

# A MODERN SCOTTISH MINSTREL.\*

A GOOD biography is always sure of a cordial welcome because the proper study of mankind is man. How one is equipped for the battle of life and how he fares therein is interesting to his fellow men. Interest in the lives of others, however, has its limits in these busy days. When books were less available than now, a life-narrative was sure to find its circle of readers. There is no time for that now. The author who would obtrude a poorly written biography, or give the tedious details of a life devoid of general or even special interest, runs the risk of losing his own. The conditions of a successful biography are that the life itself must be worth recording. The man or woman whose personality is to be presented to the reading public must be intrinsically worthy, or must have exercised a perceptible influence in the sphere in which the subject of it moved. The story must also be told with discriminating taste and tact, as well as in moderate compass. There is a wide difference between a portrait badly painted and one from the skilful hand of an accomplished artist. So a clumsily written biography is certain to provoke the ire of even the average gentle reader.

The modest and unpretentious volume in which the life-work of David Kennedy, the famous Scottish singer is narrated, fulfils the conditions stated. The sterling character of the man deserves to be recorded for the guidance and encouragement of others in the journey of life. The work for which he felt himself specially fitted, and which he did so well is worth keeping in remembrance. The volume itself, a fitting memorial of a worthy life, is written with remarkably good taste and literary skill. There is no piling on of vapid eulogy, no effort to make the most of events, no wandering from the subject; but a straightforward, simply-told narrative, commendable in its brevity, of the life that first saw the light in the picturesque city of Perth, in Scotland, and faded out from this world in the city of Stratford, Ontario.

The life of David Kennedy has an added value in that it clearly presents a type of character by no means singular in humble Scottish life. As the assimilative processes of modern life advance, the marked individuality of character displayed by men like Kennedy becomes less and less possible. The masses are marshalled. There is no room for the man with distinctive peculiarities. He must fall in with the procession, or else fall out. The unmistakable value of home religious training is once more emphasized in the career of the Scottish singer. The lessons learned in his young days were never forgotten, and what is more, were faithfully carried out through life. In him the excellent virtues of thrift and generosity were well combined. Worldly success did not turn his head. He never felt justified in making senseless displays to obtrude his prosperity. He avoided the other extreme of sordid niggardliness. The education of his family was a matter of great solicitude to him, and he permitted no considerations of cost to interfere with his wishes in this respect. On all occasions he was ready, because he felt it to be his duty, to lend a helping hand to the needy, whether a congregation struggling with debt, a charitable institution seeking to extend its usefulness, a respectable individual in pecuniary straits, or even a ne'er-do-well Tasmanian tramp, who, oddly enough, turned out to be a Scotchman.

Few Canadians need to be told that David Kennedy was, by his musical and dramatic gifts, one of the most successful exponents of all that was best in Scottish songs and character. In early life he felt conscious of the possession of those gifts, and he resolutely set himself to their full development. He was resolved to do the best he could, and steadily did he persevere while life lasted. His success was no haphazard affair. Men have achieved a temporary success by adventitious means, but Kennedy's was the result of conscientious effort and faithful hard work. Like most Scotchmen he disliked shams, and he was determined he should not be one himself.

If it is imagined that Scottish people are of cold unimpressible nature, the case of Kennedy affords ample refutation. Though from the nature of his pursuit he led a wandering life, he was deeply attached to home. The exquisite letters written to

his children when separated from them reveal the affectionate nature of the man. He was also a keen observer of what he saw in many lands. He was sensitive to appreciation of his efforts. In a letter from Agra, while on his Indian tour, he says: "I miss the warm love of my audiences in other lands this (for the whites) is an arid land in all heart crops—pride, anger, all the hell crops grow well."

Wherever he went, David Kennedy was careful to maintain his Christian profession. On Sabbath, he was generally invited to lead the psalmody in the churches where he worshipped. Throughout Canada many congregations have pleasant recollections of the heartiness and skill with which he and members of his family led the songs of Zion. As giving a glimpse of the man's inner life, we present the following extract from a letter dated Woodbridge, Ont.

My life, how varied, exacting, and dangerous! Thanks to Him who guides all things, how successful in many ways! How much left personally to lament! The tension of mind and body has been enormous, and I feel myself deficient in that calm contemplative frame of mind in which only we can enjoy that supreme delight, communion with God. How elevating, ennobling to walk with God! How paltry appear our usual pursuits, and the appalling danger is that if these paltry pursuits have control long enough, they shut out God from the heart, and kill the capacity called heavenly mindedness. A man may commit no visible sin, and yet be lost. The god of this world is most dangerous when most respectable. We go to church regularly and do our outward duty, and, I believe, strive to do our spiritual duty. But, oh! we are so tired, deadened. I do believe that a holy Sabbath can only be thoroughly enjoyed after a Saturday of comparative rest. We have sung in many churches during the last two months, but Monday morning found us weary. The people would not sing, just sat and listened, and so we had all the solitariness of public performance, breeding in us a feeling of display out of tune with worship. There is no doubt we did good in so far as many people got a new idea of style and harmony of psalm singing, and the clergymen expressed themselves deeply obliged. I would rest on the Saturday night, but our folks would rather sing than sit moping in a wee hotel with nobody to speak to—so on we go with the light ahead growing bigger and warmer every day that passes—the light of hope that we may all meet again.

