

THE LIFE

OF

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up he would exclaim *ore rotundo*, ‘Dr. Alexander, I am firmly of the opinion that mankind by nature are totally depraved.’ This eccentric little minister had the manner of a bantam cock. Towards bed-time, becoming uneasy lest the stranger should tarry all night, one of the boys inquired whether if he did, he would sleep in *his* bed? to which Addison replied, ‘No, he will roost on the tester.’ At prayers the stranger officiated, and happened to read the CII. Psalm: ‘By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop.’ When he read these ornithological verses, it was with difficulty that the ladies could repress their risibilities.”

I give below extracts from another piece which he wrote about the same time. It is certainly good, to be the production of a very little boy:

“THE PARRICIDE.

“ Ah ! who is that with glittering blade,  
 Standing beneath the elm-tree shade,  
 The tear-drop glistening in his eye,  
 His bosom heaving with a sigh.  
 Why does he turn and fearful start,  
 And lay his hand upon his heart ;  
 Why does he start with conscious guilt,  
 And grasp his sabre’s shining hilt ?  
 He turns and rushes to the tide,  
 And cries—‘ I am a parricide !’  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 But who comes there ? ’Tis Osman dire,  
 His bosom burns with generous ire,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
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 Juan to desperation driven,  
 One poisoned arrow from the seven,  
 His quiver held one poisoned dart,  
 Drew forth and hurled at Osman’s heart.  
 False to its aim the arrow fell,

But human tongue can never tell  
 The rage that flashed from Juan's eyes  
 When he perceived he'd lost his prize.  
 Another dart to end the strife  
 He hurled ;—it took brave Osman's life.”

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The two following pieces were written in his eleventh year. They both exhibit a marked increase in the poetic power, but are chiefly interesting as shedding a curious light on the character and extent of his childish studies. The first is entitled—

“ SOLITUDE.

“ Now in the eastern sky the cheering light  
 Dispels the dark and gloomy shades of night ;  
 And while the lowing of the kine is heard,  
 And the sweet warbling of the songster bird ;  
 Where from afar the stately river flows,  
 In whose bright stream the sportive goldfish goes ;  
 Where the thick trees afford a safe retreat,  
 From public eye and summer's scorching heat ;  
 There let me sit and sweetly meditate,  
 Far from the gleam of wealth and pomp of state.  
 And while I listen to that murmuring rill  
 Which pours its waters down the neighbouring hill,  
 I can despise the pride and pomp of kings,  
 And all the glory wealth or power brings.  
 Here in deep solitude remote from noise,  
 From the world's bustle, idleness and toys,  
 Here I can look upon the world's vast plain,  
 And all her domes and citadels disdain.”

The next, which was written in the same year, affords us a pleasing glimpse of the boyish student and a charming picture of his early recreations. It is entitled—

“ THE PLEASURES OF STUDY.

“ The setting sun's resplendent shining ray  
 Illumes the West and brings the end of day ;  
 And now across the mirthful village green,  
 Returning school-boys with their books are seen ;  
 Who, wearied with the duties of the school,  
 Rejoice to enjoy the summer evening cool.