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Geo. Peck's Esq
with Dr. Russell's kind regards.

ALEXANDER RUSSEL.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

EDINBURGH:

1876.

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NOTE.

THIS reprint is solely of the nature of a scrap-book of newspaper extracts. The members of Mr Russel's family were anxious to possess in a collected form copies of the tributes which the newspaper press had paid to his memory ; and, as the requirements could not be fully met otherwise, it has been thought advisable to print the notices in this way. They are given with scarcely any attempt at arrangement or at editing. In addition to the notices here printed, there were many more, dealing chiefly with biographical details, which, being more or less similar to those given, have not been included in the collection.

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ALEXANDER RUSSEL.

THE SCOTSMAN,

JULY 19, 1876.

WITH feelings of regret to which we are quite unable to give adequate expression, and which we cannot doubt will be shared in almost universally throughout the country, we have to announce the death of Mr Alexander Russel, for a period of thirty-one years editor of this journal. The sadness of this event is deepened by its having come unexpectedly. Four years ago Mr Russel was attacked with heart disease, which compelled him to take a less active part than he had previously done in the general work of the *Scotsman*. For two months in 1873 he was on the Continent by the advice of his physician, endeavouring by rest to overcome the malady with which he had been assailed. Though he derived much benefit from this holiday, it did not accomplish all that had been desired, and Mr Russel continued subject to occasional sharp attacks, which made more rest necessary, and seriously alarmed his friends. Towards the close of last year the spasms became more numerous, and they recurred at shorter intervals, until a fortnight ago. Then, following close upon one of them, came an attack of pleurisy, which brought on complete prostration. Mr Russel, however, seemed to be recovering from this illness, when, on Tuesday morning shortly after nine o'clock, another seizure occurred, under which he rapidly sank, and died within about ten minutes.

The son of a solicitor practising in Edinburgh, Alexander Russel was born in this city on 10th December 1814. His mother, who died about twelve years ago, was a woman of remarkable vigour of character. To her sole care he was left

by his father's early death ; and to her he owed much of his mental idiosyncrasy. His grandfather by the mother's side was John Somerville, who occupied the post of clerk in the jury court presided over by Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, and, if a tendency towards politics can be considered hereditary, it may be assumed that it was from this staunch old gentleman the future editor inherited his marked predilection in this direction. Mr Somerville was mixed up in a quiet way with all the leading political movements of his time, and his grandson used to relate many anecdotes of his activity and zeal on behalf of the Liberal cause. He received the rudiments of education at various schools in Edinburgh, including a classical seminary then conducted by the Rev. Ross Kennedy in St James' Square. It may, however, be said that he was really, in the fullest sense of the word, a self-educated man. From boyhood he was an ardent reader of almost all kinds of books, and he began betimes to use an inborn faculty of keen observation of men in all circumstances and conditions, and of events and their bearings. From his youth he had a passionate love for country life and things, not merely as connected with field sports, but for their own sakes, and as they were hallowed by poetic association. Sturdy independence of view in matters of opinion, ecclesiastical as well as general, was also an early developed feature of his character. While his mother and brothers attended an Established Church, he attached himself to the ministry of the late Dr John Brown, and regularly went to Broughton Place Church to listen to that venerable divine. The lad made his first acquaintance with practical life in being apprenticed to the printing trade with Mr John Johnstone, the predecessor of Dr Carruthers in the editorship of the *Inverness Courier*, and still remembered also as editor of the *Schoolmaster*, a publication which may be considered the pioneer of that class of sound, yet light, popular literature since more fully developed in such serials as *Chambers' Journal* and the *Penny Magazine*. In Mr Johnstone he found a good friend, and no less so in that gentleman's wife, who, besides editing *Tait's Magazine*, was known in the literary world as the author of "Clan Albyn" and other novels. To Mrs Johnstone, a woman of taste and culture, is perhaps due the

credit of first recognising Russel's literary ability ; hers at any rate was the merit of encouraging the obvious bent of his mind towards a literary career, and through her he was led into contributing to *Tait's Magazine* and other periodicals ; while at the same time, born politician as he was, he had been taking a keen interest in the great reform contest then agitating the country, and acquiring by diligent reading that knowledge of political and historical matters which he was soon to turn to good account.

