

thrush, as he rumples up his feathers, and how sleek and knowing does the blackbird appear in his glossy coat and bright yellow bill.

Many birds which ought, according to their nature, at this time of the year to be in South Africa, found themselves, in November, 1859, in an artificial tropical climate in the Crystal Palace. Thus, we inspected specimens of the blackcap, the ringdove, the redpole, the brambling, the "wry-neck cuckoo's mate, or snakebird," (that curious little fellow with a coat like the bark of a tree, and who perpetually hammered with his bill at the bars of the cage, as his habit is to tap for insects on the bark of forest trees); the ringdove; and last, but not least, one cage containing "six nightingales, aged seven months," the price of which was marked as £12, and not too much either, considering the excessive difficulty of rearing them in captivity. We have heard of a gentleman who once bought a nest of young nightingales: they were watched, tended, and fed with the greatest care, opening their mouths with unwonted avidity: the brood got on capitally, and the owner was delighted to think that he was going to rear a whole brood of nightingales. As time advanced, feathers began to sprout on the naked hungry little creatures, and as the feathers grew, doubts arose in the mind of the owner; at last there could no longer be any doubt: they were not nightingales at all, but a lot of common larks, palmed off as nightingales in their innocent infancy. Note, if you buy young nightingales, do not make your purchase before the feathers have sprouted.

A large collection of parrots headed the list of "Foreign Birds" at the show. Ten grey parrots led the van. For the first on the list £100 was asked, and £50 for another. There were also nine green parrots exhibited; most of these were talkers, whistlers, or singers, and their performances were printed in full. One bird could say enough to fill six lines of print—"imitates thrushes and blackbirds, performs nursing the baby, drawing a cork, etc." A full report of their speeches was placed on their cages, written on cardboard; but before the show was over, the birds had eaten up these reports, or pulled them to pieces with their bills. It is an extraordinary fact, we observed in these speeches, that their leading features decidedly relate to domestic and affectionate habits. Thus we find "Pretty Polly," "Such a duck," "Pretty fly," "Pretty creature," and the spectator is nearly always invited to nurse the baby, or kiss the performer; in fact, kissing seems the principal theme of these bird discourses. I wonder who taught the parrots to speak.

After the parrots came the paroquets, the cockatoos, and macaws, in great variety alike of form, colour, and acquirements; some screamed as if the house was on fire, or held their heads down in silence to be scratched, as if humbly begging one's pardon; others looked sedate and judge-like, others stupidity itself—pretty, but dumb, like the wax figures of the beautiful ladies at Madame Tussaud's. Then we saw cages full of little foreign birds, the constant inhabitants of aviaries, such as the Java sparrows, the indigo blue birds,

the zebra wax birds, the cardinals, the quaker birds or silver beaks, the weaver birds, Californian quails, capuchin manikins, etc., the prettiest of the lot, to our taste, being the grand "Whidah birds," which looked as if they had been cut out with a pair of scissors, of the best black silk velvet. Then we had two piping crows of Australia (price £4 4s.), those magpie-looking birds that pipe and laugh with such musical voices; also a couple of common English herons in a large white wicker cage. These birds did not seem to enter into the joke of the exhibition at all, and stood looking horribly sulky, and ruffled up their feathers at all visitors. A couple of herrings were placed in water for their dinners, but they seemed to have lost their appetites.

Every now and then, as we were examining the birds, loud shouts of unearthly laughter rang through the building; then it ceased, and a sort of wild hysterical shout succeeded. "Some curious bird," thought we, and sought him out directly. We soon found our hilarious friend in a blackbird's cage, and at once recognised the great brown king-fisher, or laughing jackass, from Australia. We laughed at his long beak, open mouth, and absurd voice; he instantly took up the note, and began laughing heartily at us in return. Perhaps, kind reader, you too will follow suit, and laugh also.

A DAY, AT BEN DHRYPPING.

A LETTER FROM A HYDROPATHIC CONTRIBUTOR.

It was with no little satisfaction that I spied your welcome handwriting amongst the huge pile of letters on the tray this morning. The arrival of the post is one of the most exciting and stirring



events here. Thanks for your home news contained in your valued epistle, as well as for the intelligence *ex officio*.

I am amused with your minute inquiries as to

our manner of life here, and your urgent desire that I should disclose to you some of what you are pleased to term "the vaporous mysteries of hydro-pathic life." I gladly comply with your request, and at your suggestion shall detail the events of one entire day of Ben Dhrypping life.



