

among us is hailed as the harbinger of merriment and fun, and his joyous laugh rings through the apartment. Dr. McDhu is a great favourite with all, and most deservedly so. Skillful in the medical profession, and at all times willing to resort to the allopathic system, when he deems it necessary, he is a thoroughly scientific hydropathist, and his practice has been attended with eminent success.

In addition to these professional qualifications, he is genial and considerate to the peculiar circumstances of his patients, and his presence among them is universally hailed with pleasure.

It is part of his system to make studious and sedentary persons take exercise of all kinds, and draw them away from their books and mental occupations; consequently, when he appears in the drawing-room in the evenings, he speedily closes the volume in the hands of the reading man, and summons the whole party to a game at "hunt the hare," "post," or some such stirring occupation. It is ludicrous to see grave, elderly men and dowager ladies joining with the young and gay, in flying through the room at one or other of these juvenile entertainments. The shouts of merriment resound far throughout the house; and occasionally some of these quiet individuals, who shut themselves up in their private parlours, are whirled by the uproarious sounds to come and "see the fun."

At nine o'clock, Waterston entered with supper. This consists of a glass of cold water, which, handed with all due solemnity on a silver salver, is presented to each person. At this stage of proceedings, I quitted the drawing-room to come and finish this letter. The gas is extinguished in the drawing-room at ten, and one hour later is turned off entirely in the establishment; so that all who have not by that time their brows encircled with the "poppy wreath," find themselves in total obscurity. It now only wants a very few minutes to the hour prescribed; so that unless I betake myself to the flickering aid of vesta lights, I must conclude my history of "a day at Ben Dhrypping."

A SELF-TAUGHT LINGUIST.

MANY years ago, while attending one of the elementary Greek classes at Edinburgh University, there sat on the same bench with me a country lad, so raw and uncouth that even I, who had no pretensions to rank and appearance, used to wonder at my strange-looking neighbour. Not many years afterwards, the grotesque rustic became Dr. Alexander Murray, Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Edinburgh.

At the time I speak of, Murray was about three-and-twenty, and the rest of the class averaged from fifteen to eighteen years of age. He had acquired, with great labour, the degree of the knowledge of Greek which qualified him to sit among us. His father, who was a poor Galloway shepherd, and an old man when Murray was born, remembered the times of the battle of Sheriffmuir, having been born in the year 1706. He bought for the child a catechism, no doubt the "Shorter Catechism," which

still plays so important a part in Scottish education, and began to teach him the alphabet. Next succeeded a psalm-book, the New Testament, and the Bible, as he called the Old Testament, and he soon astonished the neighbours by reciting large passages of Scripture to them, and acquired great fame for his reading, and was called a living miracle for his great memory. All his father's sons had been bred shepherds, and he meant to employ Alexander in that line, and often blamed him for laziness and uselessness because he was a bad and negligent herd-boy. The fact is, he was always a weakly child; not unhealthy, but yet not stout. He was short-sighted, a defect his father did not know; which was often the occasion of blunders when he was sent to look for cattle. He taught himself to write by copying the letters on a board with coals, or the black end of an extinguished heather stem or root. For some years he spent on ballads and penny histories every sixpence that friends or strangers gave him. He was for a short period at the school of New Galloway; and in time he was allowed to follow his inclination for reading, and to go about the country, sometimes teaching, sometimes being taught, and borrowing books from whoever would lend them. He got immense benefit from "Salmon's Geographical Grammar." He often admired and mused on the specimens of the Lord's Prayer in every language found in Salmon's Grammar. From this, and "Bailey's Dictionary," a Welsh history of Christ and his Apostles, and similar sources, he picked up the Anglo-Saxon, the Visigothic, the German, the Welsh, the Abyssinian, and the Arabic.

He had been early informed by some elders and good religious people, that Hebrew was the first language, and in 1789 an old woman showed him her psalm-book, which was printed with a large type, had notes on each page, and likewise what he discovered to be the Hebrew alphabet, marked letter after letter in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm. He took a copy of these letters, by printing them off in his odd way, and kept them. In 1791, he determined to learn Hebrew, and, by the man who rode post, sent to Edinburgh for a Hebrew Grammar. He had long known the alphabet; he soon mastered the points, and in the course of a month got into the whole system of Jewish Grammar. He had mastered Latin and Greek before this, with no great difficulty.

In 1794, he went to Dumfries with a collection of poems composed by himself, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, to try if he could raise a little money by their publication, and so get to college. Neither of the two booksellers in that town would undertake the publication. During the visit to Dumfries, he was introduced to Robert Burns, who treated him with great kindness, told him that if he could get to college without publishing his poems it would be better, as his taste was young and not formed, and he would be ashamed of his productions when he could judge and write better.

