

ROBERT BROWNING DEAD?

Not dead?—Oh, no! not dead; 'tis but the sleep
She sang of—she his own,
Whose tender music in our hearts we keep
Blent with his deep, strong tone!

"For so He giveth His beloved," here,
Rest after weary toil,—
Re-union after many a lonely year;
One grave in Tuscan soil;

And what, beyond? Nay, but we may not dare
To follow, on their way,
Twin souls that blossom into radiance rare
In light of perfect day!

But he,—the seer,—whose vision never lost
The light, through darkest cloud;
Who, in a faithless age, with conflict toss'd,
Could sing his faith, aloud;

Who held so fast the thread of nobler life
That but *beginneth* here;
Who heard the heavenly chorus through the strife
And caught its cadence clear;

Who gave it back to us, as best he could,
And sang so nobly this—
That service still must be our highest good,
And love our purest bliss—

He is not dead, for such can never die,
We miss him here a space,
And yet—I think—in yonder Christmas sky,
His voice hath found its place!

December, 1889.

—Fidelis, in *The Week*.

A CITY BY THE SEA.

A long, narrow city—where the few principal streets lie sinuously serpent-like beside the blue harbour, and the many, short cross streets all run steeply down the bank and end at the waterside. It is a city of strange sights, especially to an eye bred inland. The most engaging of these owe their charm to the presence of the sea. At every turn, you are reminded of the ocean and the traffic in deep waters. You cannot escape it, the very air breathes "the wonder and mystery of the ship, and the magic of the sea."

The sea itself is never far-off. It closes the vista of the short streets, one after one, with a band of blue beside the black wharves. It bounds the prospect wherever you look over the dun roofs, with their clusters of chimney-pots and dormer windows; and from not a few points of outlook you can see almost the entire land-locked sheet of water, which is said to be the safest haven on the whole Atlantic sea-board. It is ever the same, and ever-changing; glittering in the sunshine, dull under the broad, grey clouds; flecked with sails, or smooth and featureless as a mill-pond. Half way down the bay, you catch a glimpse of a white line, the reef with its breakers. Here stands the little lighthouse, which, at the fall of darkness shows its light like a candle set in a lonely cottage-window, over the houseless ocean. To-night the light is hardly needed, for the new-risen moon has turned the harbour into a faery "Field of the Cloth of Gold," fit for the meeting of old Proteus' train and all Poseidon's courts.

Along the water-front congregate, for a little while, ships from all quarters of the globe, each having an errand at this port. All flags are seen, and every description of craft; long, black ocean steamships, trim coasters, saucy, slim-sparred brigantines in the West India trade, and tidy, swift-sailing, fishing schooners. In the summer, there are usually several huge warships, moored in mid-channel, floating cities, with their crews of a thousand men. The presence of the ships has its influence on the aspect of the streets, for you are continually meeting every description of sea-dog, of home and foreign breed. In summer especially, they swarm the thoroughfares and afford a pleasant diversion to the eye wearied of the common-place civilian garb and land-keeping faces. The most picturesque object is the smart man-o'-war's man, with his blue, extensive trousers, blue jacket and round, flat cap, bearing the name of his ship in gilt letters. The officers are conspicuous by their gold lace. But even the stokers from the steamers and the plainly-habited fishermen, whose faces testify to the hardships of their life, carry with them some of the immemorial interest attaching to the sea. Jack ashore is usually very quiet, and seems to pass his time looking at the shop-windows and the girls, or getting drunk in an unobtrusive and methodical way.

The town itself is built on a rock, the pavements are few; only the principal streets have sidewalks of stone or brick. Elsewhere, a load or so of gravel spread upon the ground and trodden into it serves the same purpose very well. The houses are of wood, very plain without as a general thing; but pretty and comfortable within. They are all of the same pattern, painted a dull drab or grey, which is soon further toned down by the action of the coal smoke. The English chimney-pot abounds, and the dormer-windows on the roof. This last always prevents a house from being utterly ugly, and some of the sloping streets where roof rises above roof, and the outlines are still further broken by these quaint devices, half window, half room, are quite worthy the study of the etcher. In the moonlight, the vulgar details are veiled, the lower parts are dimly indicated, but the picturesque irregularity of the roofs is further accented by fantastic patches of whiteness and black shadow. The result is very beautiful. It is an old city and some of the most ancient quarters are very quaint, and remind one of the cities of Europe. In your rambles, you stumble on the queerest courts and closes, and often on much squalid misery there. In one of the dirtiest and most disreputable parts, I came upon this sign, "Sweeps' Office." Sweeps! It was like chancing on a page

of Dickens. Sweeps! I never thought that they had crossed the Atlantic; they always seemed to me part of a vanished, almost pre-historic London. In this new world, such a legend becomes the strangest of anachronisms. I remembered that I had seen a black-faced figure in grimy rags, standing on a door-step, a sheaf of odd-looking brushes on its shoulder, and looking like an illustration by Cruikshank. How surprised the poor figure would be to learn that its trade had been made immortal by essay, fairy-tale and poem! Who does not remember the gentle Elia's fondness for the young apprentice "in his first nigritude"? Was not Tom a sweep before he escaped from Mr. Grimes, and was changed into a water-baby; and was not the heart of half-mad William Blake stirred by the sight of the little black thing among the snow, crying, "weep! weep!" And there are many sights which will start just such trains of thought.