This morning, at six precisely, John, my bathman, knocked at the door, and entering with sleeves tucked up, and all ready for immediate action, proceeded to fill the "shallow bath." Into this I had the felicity of extending myself, when John commenced rubbing me with extraordinary vigour. This ablution was concluded by several pitchers full of water being thrown over my shoulders. You cannot imagine how professional these bathmen look, nor how swift and orderly their motions are; the whole operation is completed within the time that one acting for himself would have taken to make up his mind to undergo it. "Now, sir, off for your run before breakfast," said John, as he quitted the apartment, and I was not long in following his advice.

It was a splendid morning, and meeting Major Wilcox and Maitland at the hall door, we started for a walk on the adjoining moor. The house, I may mention, is situated midway up the slope of this moor, and the view of the rich dale beneath is extremely fine. The building is very extensive, being capacious enough to accommodate more than one hundred patients and visitors, besides servants and the household of the establishment. The public rooms are large and airy, and the bed-rooms comfortable and admirably adapted for all hydro-pathic purposes. At eight o'clock a sonorous bell summoned us to breakfast. Upwards of eighty sat down at table, and did ample justice to the plain but wholesome repast placed before them. There were, as usual, several new arrivals, who, coming

late in the previous evening, appeared for the first time in the dining-room.

"Oh," said one lady seated near me, "I am so glad we have tea for breakfast: I fancied we should have had only cold water."

"Pray," said another, "do you know when we



have luncheon here?" Wilcox replied, "At twelve o'clock, in the hall; but should you wish it later, you will find it on the table till one."

"Exactly," said the lady, who proves to be an Honourable Mrs. Wells; "I suppose cold luncheon is considered, in this digestive asylum, more wholesome than anything hot or heavy."

"Precisely so; you will find the noon refection here, all that can be desired for light and nutritive qualities."

Breakfast being over, we repaired to the drawing-room, where the Scriptures and a prayer are read daily by Dr. McDhu himself. After prayers, the doctor went to his consulting-room, where each patient had an interview. Having, in my turn, had my sentence for the day pronounced, I sought out my semi-amphibious friend, and arranged with him to have bath number two at eleven o'clock. Punctual to the hour, John arrived at my room, and said, "You must please come, sir, to No. 60 bath-room; it's a rain-bath you're to have."

Not having had this particular immersion before, I followed in some trepidation as to what was now to befall me. This bath-room presents a very inquisitorial aspect, and the foot-bath, spouting apparatus, and other aqueous instruments, might, from appearance, belong to any papistic torture-room. One only, however, requires a personal experience of them, to test both their agreeable and efficacious qualities; and I, as a patient of a fortnight's time, can bear ample and grateful testimony to the immense benefit I have derived from

the whole system of Ben Dhrypping, and anticipate that, by the end of four weeks more, I shall have regained more health and vigour than six months ago, in my Ganjam home, I ever anticipated enjoying again.

But to return to the rain-bath. Opening the door of a closet in one corner of the room, and scarcely giving me time (in my somewhat indolent fashion) to divest myself of my clothes, John politely desired me to walk in, and immediately closed the door.

"You must let me out should I not like it," I shouted out, as I found myself thus hermetically enclosed.

"Not or ever yir time's oop, sir," replied John, in a tone of calm indifference; "only one minute an' a aff. Now, sir, I'm going for to turn on the water."

A second of breathless suspense, and forthwith, on all sides of me, shot forth ten thousand tiny jets of water, darting themselves upon every square inch of my body. The sensation was most curious, but not disagreeable, and it is found to have a most bracing effect upon the whole system.

This forenoon battery being closed, I started with Maitland for a long walk; and, taking the "Lion fountain" *en route*, drank a glass of the very finest water I ever tasted. Maitland having just come out of the "compressed air-bath," in which he had been for two hours, was ready for a brisk walk to warm him, and gladly acceded to my proposal to strike across the moor, and penetrate to some of the more distant scenery. I never knew any one so improved as he is, mainly owing to the air-bath. I believe that this bath at Ben Dhrypping is the only one of the kind in the country, and patients repair here from all parts to have the benefit of it. It is chiefly applied to those suffering from chest, bronchial, or asthmatic affections, and in many cases with great success. This bath is only a few yards distant from the house, and is capable of containing six persons at a time. The cold is sometimes intense, and furs and great-coats are in requisition by those who take it. Imagine a neat very small room, capable, as I have said, of containing six, seated, with comfortable chairs and a small table in the centre. The patients being all assembled, the air is pumped in until the pressure amounts to seven and a half pounds for every square inch. This artificial atmosphere tends to brace and strengthen the delicate organs, and is accompanied with no unpleasant effects.