In the summer of that year, a friend of his, of the name of McHay, was in Edinburgh, and, describing his situation to James Kinnear, a journeyman printer, was told that if Murray could be

brought into town, Dr. Baird and other gentlemen would take notice of him. Accordingly, with a letter of introduction to Dr. Baird, from Mr. Maitland, the minister of Minnigaff, he came to Edinburgh, was kindly received by the Principal, and by his instrumentality procured a university education; and hence my vicinity to him as a class-fellow at Professor Dalzel's.

That I was not the only person who was startled by his uncouth aspect is manifest from an anecdote related by Mr. Strang, a Relief minister. "Some time in the summer of 1796, I was taking a forenoon's ride for two or three miles beyond the village of Minnigaff. In ascending a hilly part of the road I dismounted, and leading my horse, the day being warm, my attention was attracted by a ragged boy, sitting upon the heath, reading. Being in no hurry, and impelled by curiosity, I drew near and spoke to him. Observing a number of books lying around him, I lifted one, and, opening it, found it to be Virgil. I desired him to read the first eclogue, and he did so at once. I asked him if he knew me; he said he did. I asked if he knew where I lived; he replied, yes. I requested him to call on Friday night, at six o'clock, to tea. He came; but judge Mrs. Strang's astonishment when Murray appeared, and announced his invitation. Having intentionally concealed the circumstance of our interview, she was horrified at the idea of my folly in requesting a beggar-boy, bare-footed, clothed in rags, of whom she had never heard, to drink tea. However, after a little explanation, she was satisfied, and he was entertained with a hearty welcome. When he tasted the tea, he said it was the first he had ever drank, and thought it smelt like new-mown hay."

Murray requested of Mr. Strang the loan of "Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric," and, leaving with him a manuscript of poems he had written in the moors, he begged Mr. S. to procure a subscription for printing them, in order to purchase clothes. It was not thought advisable to publish the poems, but he was soon furnished with the means of appearing in a garb more suited to his future prospects.

Having completed his studies at the University, he, in 1806, became minister of the parish of Urr, in his native county. He continued there till 1812, when he became candidate for the Hebrew Chair in the College of Edinburgh. His chief opponents were the ministers of Edinburgh, as one of their number was also a candidate, and the office had generally been filled by one of their body. Several of the ministers being also Professors, and members of the *Senatus Academicus*, of which Dr. Baird was Principal, showed their feeling by absenting themselves from the meetings. On one occasion, when Dr. Baird was absent, it seemed as if the *Senatus* could not be constituted, as it was usually done, by the Principal pronouncing a prayer; but the manly form of Dr. Gregory stalked forward, and said there should be no difficulty on that score, for he would open the meeting with prayer. Accordingly, he recited a Latin prayer, which he used to hear from Principal Robertson in his student days, and the business proceeded.

Murray was appointed, with the general approbation and high hopes of the learned world, both as to what he would do in his class-room, and as the author of various works on the science of language, more profoundly learned than any that had hitherto appeared.

Finding that the Scottish Clergy did not pay that attention to Hebrew which he thought they should do, he used to ask his students what they would think of themselves, if, having engaged to lecture and comment upon Homer once every week, they should be obliged to confess that they could not read Greek.

Unfortunately, the weakly constitution of this extraordinary genius sank under the fatigues of his first session. Consumption manifested itself; and he died, universally and deeply lamented, on the 15th of April, 1813, before he had completed his thirty-eighth year.

THE MINERS OF CORNWALL.

For the larger proportion of the copper and tin, and much of the lead and various other metals, used in our manufactures, we are indebted to the labours of about thirty thousand of the industrial classes in the county of Cornwall. These thirty thousand of our compatriots are in some respects a peculiar race, of whom the world knows little, and who have a substantial claim to more consideration and regard than is generally awarded them. As we are convinced that the reader will find it worth his while to make their acquaintance, we shall endeavour, as briefly as may be, to present him with such a sketch of the workers in and around the mines of Cornwall, and their circumstances, as will perhaps effect that object.

The habitat of the Cornish miners is invariably at no great distance from the mine in which they and their families find employment, wherever that may be, and that for a reason which will presently appear. We may divide them into three classes: the tut-workers, the tributers, and the surface-workers. The tut-workers (or task-workers) are those who sink the shafts, excavate the lateral galleries, fix the supporting wood-work, and perform various other duties in preparing the mine for the excavation of the metals, and in maintaining it in working condition. All their work is done by task or by contract, which in their case is the same thing; and when employed they know perfectly well what their earnings will be.

Such is not the case with the tributers, however: these cannot be tasked, for obvious reasons, one of which is, that they would have small inducement to energy if they were so employed. The tributers work the mineral vein, or lode, as it is called among miners, and, by the system on which they work, it is made their interest to get out as much of the ore from the vein as they possibly can. Instead of fixed wages, they receive a "tribute" or per-centage upon the value of all they dig out—an arrangement which, if it exposes them to loss of labour when the mine becomes suddenly unproductive, may chance to enrich them of a sudden