Another unusual sight is the great hill-fort behind the city. It is also a perpetual presence, like the sea. There is scarcely any quarter from which it can not be seen. The best view, undoubtedly, is from the two drives leading to the park or from the tops of the high bluff, three miles down the harbour. From this latter Mount of Temptation the eye takes in at one glance the great harbour and the fortified islands, the city, the star-shaped fort above it and the brown glacis sloping away on every side. To this is added a seemingly limitless stretch of ocean. The visible fort itself is an inch of grey stone-work, showing between the earthen bank and the mound above it, some yawning embrasures and a few pacific chimneys. On the city side are the masts and yards for the signalling service and from a tall staff in the centre brave St. George's cross is ever flying over all. This is the fort to the outward eye. You may walk up through the soldiers' quarters to the very edge of the deep, dry moat thirty feet deep and as many feet across; you may watch the sentry on his beat at the beehive-like entrance but you can never increase your knowledge by a visit within the walls. No civilian sets foot within its precincts. So we live in the continual neighbourhood of a great mystery. The wildest stories fly about of excavations and tunnels joining the citadel with the islands and so on. Any secret is jealously guarded, Citadel Hill is not always free to ramble over, and innocuous amateur photographers have been ordered off. It is well that precautions should be taken, for this lesser Gibraltar is the second key to the British possessions in America.

It is a garrison town. That fact is borne in upon the mind by the constant recurrence of the Queen's scarlet on the streets. You encounter it in all its freshness on smart orderlies hurrying to and fro with dispatch bags, or soiled and untidy on the men building the general's new hot-house. To see it at its best you must wait till Sunday when Tommy Atkins takes his sweetheart a-walking. The dark blue and gold of the artillery-men sets off the more prevalent red-coat. What a link that same red coat is with the past! It whirls the mind off to every field that has seen it from Waterloo to Rorke's Drift. The thin, red line stretches back to Ramillies and the bo-wigged commander whom his courteous foes called the handsome Englishman. It was a line of red coats that marching over a mount at Fontenoy suddenly confronted a regiment of the French Guards, and the memorable contest arose which side should fire first. Whether this be fact or fiction the story ought to be true, for the scarlet coat represents many a deed just as chivalrous which never becomes history at all. Farther back this blood-coloured streak extends till it gleams behind the levelled pikes of Cromwell's Ironsides. Even the brass eidolon of an elephant on the collar of a tunic conjures up the land of the elephant and the tiger and all the fights with the tiger like peoples of it, from Plassy to Lucknow. And the brothers of the men who battled there go up and down these streets ever ready, when duty calls them, to conquer another empire or save another despairing, leaguered city.

This city by the sea is full of strange sounds as well as picturesque sights. At midday a time gun booms from the citadel hill; then everyone, regardless of place or occupation, on Sunday in the midst of his devotions even, pulls out his watch and compares it with the standard. Another gun sounds at half-past nine at night to warn the soldiers on leave that it is time to return to the barracks. These two guns mark off the day for most of the citizens. When the tall masts and squared yards of some cruiser sweep up the harbour, towering above the roofs, gun after gun from battery and fort bay their deep-mouthed welcome to the flag she carries. And when the white fog drifts in from the ocean and wraps earth and water in its misty veil the fog-horn at the harbour-mouth sounds at intervals, not unmusically, its note of warning to ships upon the sea. It is easily suggestive of the perils of deep waters to hear this strange, high note coming night and day upon the wind. You cannot help thinking of wrecks and of one great vessel cast away on the rocks just as all on board thought they were entering their desired haven. Often the cheery bugle-calls mingle merrily with the clatter of wheels and the other prosaic noises of our work-a-day world.

All this does not begin to exhaust the suggestiveness of this historical town. Nothing has been said of its old churches, the walls of which are covered with memorial tablets, its various buildings, its society, its beautiful gardens or its manners and customs. That must be the subject for closer study; the mere externals, such as those mentioned, I reserve upon the attention of the casual observer.—*Archibald MacMechan, in The Week*.

British and Foreign.

MR. ROBT. BUCHANAN is about to start a new monthly review.

GREENOCK is once more moving for the erection of a worthy memorial of its greatest son, James Watt.

THE Rev. Thomas Reid, of Airlie, died lately in his eighty-seventh year; he was ordained in 1843.

THE Marquis of Tweeddale has accepted the post of Lord High Commissioner at next General Assembly.

DUMBARTON U. P. Presbytery by eight to six assent to the scheme of proportionate representation in Church Courts.

