

THE PARTING OF DOUGLAS AND MARMION.

Altered to dialogue form by James Hughes, Esq., late head master of the Boys' Model School, Toronto.

CHARACTERS :

DOUGLAS—A haughty Scotch peer.

MARMION—An English Knight, sent by Henry VIII, of England, to James the IV, of Scotland, with friendly overtures which were rejected. He has been, at the command of the Scottish King, the unwelcome guest of Douglas, and is about to recross the Border on the morning previous to the battle of Flodden Field.

MARMION :

At length the welcome hour has come,
When I may seek my English home ;
I've given my message and received
Reply at which I'm deeply grieved.
I came desiring peace, but find
That nought can change your monarch's
mind.

DOUGLAS :

My monarch but performs a part
Approved by every Scottish heart,
While true to friends whose worth he knows,
He proudly scorns to treat with foes,
Who, though they hate him, basely bow
And humbly seek his friendship now ;
We shun the love which springs from fear,
And spurn the aim which brought you here,
I'm not surprised that you lament,
Because my king would not consent ;
No doubt 'twould suit you well, if he
Were willing your ally to be,
While you, rejoicing at the chance,
Were warring with our friends in France.

MARMION :

Thy base suspicions show a mind
Well schooled to thoughts of darker kind ;
I'll treat them with deserved disdain,
For England's honour knows no stain.
Full soon, proud Douglas, you'll be taught
That not from fear King Henry sought
To stop the war you have begun,
And weld our nations into one ;
For, though your nation nobly chose
The time when we have other foes,
You'll find us ready even now
To teach your haughty king to bow.

Too well we know the Scottish heart
To let our bravest troops depart ;
So, while one army conquers France,
We've kept for you our strongest lance.

DOUGLAS :

Bold braggart, ere to-morrow's light
Has yielded to succeeding night,
The test will come, so words are vain
To settle what will then be plain.
I'll yield no praise to deeds undone,
Nor boast of battles till they're won ;
Nor can I deem his valor great,
Who in his foeman's halls can prate
Of glory, while his country's needs
Require not words, but noble deeds.
Away ! prepare you for the fight ;
Be worthy of the name of knight.

MARMION :

I go, and parting gives no pain,
"But though perhaps I might complain,
Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither at your king's request,
I go in friendship from your land
So noble earl receive my hand."

DOUGLAS :

"My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will.
To each one whom he sends, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone
From turret to foundation stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own ;
And never shall in friendship grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."

MARMION :

"If 'twere not that a hoary beard"
Proclaimed a right to be revered,
The hand of Marmion had not spared
To cleave the head of him who dared
His honor to deride.
"And, first, I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate ;—
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here, in thy hold, thy vassals near,
(Nay never look upon your lord,
And lay your hand upon your sword)
I tell thee thou'rt defied !

And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any Lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied !"

DOUGLAS :

"And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall ?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go ?
No, by Saint Bryde of Bothwell, no !
Up drawbridge, grooms ! what, warder, ho !
Let the portcullis fall."

Marmion hastily retires from the platform and reappearing in another part of the room (outside the castle wall), hurls defiance to Douglas.

MARMION :

Ha, treacherous Scot ! although thy band
In haste obeyed thy base command,
My noble steed, in danger tried
Their promptest efforts has defied,
And now, I dare thee to maintain
Thine honor free from foulest stain
In combat on the open plain.
And know, proud Earl, that English
Knight
Seeks no advantage in the fight.
So, lest thy age should form a plea
For silence, send the bravest three,
Who dare decry my king or me,
And Marmion's hand shall make them feel
For England's honor by her steel.

DOUGLAS :

"To horse ! to horse ! give chase ! give chase
Shall Douglas bear this deep disgrace ?
But hold ! my king has given command,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
To give safe conduct and a guide ;
This I must do whate'er betide.
A plague upon my fiery mood !
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood !
I thought to slay him where he stood.
But, though my hate I cannot hide,
I warrant him a warrior tried,
Bold can he speak and bravely ride.
A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name,"
So call him back, a truce proclaim—
No stain must mar the Douglas fame—
And haste provide a trusty guide
With him to Surrey's camp to ride.

II. Papers on Educational Subjects.

PUBLIC SCHOOL LIFE.

A University man and an English Public School man are of a peculiar type. We do not say they are the highest breed of humanity, but they are a breed peculiar to themselves, with singular, cork-like faculty of floating, with other corks, to the top of whatever social gathering-bucket they happen to be in. The Eton boy is equally at home, charmingly unconscious of self, and yet with a deep inner self-respect that no vulgarity of others can impair or self-assertion of others reach, whether he be cooking rats with his fellow-middies' mess over the gun-room lamp, or dining with the King of Ashantee ; whether he be mate to "a horse thief and a cockney" in the gold diggings, or preaching a University or Whitehall sermon. He has his faults ; unless a religious re-action has set in, he is heartily selfish ; he draws that distinction between "ladies" and "women," between "girls" and "gals," which Charles Lamb so nobly scouted and tenderly reproved. His self-possession, too, can easily be called impudence by his enemies. But he belongs to the class which has been lately and is now moulding history and doing seven-eighths of all that is worth or not worth doing in the world. There is no better training school in the world for the race of life, so called, than the

English Public School, and hardly a wise father in England but sends his son, undoubtingly and as a matter of acknowledged advantage, to one. How few would sacrifice the ineradicable memories of Public School life, with its prefects and its roll-calls, its whole school days and half-holidays, for a baronetcy or even for a bishopric.

The faults and abuses of English Public Schools are trifling. What are their advantages ? Firstly, the boys are trusted and so are at once trustworthy. When asked who did anything they give in their names as a matter of course and take their punishment like men. Again, from the first they are brought into contact with thorough gentlemen and undeniable scholars as masters. The masters are all University men. Hence they learn to obey, or rather never to dream of disobedience, and to yield respect where respect is due gladly and happily, and to the sound growth of their own self-respect. Omitting much, remember how in all their games, the main part, after all, and the very salt of Public School life, they learn to forget themselves in a "cause," to recklessly sacrifice themselves to the success of their party. Self-denial, culminating in self-forgetfulness, is the highest virtue in men. How are these schools to be transplanted to this country ? State aid will not produce them. They depend on private munificence here as elsewhere. A respectable quota of English real estate and existing capital is of originally private bequest in trust for English Public School education. Too many English Public Schools are restricted to the rich.