

POETRY.

THE LITTLE BOAT BUILDERS.

*Beside the sea-shore Charles and Ben
Sat down one summer day,
To build their little boats—and then
To watch them sail away.*

*“Hurrah!” the boats have left the shore,
And side by side they sail;
The pleasant sunshine all before,
Behind the summer gale.*

*But all too rough the sunny sea:—
One boat upsets—and then
They clap their hands and shout with glee;
“Hurrah! she’s up again.”*

*But on the wave it cannot live:
It sinks:—and now the other!
And now a louder shout they give,
“Hurrah! we’ll build another!”*

*Let’s make ourselves a little sea—
The ocean is too large!
This tub will do for you and me
To sail our little barge.”*

*Dear children! thus through life your joys
May vanish! Will you then
Still laugh while o’er your childish toys,
And think they’ll rise again?*

*And when life’s ocean seems too wide
Your quiet course to trace;
Say, will you wisely turn aside,
And choose a humbler place!*

*And will you as your joys decay,
First one and then the other,
Shout oh, as one hope sinks away,
“Hurrah! I’ll build another!”*

BIOGRAPHY.

ALEXANDER MURRAY.

Alexander Murray was the son of a shepherd, who lived in a very lonely part of Scotland. His father had forty or fifty sheep and four cows, and this was all his property. As he was too poor to send his son to school, he undertook to teach him himself. As he had very few books, and was afraid they would get spoiled by being handled by a child, he taught him the alphabet, when he was six years old, by making the letters on a piece of board with the burnt end of a stick. In this way Alexander learned at the same time to read and write. The first book ever put into his hands was the Shorter Catechism, and in a month or two he could read the easier part of it. His next book was the New Testament, of which he read the historical parts with delight. He was not allowed to touch the large family Bible, which he felt a great curiosity to read; but finding an old loose-leaved Bible, he took it away a leaf at a time, and pored over its interesting stories with a pleasure which he had never before felt.

His father, intending to bring him up to his own business, sent him when seven or eight years of age to the hills with the sheep. But he was too fond of reading and writing on his board to become a good shepherd; so that his father often blamed him for being lazy and useless. About this time, an uncle, hearing of his love for learning, sent him to school, where he was at first much laughed at for his strange pronunciation of words; but in the course of a few months he became head of the Bible-class. After being at school one quarter, he was obliged to leave on account of his health. The next five years were spent in the occupation of a shepherd, and in solitary study. When about 12 years of age, he borrowed a work on Geography and History, which he almost learned by heart. He also learned to copy the maps which it contained, and even made a map of his native glen and its neighbourhood. His father, finding that Alexander was not likely to make a living as a shepherd, sent him to teach the children of two neighbouring farmers during one winter, for which he received only four dollars and his boarding. This money he laid out in the purchase of useful books.

During the next three years he was allowed to go to school only about five months. But he made good use of his opportunities. While his schoolmates were at play during the middle of the day, he was in the school-room, poring over their books, and storing his mind with useful knowledge. It was about this time that he began to show a fondness for learning foreign languages.—And so eager and diligent was he in these pursuits, that in about eighteen months, he had learned the French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, almost without assistance. As a proof of his earnest desire to learn, it may be mentioned that in his spare time he actually read Ainsworth’s Latin dictionary several times through. He still spent his winters in teaching, which now became more profitable to him. All the periods of his attendance at school being added together make only about thirteen months, and these were scattered over the space of eight years. After leaving school, Alexander continued to pursue his studies with increasing ardor, in the mean time supporting himself by teaching. At length through the kindness of a gentleman in Edinburgh, who had heard the fame of his uncommon learning, he procured a free admission to the classes of the university. He was then about nineteen years of age.—Here he continued ten or twelve years in his favourite study of languages, and in preparing for the ministry of the Scottish church, to which he was at length ordained. Six years after this, Dr. Murray was elected professor of oriental languages in the university of Edinburgh, which office he held ou-

ly nine months, being suddenly called away by death, on the 14th of April, 1813, at the early age of thirty-eight.

The life of this eminent man may give encouragement to some youth who is struggling with poverty, and want of an opportunity to get an education, and be fitted for usefulness in society. Who would have thought, to see the little shepherd boy sitting under a tree poring over his book or board, while his flock was grazing before him that in less than thirty years his name should be known throughout Europe as the most learned man of his own or perhaps any other age? Remember the motto of Eliot, the Missionary to the Indians, “Prayer and pains, with the blessing of God, can do any thing.”

QUESTIONS ON COMMON THINGS,
Nos. 1 and 2.

Is any thing in the material world, more common than air?

What other liquid can be mixed with cold water to render it intensely hot?

Why is iron made hot by hammering?

What becomes of the water which runs into the ocean, by the numerous rivers upon the earth?

What are some of the other uses of evaporation, besides furnishing materials for clouds and rain?

What are the two principal ingredients in the atmosphere, and which the most interesting?

Of what liquid and solid substances, does oxygen constitute a part?

Which is mixed with oxygen to form water, nitrogen or hydrogen? and which of the two is mixed with oxygen in the atmosphere?

What other substance unites with oxygen and hydrogen, to form the whole of the vegetable kingdom?

What fourth substance is added to the three which constitute vegetables, to form animal substances?

Is it Carbon or hydrogen which produces the blaze in a wood or coal fire, also in the candle and lamp?

Which contains the most hydrogen, anthracite, or bituminous coals?

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