

Without a doubt, the most picturesque character in Edinburgh literary circles to-day is John Stuart Blackie, at once the most versatile and the most famous of living Scots. For nearly eighty-six years Professor Blackie has been the property of the Scottish people, and to-day, nowhere in Edinburgh can one breathe more of the healthy invigorating atmosphere of the old Scots than in the society of the distinguished author of "The Wise Men of Greece," "Four Phases of Morals," and "Self-Culture." He has been called "the last of the Scots," and certainly it is difficult to find to-day another man who carries with him so much of the robustness and freedom of character and thought which was so characteristic of the country which produced Walter Scott and Christopher North. Not only as a classical scholar, with his "Wise Men of Greece," "Æschylus," "Horæ Hellenicæ," and "The Iliad," has Professor Blackie gained distinction, but by his "Four Phases of Morals" as a philosopher, and by his "Self Culture" as a moral teacher, he has won a distinguished position in the world of letters. He is a singer, too, and a singer who takes his notes straight from Nature. But it is the man himself that fascinates most, and it will be a sad day for Scotland when it wakes to discover that the Grand Old Man of Scotland has passed into the Valley of the Great Shadow.

202 BLACKIE (Professor) A. L. s. 2 pp. 8vo, *Douglas Crescent, Edinburgh*, to Colin Rae Brown, relative to a volume of poems which he has received from his correspondent, he is always busy, but to-morrow is Sunday, when he will read the book

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## DEATH OF PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

### A REMARKABLE MAN.

Professor Blackie died at Edinburgh at a quarter to ten o'clock on Saturday morning. Professor Blackie was fully aware on Friday that his end was approaching, and bade an affectionate good-bye to his wife and adopted son, in whose presence, together with that of his sister, he passed peacefully away at the time mentioned, just half-an-hour after being visited by his consulting physician. Previous to last spring the professor could boast that he had never suffered from illness, but he then overtaxed his strength by an arduous lecturing tour, and weakness of heart developing his medical attendant ordered a three months' stay at Pitlochry, where he met Mr. Gladstone, whose friendship he had enjoyed for years. After his return to Edinburgh he only once left the house to attend one of the opening lectures of the Edinburgh University winter session. On this occasion he took a chill, and gradually failed in health, but he retained his faculties almost to the last, dictating an article on "Erasmus" as recently as the week before last. Grave symptoms developed on Wednesday.

Professor Blackie, who celebrated his golden wedding three years ago, when he received tokens of esteem from various private individuals and public bodies, leaves no family. It is understood he has left £2,500 towards the foundation of a travelling scholarship for the study of modern Greek in connection with the Edinburgh University.

The deceased professor, whose name and works enjoyed a world-wide reputation, was born in 1809, being the son of an Aberdeen banker. He was educated at Aberdeen and Edinburgh, and spent two years of his early life in Germany and Italy. For thirty years he occupied the Chair of Greek in Edinburgh University. He contributed largely to current literature, one of the best known of his works being "Self-Culture, Intellectual, Physical, and Moral," a volume addressed to the young, and full of sound practical advice. Professor Blackie championed many deserving patriotic causes, his enthusiasm once aroused being unbounded. About a dozen years ago he succeeded in raising a sum of £12,000 for the endowment of a Celtic Chair at Edinburgh.

### THE LATE PROFESSOR AS A LECTURER.

The late Professor Blackie was chiefly famous as a lecturer, and the following interesting account of an appearance of his in that capacity we take from an issue of the *Christian Commonwealth*, dated November, 1891:—

To get such a man as Professor John Stuart Blackie on their lecture list was characteristic of the enterprise shown by the managers of Westbourne Park Institute, of which the Rev. Dr. Clifford is president. At their bidding, or in response to their cajoling, the professor wrapped his plaid around him, put on his broad wide-awake, and left "the finest city in the world" for a much inferior town.

