home and Logan, Dugald Stewart, Hill and Blair, Andrew Thomson and Thomas Chalmers—all these, and many more have been thine, and have been a glory round about thee. Two Secessions for a moment weakened thy ranks but touched not thy vital power. They left you; you sorrowed, but it was for them, not

for thyself. For a little while some of the best of thy children did turn their heel against thee, and beat against thy walls. In thy glory they gloried in the strength which thou hadst given them, and trusted by that strength to overthrow thee. *Nec tamen consumebatur.* Seventeen years have passed away—and what time have passed away many of the most illustrious of those who left you. Chalmers the massive browed, the Massillon of the 19th century; Gordon, the learned, the pious, the amiable; Welsh, the clear, the deep, the elegant and loveable; Buchanan, Brown, Fleming, Hugh Miller, have thrown off the armor and laid them down to their long sleep. Who is to put the armor on? Who can lift the spear of the Achilles of the Free Church? No one; it must hang in the hall a memento of the past. The youth are weak; the glory of the Free Church is in her old men;—the pre-disruptionists, nursed upon the milk of the old kirk—Candlish, Cunningham, Hannay, Guthrie, Fairbairn, men of mark and intellectual muscle, towering easily above their fellows. But amidst the motley crowd of 800 what sapling of—43 has grown into a tree? Not one. Turn your eyes, dear friend, to the grey old structure, the Kirk of Scotland. Are her chiefs all ancient—does she lean for support only on her grey beards? Some of her princes, it is true have fallen, full of years and honor; Lee, who knew nearly all that man has known, Cooke and McFarlane, have put off their mantles for the last time. But are there none but hoary heads upon her highest watch towers? Yea, and a noble phalanx:—Principal Tulloch and Caird and McDuff and McLeod, serve in line with the veterans and are worthy of their palmiest days. The strength of that old Church is in her youth—the boast of that young church is in her grey heads. With the down hardly on her cheeks, she begins to feel the decrepitude of age. The former like a mighty trunk, spreads out its branches green and strong now on her three hundredth birth day. Come back erring but glorious child, to arms that will be outstretched to receive thee. You have shown a spirit worthy of your great descent. Let it be said that the day of error is past, and that on this great anniversary the day of mutual forgiveness and atonement has come. Fret not away the hey-day of thy life. She is strong and is growing stronger. Her roots are striking deeper and wider into men's hearts. On this great day graft thyself once more among her branches, and be one—one in body, one in aim and effort, one in love. Wait not for another hundred years. For ere that, you will be in your grave. Oh come, let our songs and prayers rise together undivided, one great family; it may be, the invitation will not be accepted. What then? The one will wax, and the other wane, but our duty is the same. The Church of our fathers will continue to be our hope and our portion. We will worship while we live within her walls.