

August 1882, at the comparatively early age of sixty-four. He had been in failing health for about two years, but it was only a week before he died that he became seriously ill. His funeral took place in Warriston Cemetery on the 29th of August, and was attended by a large concourse of attached relatives and friends.

Dr. Robertson is survived by two sisters, with one of whom he resided, while the other is the wife of Mr. John Gillespie, Writer to the Signet, and Secretary to the Royal Company of Archers. His youngest brother, Alexander, a promising artillery officer, was one of the many victims of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

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Since the above was prepared, the writer has received a letter from one of Dr. Robertson's medical compeers (Dr. George Bell) in reply to an application on the subject of his chess-playing, in which he says:—"Dr. Robertson was no ordinary chess-player; he *understood* the game, and practised it with judgment and skill. I know this, for the 'chequered field' was our favourite meeting-place during many years. Always pleasant there as elsewhere, Edinburgh does not know what a rare son she has lost. Though undemonstrative, the Royal Society had few such members as William Robertson."

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SIR DANIEL MACNEE. By the Rev. Walter C. Smith, D.D.

Daniel Macnee's life, like that of most hard workers, was not a very eventful one. Its chief incidents were its productions, and these were nowise startling, but rather such as might have been looked for—fruits of patient labour, and proofs of quiet growth. Born at Fintry in 1806, he lost his father while yet a mere child; but he was happy in having a mother who could understand and guide his youth. Very likely that youth puzzled her a little at first, for she would fain have trained him for merchandise and money-making, and his gifts did not lie at all in that line. The sleepy valley of the Endrick, among the green Campsie hills, had to produce its genius like other Scottish glens; and probably his mother had her anxiety, as well as her pride, when it began to dawn upon her that she had given birth to one of that wayward race. I suppose

he did his school tasks fairly well for her sake ; but after school hours, if he was not fishing the water, he was sketching his companions, or telling the drollest stories of things he had seen or heard, which were truly pictures of the vividest kind. So she concluded that he was born to be an artist ; and that, no doubt, was his own opinion also. Yet, with all his well-merited success, it may be doubted whether they were not both of them mistaken. That he had genius was clear enough, and that he was fond of drawing pictures was plain to every one who knew him. But whether his genius would best find its true field in painting the outward or the inward man—faces or characters—that the gossips of Fintry could hardly be expected to determine. It showed some courage then, at that early stage of Scottish art, to devote a boy of thirteen to so precarious a means of living ; but it would, no doubt, have looked like very madness to bring him up for the career of a man of letters. Yet, excellent as his portraits are—and some of them caught not the features only, but the very spirit of the sitter—those who knew him, and can remember the delicate shades and dramatic play of character in the stories with which he was wont to brighten our social intercourse, will hardly doubt that his real power lay rather in word-painting than in material pigments. The patient industry which he devoted to art would have made him a subtle dramatist—a writer of such comedies as Scotland has never yet produced, or a novelist to rival her very best. I am not sure, then, that in making an excellent painter of him, we did not lose something greater still, for which nature had specially endowed him.

There was a Glasgow artist, at this time, who bore the honourable name of John Knox, to which, however, he has not added any fresh lustre, for he will probably be known hereafter chiefly as the teacher of Daniel Macnee and Horatio Macculloch. Yet there must have been something in him to have trained two such men. These two formed their life-long friendship in Knox's studio ; and many a trip, doubtless, the two lads had together to the lochs of Argyle and Dumbarton, and many a Highland story they picked up, and learned to interpret well the character both of its scenery and its people. Afterwards Macnee came to Edinburgh, and studied at the Academy there, along with Thomas Duncan, Scott Lauder, and David Scott, who all became his warm friends. For there was

no mean jealousy in his nature, but he gladly recognised the genius of his compeers, even when their views of art differed wholly from his own. In the end, having been admitted an Academician without passing through the humbler grade of Associate, he settled in Glasgow, till he was elected to the Presidency of the Royal Scottish Academy, on the death of Sir George Harvey in 1876.

It was in Glasgow, then, that his life-work was really done, and probably the necessities of "pot-boiling" dictated the path it was to follow. Now and then, for a season, indeed, he sent for exhibition some simple rural study—"A Peat Sledge," or "A Burnside," or "A Pretty Picture of Children"—which had a touch of pure poetic fancy. But these were short flights into a region which he could not afford to cultivate; and ere long he settled down to the steady business of portrait painting. Rembrandt and Reynolds, Vandyke and Raeburn, have shown that this may be a very noble branch of art; and Macnee's portraits of the late Dr. Wardlaw and Mr. Dalgleish prove that he had no mean idea of the work of his profession. But if painting was the right vehicle for his genius to express itself in, we should have expected to find him rather following in the wake of Wilkie than of Raeburn, and showing on his canvass that dramatic power, and insight into Scottish character, and rarely delicate humour, which were the richest gifts, and most real qualities of his mind. Nothing of this, however, can be found in all his work. Even in painting portraits, though among so many he must have come across some faces which had Scotch character and humour like his own, yet I am not aware of any of his pictures which suggest what a wealth of laughter lay in the man. It would almost seem as if his art was not his natural utterance, but a mere skill of hand, and that this successful painter, after all, had not "found his mission," and has left no real record of his brilliant genius, except in the short-lived memory of his friends. For assuredly, however excellent his likenesses are, and however ably some of them are painted, they give no adequate conception of that singularly rich and fertile and dramatic portrayer of national character, who could so nicely hit off not local dialect only, but local habits of thought, with strokes of finer insight that pierced far into the deepest heart of man. Of all this, however, nothing now remains. No other tongue could reproduce those tales,

which had no plot to speak of, which were at times even a mere thread of extravagance, but in which the characters were so felicitously sketched with touches of such kindly humour, that they themselves could only have joined heartily in the mirth which they evoked. For this was a marked feature of his genius; there was not a drop of gall in it. If he saw all the oddities of a Glasgow bailie, an Airdrie miner, a Paisley shopkeeper, a Highland gillie or drover, or minister, "he handled them as if he loved them," and, indeed, he did like them all the better for the flavour of individual character they had.

I would not be understood as anywise undervaluing his artistic powers, which were of no mean order, but they certainly would have attained a still higher rank had his canvas been covered with many figures representing the men who lived so vividly in his stories, and reflecting the dramatic lights in which he could have placed them. Most likely this was at first prevented by the *res angusta domi*, and when easy times came his *role* was already determined for him. So he went on painting portraits—many of them; and making warm friends—many of them, too. Art naturally drew to him Macculloch, Sam Bough, Brodie, and others; and his rare social qualities as naturally associated him with Outram, Glassford Bell, and Norman MacLeod. Brighter evenings there were not in all Scotland than those which brought together the authors of the Annuity and Billy Buttons and Daniel Macnee—and the brightest of them all was Macnee. He was the last of them, too, and perhaps this fact, that he had been left alone by these, his dearest friends, made him more willing at last to leave Glasgow, and take up the burden of the Presidency, even when his own health began to be uncertain.

How he discharged those duties, and commended himself to all his brother artists by hearty kindness and frank recognition of their several powers—how he also interested himself in the meetings and business of our Royal Society—how he soon became as valued a member of general society in Edinburgh as he had been in Glasgow;—all this is known to you all, and all the more is our sorrow that his stay among us was so brief.