The lecture was delivered on Tuesday evening, last week, and, needless to say, Westbourne Park Chapel was more than crowded. The professor's subject was "The Highlands and Highlanders." It would be hard to find a man who could handle such a theme better or speak with more authority than Professor Blackie. But it is safe to say that his hearers were even more interested in the man than in his subject.

The most noticeable and most amusing thing was the professor's total disregard of platform conventionalities. Often the audience could not restrain its laughter at the novelty and comicality of the situation. Once the professor dropped—or rather rose—into song. He began to recite "Johnnie Cope," and finished by merrily singing:—

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,  
They speer'd at him, "Where's a' your men?"  
The deil confound me gin I ken,  
For I lift them a' i' the mornin'.  
Now, Johnnie, troth ye are na blate  
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,  
And leave your men in sic a strait,  
See early in the mornin'.  
Oh, faith, quo' Johnnie, I got sic flegs  
Wi' their claymores and philibees;  
If I face them again, deil break my legs—  
So I wish you a' gude mornin'.

The professor strode freely about the platform. Once he almost danced. This was when reciting the Psalmist's injunction, "Praise Him with the timbrel and the dance." He was condemning the sombreness of Scottish Christians, and said their religion is like the skies—gloomy. "Piety and gaiety," he declared, "go together with the Greeks and Hebrews and all healthy nations." This was about the only thing he found to complain of in his fellow-countrymen. Still "it is better to be religious with one or two bits of narrow-mindedness than to be light and frivolous and thoughtless. I must have a religious man or I cannot do with him. The irreligious man is an imperfect creature; the irreligious woman is a monster. Religion is the keystone of the arch of morality." He once asked some Dingwall folks why they didn't cultivate a few flowers around their church, and was told, "The lust of the eye is danger." "If we're not to appreciate beauty, why," the Professor demanded, "did God Almighty make so many bonnie lasses?"

Occasionally, when he wished to press home a certain point, the professor ran up to Dr. Clifford, who sat on the platform, and gave him a familiar dig. Once he was contented with nothing less than a good shake of the doctor's hand. He had declared that "There's never a bad without some good—that's my philosophy." A hearty "Hear, hear," came from Dr. Clifford. "That's good, doctor," exclaimed the professor, grasping his hand, "the world would not be fit to live in if that were not true." His frequent "asides" were quite entertaining. Several times when he

made a statement he quietly added, "If you have anything to say against that I will speak to you privately." But some propositions did not admit of discussion. "All great cities," he stated, "are a balance of forces," and then added, "Contradict that if you dare! You may contradict Blackie, but if you contradict Aristotle you are a fool." Of course John Bull gave in for castigation. John Bull had once rashly pronounced the Scottish dialect "vulgar." But the professor declared, "There is no more barbarous language than John Bull's. And don't they know that common people have truer and healthier sentiments than those above them? It is the worship of show and fashion that has corrupted the upper societies of London." As the Scot's language is superior to the English, so is his kilt better than the trousers of the Sassanach. Remarking on the abolition of the Highland dress, the professor claimed that it is "the finest and most healthy dress in the world."

The greater part of the lecture was devoted to a consideration of the clan system. Its origin, advantages, and decline were fully dealt with. "What made Highlanders model men?" he asked. It was the clan system, and this he regarded as the most perfect form of organisation that human beings ever took. It sprang from the family and patriarchal idea, and developed a splendid type of manhood. Celtic fire," he said, "makes our Scottish soldiers so superior to your tame folks in England. For strength and standing out, and doing real work there is no man like a Highlander. Why do men not succeed in the world? Because they have no patience, they cannot endure." What was the cause of the decline of the clan system? It arose from that want of balance which affects poetical minds—minds governed mainly by sentiment. This makes them do rash and foolish things—noble things, of course, but things that lead to their own ruin. It was this excess of loyalty, loyal devotion to head of the clan and king that ruined the highlands. "A fine sentiment may make a good song, but it may make a very bad policy." Contrasting the clan system with modern methods of government, he remarked, "The perfection of society does not consist in its largeness. London is too big—all big things are contrary to nature." In the ideal state there would be "Sovereignty without slavery, obedience without fear."

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