MR. WALLACE BRUCE, American consul in Edinburgh, gave the fifth of a course of lectures in Plantation Church, Glasgow, on "Landmarks of Scott."

THE Rev. Alex. McMillan from Canada addressed the annual soiree of St. George's Road Church, Glasgow, on church life and missionary effort in the Dominion.

THE Rev. D. Sage McKay, assistant in Free St. Stephen's, Edinburgh, has declined the call to Fraserburgh, intending to proceed to America for the benefit of his health.

THE Rev. Lewis Davidson, of Mayfield Free Church, Edinburgh, is going to Calcutta to take charge of a church there, and is expected to be absent about a year.

MISS M. M. PARK, of Free St. Matthew's, Glasgow, has gained one of the prizes offered by a gentleman in London to Sabbath school teachers for the best essay on the Sabbath.

It is stated that Rev. Mr. Crerar of the Free Church, Leith, formerly of Cardross, brother of Mr. Crerar, County Attorney, Hamilton, is about to be married to a sister of Prof. Drummond.

THE missionaries in Madagascar have petitioned the Queen to put a prohibitive duty on rum; it is working ruin among the coast tribes. At Tamatave a bottle of spirits may be had for six cents.

To remodel St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, \$70,000 have been raised, and even with the towers left out, \$15,000 more will be required. People begin to ask if it would not be better to build a new church altogether.

MR. JAS. RECKITT, a manufacturer at Hull, has presented to the town a free library of 8,000 books in suitable premises at a cost of \$55,000. Hull has twice voted against the adoption of the free libraries act.

KINNAIRD Hall, Dundee, has been refused for Sunday afternoon concerts. The Tent Mission threatened to leave the hall, which they use in the evening, if secular concerts were allowed in it at another part of the day.

A BAND of stringed instruments and cornets, in addition to the organ, accompanied the hymns at Dr. Parker's City Temple, London, on a recent Sunday for the first time; they played a wedding march at the close of the service.

THE students of the U. P. Divinity Hall, Edinburgh, are said now to be in revolt. Their discontent with one of the professors is expressed in a petition signed by the whole number except six, for presentation to the college committee.

THE Rev. Wyke Bayliss, vicar of Upham, Hants, has narrowly escaped being buried alive. He was thought to have suddenly expired when he fell down at a village concert, but on the eve of his funeral it was discovered that his heart had not ceased to beat.

THE Highland Association has thirty-three men and twenty-six women engaged as teachers in outlandish spots, who give instruction in Gaelic as well as in English. Miss Rainy presented the annual report at a meeting in Edinburgh, acknowledging receipts for the year of \$7,745.

THE Rev. John McNeill is pledged to devote what time he can spare to evangelistic work in churches outside London connected with the English Presbyterian Church. In view of the overwhelming applications pouring in upon him, he was compelled to adopt some principle of selection.

THE Rev. Daniel Neilson, Primitive Methodist, applies to Manchester Presbytery for admission to the Presbyterian Church. He is Scotch by birth and a Presbyterian by training, and feels under a strong constraint to return to the Church of his fathers. His application has been referred to a committee.

QUEEN VICTORIA is the 119th of the royal line of traditional Scottish monarchs, but there is reality in the statement that her Majesty is twenty-sixth in succession of the house of Stuart, though nineteenth only of the royal line. She is thirty-fourth in succession to Malcolm Canmore and thirty-fifth to William the Conqueror.

SOME members of Free St. George's, Edinburgh, complain of the hurried way the congregation were asked to give an opinion on the nomination of Rev. G. A. Smith as junior pastor. They hold that it was impossible offhand to dispose of the doctrinal questions raised in connection with his name, and that these have not yet been adequately discussed.

AT the Edinburgh deacons' association Mr. Hewat pointed out that within fifty years, while the population of Scotland has increased by one-half, the number of Presbyterian churches is doubled. The Free Church must have spent about \$16,250,000 for building purposes. He advocated the appointment of a building committee that would be able to supervise and control congregational operations in all parts of the country.

ST. BERNARD'S parish, Glasgow, celebrated the semi-jubilee of the minister, Rev. J. C. Stewart, LL.D., by a social meeting held under the presidency of Sir John Neilson Cuthbertson. The congregation presented to Dr. Stewart a purse of sovereigns and a silver salver with inscription. The Bible class, Sabbath school, and boys' brigade company were also represented in the rejoicing, their gifts being a marble clock, a field-glass, and a silver mounted walking-stick.

THE English Presbyterian mission, which had only two missionaries thirty-five years ago, has now a staff of thirty-one with their wives, and also twelve ladies sent out by the ladies' association. The number of communicants is 3,597 in 127 stations, and there are eight native ministers and 100 preachers. The income in 1889 was \$26,905. Rev. R. W. Barbour, at a meeting of the Scottish auxiliary, said the criticism of foreign missions has proved a healthy stimulus to the great heart of the Church at home.