The second and larger part of the volume is no less interesting. It is young David Kennedy's record of their travels and observations in various lands. It is admirably written, and will be read with profit and delight.

## Books and Magazines.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—In this weekly magazine the reader finds all that is worth knowing in the realm of current literature.

THE EUREKA SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS BOOK. (New York, E. Glaeser.)—It would be difficult to devise a more simple or complete Sunday school class book than the one here mentioned.

MISS CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG, the singer, does not believe in sending American girls abroad for a musical education. She gives her reasons in an article which will appear in the *Youth's Companion*.

FROM the National School of Elocution and Oratory, Philadelphia, we have received THE ELOCUTIONIST'S ANNUAL, HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENTS and the CHILD'S OWN SPEAKER, all containing choice selections.

RECITATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS, selected and arranged by Margret Holmes. (Indianapolis: Charles A. Bates.)—These selections are varied and appropriate for the season and the purpose for which they have been issued.

THE WESTMINSTER QUESTION BOOK FOR 1888. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: James Bain & Sons.)—So well known and so highly prized is this aid to the study of the International series of lessons that the announcement of its appearance is all that is needed.

FROM the Willard Tract Depository we have received a neat little holiday gift book, OUR LAND ILLUSTRATED, THE CHRISTIAN GRACES SERIES and the CANADIAN PICTURESQUE NOTE, all of them beautiful, inexpensive and finely adapted for sending to friends as suggestive mementoes of kindly interest.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE JOURNAL. (Kingston.)—By some mischance the first number of the fifteenth volume of this sparkling academic monthly failed to connect. The number for December is as bright and attractive as any of its predecessors. Topics of live interest to its readers are briefly but pithily discussed.

IN THE HOSPITAL AT ELMRIDGE. By Ella Rodman Church. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication. Another of the "Elmridge Series." In the present volume the young people and their governess, with whom we have become so well acquainted, meet with an unwelcome interruption in their studies, which, however, leads to scenes of novel interest, and to the study of a fresh subject while they are in the hospital at Elmridge.

SERMONS FOR CHILDREN. Including the Beatitudes and the Faithful Servant. Preached in Westminster Abbey. By Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Toronto: William Briggs.)—These sermons to children by the late Dean of Westminster are calm, thoughtful and expressed in language of great beauty and simplicity. They inculcate much that is very valuable in the formation of Christian character and life.

MATTHEW DALE, FARMER. By Mrs. Sanders. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.)—Miss Ann Forbes, the orphan daughter of a Relief minister, applies for and obtains the position of housekeeper at Hallyards, the residence of Matthew Dale, a farmer of the country gentleman type, and a widower. The new housekeeper tells about her troubles and successes in the management of servants, and her experiences generally until she becomes her employer's wife. The story is told with a good deal of vim and vivacity, and illustrates some phases of Scotch country life with which many of our readers are familiar.

THE ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. (New York: Macmillan & Co.)—The readers of this very attractive monthly are presented this month with a handsome Christmas number. No fewer than fifteen beautifully executed full-page engravings enhance its attractions. A copiously illustrated paper by Lawrence Oliphant, on "The Sea of Galilee," is full of information, and of great interest. The other principal papers, all illustrated, are "Ornithology at South Kensington," "What Players are they?" and "Coaching Days and Coaching Ways." Sermons, poems and short stories add to the variety and value of this charming number.

MRS. WINCHESTER'S KITCHEN: or, The One Talent Improved. By Mrs. Helen E. Brown. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.)—This book tells how one plain woman, with quite ordinary gifts and advantages, made her life truly and richly helpful to many of her neighbours by faithfully using the small gifts God had bestowed upon her. It is a book Christian mothers may read with real profit, as they will be sure to get from it many suggestions as to homely yet effective ways of doing good. They will see how many opportunities of honouring Christ and blessing others they really have even in the plainest circumstances, and when their hands are fullest of household work and care.

THE PULPIT TREASURY. (New York: E. B. Treat.)—Princeton comes in for considerable prominence in the December number of this very excellent evangelical monthly. There is an able discourse on "Mighty in the Scriptures," preached at the opening of the present session of Princeton Theological Seminary, by Professor Green, D.D., LL.D., whose portrait forms the frontispiece of the present number. There is also a full page engraving of the famous seminary and chapel, a portrait of the recently-appointed Professor of Homiletics—the Rev. William M. Paxton, D.D., LL.D.—and his inaugural discourse. Then there is a view of the First Presbyterian Church, New York City. The number as a whole is one of great excellence.

GUNETHICS; or, the Ethical Status of Woman. By Rev. W. K. Brown, A.M., D.D. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—This little book, by the President of Cincinnati Wesleyan College, is an attempt to sketch the status of woman in the field of human civilization and redemption, and thereby disclose the ethical status of the sex. He argues from the Scriptures, earnestly and gently, on the basis of his exegesis, that the woman has all the rights and immunities bestowed upon her that belong to the male, both in the Church and the State. It is a strong plea for the recognition of woman as having equal inheritance, endowment and dispensation with man in matters of religion, and that she should be conceded equal rights in every field of life. The work may be read with interest and profit even by those less advanced in this line of belief.

\*DAVID KENNEDY, the Scottish Singer: Reminiscences of his Life and Work. By Margery Kennedy. And Singing Round the World. By David Kennedy, Jun. With Portrait and Illustrations. (Toronto: Williamson & Co.)