

and made the darkness both dismal and visible. And thus, while this man of genius was a ruined outcast, without friendship or lands, by means of inordinate passions and disordered will, a humble mechanic, by moderate wants and unsophisticated affection, had secured all the pleasures which wisdom can seek, or which earth can bestow—the blessings of health, competence, love, and home.

At Lanark, my young friend and I separated; he returned to Glasgow and I went on to Edinburgh. Once again I saw him. He was going home to England, to spend the vacation. He was in the heyday of life and hope; already the gladness that awaited his return was before him in anticipation; the clasp of his father's hand and the pressure of his mother's bosom; the merry welcome of his brothers and sisters, and the hearty greetings of his school-day companions. He appeared to enjoy all that he had anticipated, but he did not enjoy it long. From an evening circle of mirth and gaiety, he came away loaded with fever, and died, after an illness of two days. As his image often comes to me in the recollections, that people the summer twilight or the winter interval, between the closing of the shutters and the lighting of the candles, I could not wait a reminiscence of him, from the individual musings which these scribblings are intended to record.

Edinburgh, the beautiful and the far-famed, I mention only for the sake of a little incident. Lions, I like well to see, and I saw them; but they have been described to the extremity of a hair and the point of a claw. I have nothing to add to these zoological researches; and, truth to say, if I had the ability, I want the inclination. The most agreeable hour I spent was with Mr. Steele, then a young sculptor of eminent promise; promise which he has since fulfilled. The stamp of an artist was on his pale and thoughtful countenance; his mere gestures and expression had a grace which evinced an innate perception of the fair and the fit. Like every man of a true inspiration, he was modest and courteous. He led me through his studio; shewed me works in different stages, from embryo thoughts, rudely fashioned into clay, to those which stood completely embodied in the full maturity of chiselled marble. Sculpture, I ventured to observe, was the most perfect manifestation of *ideal* beauty through *material* form. He seemed pleased with the remark; merely, I suppose, because it implied a desire to judge of his art with a rational appreciation. I went from his door, confident of his progress. I had no critical skill; I could give no reason for the faith that was in me; but the faith was there, and it has been since justified. A few minutes after quitting his door, I was

seated in a canal packet boat, making all speed back to Glasgow. One other passenger was in it, and that was a young lady. The circumstance justified conversation without an introduction, and ere long we were deep in gossip about things in general, and Edinburgh in particular. I mentioned my visit to Mr. Steele, and gave hearty utterance to the feelings which it inspired. "I, sir," said she, "*am Mr. Steele's sister.*" Pleasant it was to me, that my words were not words of censure; pleasant to me afterwards was the memory of this praise; and, flowing honestly and warmly as it did from a stranger's lips to a sister's ear, I would fain hope that to the lady herself it was also pleasant. I would not for the critical powers of Longinus, and the opulent wit of Rabelais, have wounded that young girl's feelings; and yet, unconsciously, I might have stung them to the quick. Mr. Steele has recently been selected by Sir Robert Peel to execute one of three great national works.

Thus the stream of years flows on, sweeping some to oblivion, and carrying others to the open day of fame. But, after all, this course is only comparative. The most noted will sink at last with the most obscure. My young friend awakened a few tones of emotion within the circle of a span, and then came silence. The Scottish sculptor has made for his conceptions lasting habitations in solid forms. Yet had my young friend an imagination as mighty in harmony as Handel's, he would, notwithstanding, be forgotten; and had the Scottish sculptor the plastic chisel of Phidias, a like destiny would also be his. The statues of Greece are in ashes, and the music of Zion has not left an echo. Time not only wears out arts, but ultimately wears out all nature. Not only the sound of the lute and the lyre die, but so will the sound of the wind and the wave: the colours of the pencil fade, so will the glory of the sun: the sculptured marble moulders, so will the mountain from which it was hewn. The only immortality is Thought, and that which thought inhabits—*SPERM.*

#### CONNEXION OF EVENTS.

THE progress of human intellect is subject to the same general laws observable in the individual development of our faculties; being the result of that very development considered at once in a great number of individuals united in society. But the result, which every instant presents, depends upon that of the preceding instants, and has an influence on the instants which follow.—*Condorcet.*

It is better to think in poetry and write in prose than to think in prose and juggle in rhyme.