Maitland and I were amply rewarded for our enterprising spirit, and had a splendid walk across a moor, which would rival any of the Highland ones, and the air is as exhilarating in its effects as a draught of the rarest mountain dew. We re-entered the grounds in time to hear the first bell sounding forth its hospitable reminder of the near approach of dinner—an announcement which calls forth the "readiest of ready responses."

We were soon all seated at table, and the rapid incision made into the joints and fowls showed that the mountain air had been profitably inhaled and enjoyed.

The first course having been removed, Mr. E—,

an eminent London barrister, who pays two annual visits to Ben Dhrypping, rose, and said he had, in a few words, a communication to make to the company, to the following effect: "It was the practice in this establishment that an expedition be made once a year by the servants in the house to — Abbey, the expense of which was usually defrayed by each one of the company contributing a small sum. He had now the satisfaction of intimating that the proposed holiday would take place the following day, should the weather prove favourable." In adverting to the charms of the spot they were to visit, he concluded thus: "It is one peculiarity of the water at Ben Dhrypping, that it *will not make mustard* (one of the *anti-hydropathic* condiments). It has been tried again and again, but each effort has proved a failure. The water of the river, however, near — Abbey, is peculiarly adapted for such purposes, and it is said that at one particular bend, the river assumes a complexion very much resembling beer, while others have declared that something as pure as whisky has been known to emanate therefrom." This effusion gave occasion for great merriment, and it was curious to hear the learned lawyer evoking materials for mirth out of—nothing.



Dinner being over, and rain having set in, some of the company adjourned to the drawing-room to hear Mr. B. (who is a very great favourite in the house) give a recitation. After this had been given with admirable effect, I heard our friend Mr. Glass also asked to repeat one of his own poems; his reply was: "Pray don't ask me for anything that requires either memory or thought; for I declare I feel as if my mind were all washed out since I have been at this Ben Dhrypping establishment. I had one or two letters to write this

morning, that required some consideration, and I found it almost impossible to work a bit; and when I told the doctor, he said he was delighted to hear it, for that he doesn't want any of us to be writing or studying here."

[To be continued.]

HAUNTED LONDON.

I.—LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

LINCOLN'S INN, that is to say, the old "inn" or mansion of the Earls of Lincoln (1312) on its grimy Chancery Lane side, is indeed, as Leigh Hunt well expressed it, "saturated with London smoke." That long row of black opaque windows, that even in hot bright June, sunshine never seems to visit; those mud-splashed spiders' nests of opaque glass, piled up with heaps of dead men's briefs, that are tied with red tape and spiced with dust black as pepper; can scarcely, by the liveliest imagination, be recognised as lighting the chambers where Cromwell spent his wild youth, afterwards to be so weepingly repented of; where Dr. Donne wrote quaint crabbed poetry; where the wise Lord Mansfield sipped his tea; and where, at the mature age of twenty, Sir Thomas More donned a hair shirt, to help him to meditate on law and philosophy, with that massy head one day to be held up in the bloody grip of an executioner.

It is healthy, in walking London streets, to fly the mind, as if it was a hawk, back at old times; it removes us from the selfishness of the present; it reads all our dreams and hopes a sharp sound lesson of the mutability of things, and teaches us what a great kaleidoscope this city (nay, the world itself) is in the hands of Time—that mighty conjuror, upon whose magic chess-board we men are but as the pawns of red and white.

It gives, too—this putting on, now and then, antiquarian spectacles—a charm to our walks, lifting off London roofs for us, as a carver lifts up the lid of a pie, and showing us under each, little fairy worlds of history and poetry; for behind every stucco shop-front even in this Babel Fleet Street are hid tragedies and comedies, more wonderful than playwright or novelist ever wrote: for fiction after all, is at the best but a poor apery of human life.

As I walk down Chancery Lane, observing this smoke-black wall of the legal fortress, so squalid in appearance, so splendid in memories, I can scarcely, though I have read it so often, imagine that this lawyers' inn was, hundreds of years ago, a solemn monastery of the *Black Friars*, till they removed near the bridge that still bears their name. Their cloisters faced on the Holborn side the palace of the Bishop of Chichester, built in Henry III's reign. When the monkish rooks flew, the Earl of Lincoln, by Edward I, his master's leave, built his house or "inn" here; and then, in Henry VII's time, the Bishop of Chichester, reserving lodgings to himself, leased the inn to students of law, and Sir Thomas Lovel, treasurer of the royal household to "Harry of Richmond," built the present pile out of the materials of the bishop's palace, the Earl of Lin-

coln's house, and what remained of the old monastery; so our new world goes on using up its old materials; our new books spring up like fungi from our old books; and the fossil bones of extinct animals go to pave our very London streets.

But let us pass under the Tudor brick arch, that Sir Thomas Lovel must have smiled at when it was completed, and wind through to meet our shadow-friends in Lincoln's Inn Fields, stopping only for a moment to wonder where the old garden wall "next to Chancery Lane" stood, at which that bitter-faced satirist, Ben Jonson, Shakspeare's friend, once worked with a diamond-shaped steel trowel in his hand, and Homer in his pocket.

Now we breathe freer; we are past the chapel, and all the chambers with doorways lettered like the backs of books, and are in the fields, that in Charles I's time, Inigo Jones, the great Welsh architect, Ben Jonson's sworn enemy, laid out just as they are now, making, with clever pedantry, the great inclosure the exact size of the base of the largest pyramid of Egypt. Gigantic puzzle! I can see it now, far away as when Moses saw it, braving the sun and cleaving the clouds. It may make the hard man laugh when I confess, without shame, that there is not a sooty lilac bush, nor a black wiry plane tree, in those gardens that the great Lord Bacon helped Jones to lay out, that I do not love, and indeed regard as a sort of poor relation. They gave me, a London-bred boy, my first ideas of country delights; there I first saw a real live butterfly; there I first leaped for joy, to see the buds break out; and there I first felt sad to see the beautiful green leaves, that spread out like birds' wings, and move and breathe and all but speak, turn to the death-yellow of autumn.

But I have greater people to talk about, and must forget myself. Inigo Jones's houses are in Arch Row, on the west side of the square. Here, in the Georgian times, lived all the stars of fashion, for this was then a sort of Belgrave Square to the rakes in wigs, and the card-playing ladies in hoops and sacques. The Dukes of Ancaster, Horace Walpole, the witty flippant memoir writer's friends, lived on this side, in a house now sliced into chambers; where, I am told, high up, once mused our great poet, Tennyson. His room is a cheery little room, Venetianized by a heavy stone balustrade facing the window. There is a certain look of faded grandeur, even now, about this house, that commands respect; the square black-red brick pillars at the gateway still forlornly balance their stone globes, as if they were disconsolate giant jugglers, doomed, without an audience, to go through their eternal performance; and in blue fog evenings I should not be astonished to see sweep into that grass-grown court-yard a huge gilded coach, the panels blazing with mythological subjects, but the coachman a skeleton, driving the ghost of a duke home from a Walpole "drum."

Not far from this haunted house come three mansions, once united into one, and called Powis House. When Popish James II fled to France, the Marquis of Powis left this new-built house, and fled too; the Lord Keeper had it then, and next the Prime Minister of George II—that ridiculous

mention while upon this strange subject; but they all yield in interest to the newly-discovered and very remarkable, though disgusting phenomenon of the "Fountain of Blood," which exists in the republic of Honduras.

A DAY AT BEN DHRYPING.

PART II.

OUR pleasant entertainments in the drawing-room were cut short by the apparition of Tom at the door, summoning Mr. B— to have his afternoon bath, while the rest of us dispersed for similar purposes. Just before leaving the room, Wilcox said to me: "I'm to have a 'pack' this afternoon; will you come and talk to me after you have had your bath and walk?" Having promised to do so, I betook myself to the inquisitorial chamber, No. 60, where John administered to me a "dripping sheet," the sensation of which I cannot better describe than as resembling that of a huge toad jumping upon one's back, and seizing one in its cold, clammy embrace. As it still rained heavily, I proceeded forthwith to the racket court, where a brisk game with an experienced player, a convalescent clergyman, soon put me in a fine glow of heat. This building is invaluable in wet weather. It is distant only three minutes' run from the house, and its dimensions being good, there is ample accommodation for the ladies walking, as well as for various games and gymnastics. Being now sufficiently warm, I did not forget my friend in "pack," and hastened to his apartment.

Anything more ludicrous than the appearance he presented, you can hardly conceive. As I entered the room, I looked towards the bed, where I expected to find him. I could at first discover nothing but what appeared an enormous pile of feather-beds. At one extremity, however, of this strange-looking erection, I caught sight of his pale face, with those huge black moustaches of his looking fiercer than ever. As he thus lay stretched out, no member of his body being capable of the slightest motion, he looked much more like a mummy than a gallant major of the Guards.

"Oh, Clarence," he groaned out, "are you come at last? For pity's sake, dash away this intolerable spider, which has been careering over my nose for the last half-hour, while I have not a finger or thumb to annihilate the horrid creature."

"Why, I thought you told me that to be in your present circumstances was little short of Elysium," said I, laughing heartily as I brushed away the creature; "it is well you had sufficient command over yourself to keep your mouth shut, or you might have had your ungainly visitor walking in at the inhospitable door."

The "pack," I may mention, is found very efficacious in cases of over-exhaustion, cold, rheumatism, etc. The patient remains in it for two hours, and those with whom it agrees describe the sensation as being very delicious and soothing. It is well, however, to have the bath-man, or some one, looking in occasionally, as a drop of water trickling down the face from the wet towel around

the head, or, as in the case of Wilcox, a long-legged spider incidentally perambulating across the nose, produces the most annoying and disquieting irritation, which the utter helplessness of the victim renders it impossible for him to remove. At the end of two hours' time the patient is unpacked, and



THE MAJOR IN "THE PACK."

plunged, while in a state of profuse perspiration, into a shallow bath, after which he is rubbed, and the operation is at an end.

At seven o'clock the whole party reassembled for the evening meal. This simply consists of tea and bread and butter. For this repast the company dress, and there is quite a display of beauty and fashion. One agreeable feature of such an establishment as this is, that there are but few who appear very delicate; those who feel unable for the excitement of mixing in so large a party preferring to remain in their private sitting-rooms.

I have often thought that a stranger, coming into the dining-room for the first time, and imagining he was to find himself among a set of invalids, must marvel at the amazing appetites around him; and I have been often reminded of the story of an old woman in Scotland, who was always complaining and declaring herself ill, but who invariably seemed to rally wonderfully at meal-time, and to eat more heartily than any around her. This peculiarity of her complaint having struck a gentleman who had observed her, he made a remark to that effect, when she characteristically replied, "Oo, sir, ony grain o' health I hae is aye at meal-time." So, "ony grain o' health" possessed by the inmates of Ben Dhrypping develops itself in unvarying force at the various repasts.

To-night, at tea, Wilcox, in his diversified attentions to the ladies, said to one who, with her brother, had arrived in the afternoon, "Now, you



THE RACKET-COURT AT BEN DHRYPPING.

had better let me give you another slice of this brown loaf, because it's a long while to supper time." The Honourable Mrs. Wells, who, seated opposite, overheard the remark, looked across to the young lady and laughingly said, "Pray do not allow yourself to be imposed upon by any fond anticipations of supper; for, if it should resemble the luncheon, you will find yourself grievously disappointed."

"Why, did you not approve of the noon refec-tion?" said Wilcox. "Did I not tell you it was light and nutritious, and that, no matter how late you were of going for it, it never got cold or the worse of standing?"

"Oh, yes, yes," said the lady, laughing heartily; "but I shall know again how to interpret your description of things."

"But in what did your luncheon consist?" said the young lady.

"A piece of dry bread," said Mrs. Wells, "and a glass of cold water from the fountain, which you get by going for it yourself."

"Have you any commands for London, Rupee?" said Lieutenant Jones, as we quitted the tea-table; "I leave to-morrow morning."

"Are you really going? I thought you had made up your mind to stay a week longer?"

"Yes, so I had; but my letters this evening necessitate my departure to-morrow. I shall only have one more song this evening from Miss Lucilla," he added, clasping his hands in affected despair.

"I am sorry you are to leave us," I said; "but I hope you feel better for your residence here."

"Yes, I do certainly; though I should have liked another week or two in this jolly place. What do you think my bath-man said to me this afternoon,

when I told him I was going? 'Well, sir,' said he, 'if we don't send you home cured, we'll, at any rate, send you away clean!'"

"At what hour do you start to-morrow?" I asked, as we proceeded up-stairs to the drawing-room.

"At eight o'clock, to catch the eleven o'clock train; at least, such is the conclusion I have arrived at, after a minute and painful study of Bradshaw."

"I can lend you the 'Intelligible Railway Guide,' which is much plainer, if you choose."

"Oh, thank you; but I've spent nine years of my life in studying 'Bradshaw,' and, having mastered it, life's too short to admit of my devoting other nine years upon any other railway guide."

The drawing-room was very full this evening, and Jones was not long in leading Miss Lucilla to the piano, when she quite charmed us with her playing and singing. The ladies most readily play and sing; and, having at present some first-rate musicians here, the evenings are extremely pleasant.

"Now," said Jones, as, after having performed to his heart's content, Miss Lucilla rose to move from the piano, "just my favourite duet, with the guitar accompaniment, when perhaps your sister will join you?"

"Willingly," said the sprightly girl, laughing at his enthusiastic tone; and, calling her sister to take a part, she lifted her guitar, and struck the chords of a beautiful little German air, which the two sisters sang sweetly and simply together.

"Ah, there is the doctor," they both exclaimed, as the door opened, and the moving spirit of this little world entered the room. His appearance

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