Mr Russel was still a very young man when he obtained the post of editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. In this position he remained for a few years, and then removed to Cupar to take the editorship of the *Fife Herald*, which he continued to hold till about the end of 1844. In those early stages of his journalistic career he was of course involved in all the miscellaneous drudgery exacted of provincial editors in those days. On his shoulders lay the whole burden of getting up the paper—a task involving, besides editorial functions properly so-called, a good deal of merely manual labour, and, along with such descriptive writing as might be called for, the reporting of all sorts of local and other meetings. He had qualified himself for the last mentioned duty by acquiring in boyhood considerable expertness as a shorthand writer, and this accomplishment, after he had ceased to use it for reporting purposes, stood him in good stead through life as affording a means of rapidly noting the gist of his reading, and giving their first rough form to his writings. The practice of making shorthand notes from the books he read was adopted in early life, and he had many volumes of such extracts. Both at Berwick and at Cupar Mr Russel was naturally thrown into contact with the leaders of the Liberal party. While resident on the Border he formed, among other acquaintanceships, that of Mr Robertson of Ladykirk, afterwards Lord Marjoribanks, and along with that gentleman took an active part in certain electioneering contests in North Northumberland. In Fifeshire he became connected with, among others, Admiral Wemyss, the late Right Hon. Edward Ellice, and his son, the present member for the St Andrews Burghs, with both of whom he subsequently maintained a close and confidential correspondence on public affairs.

One of Mr Russel's most intimate associates in Cupar was James Bruce, the editor of the *Fife Journal*, and author of several biographical works which still hold a place in literature. Mr Bruce, a man of considerable classical learning and of ready literary faculty, was endowed with a keen sense of humour, fully appreciated and stimulated by the genial brother journalist with whom he was ten years afterwards associated for some time as assistant in the editorship of the *Scotsman*.

Towards the close of 1844, Mr Russel was induced to quit Cupar and take charge of a Liberal paper started at Kilmarnock. By this time he had attracted attention as a political writer, and after spending only a few months in Ayrshire, he was invited by Mr John Ritchie, late proprietor of the *Scotsman*, to become assistant to the late Mr Charles Maclaren in the editorship of that newspaper. To form such a connection with what was even then recognised as the first political journal in Scotland had, Mr Russel frankly confessed, long been the chief object of his ambition, and accordingly he gladly, in March 1845, returned to his native city. For Mr Maclaren's writings and character he had long cherished a warm admiration, and he proved to him a most devoted and zealous colleague. With characteristic candour the veteran editor at once recognised and admitted Mr Russel's extraordinary readiness, the masculine grasp he took of every subject, and his varied and extensive knowledge of political topics and of public men. In point of fact, Mr Maclaren, towards the close of 1845, ceased to act as editor, except in so far as he took charge in his colleague's occasional absence, or advised with him as to the conduct of the paper. His formal renunciation of the editorship did not, however, take place till January 1849; and its announcement even at that time was dictated solely by his reluctance to continue taking credit to which he felt he was not entitled, and in spite of Mr Russel's solicitations that he should retain at least the honorary position of editor.

About the time of his joining the *Scotsman*, Mr Russel had attracted the notice of Mr Cobden and other leaders of the Anti-Corn Law agitation. His pen was employed on several occasions in furtherance of the objects of the League; and so valuable was his advocacy considered that overtures were

made to him, which, however, he did not feel himself free to accept, to become intimately associated with the active and able men engaged in that enterprise.

One of the first subjects in regard to which the *Scotsman*, under his care, made its mark, was the question of Highland destitution, about which much was being said in 1847. Not content to accept the ordinary, and, as they might be styled traditional and hereditary statements of the case, Mr Russel set about an examination of the actual facts and their causes, and it is not too much to say that his arguments and investigations, to which publicity was given, not only in newspaper articles, but in one if not two papers in the *Edinburgh Review*, afforded such an accession of knowledge alike as to existing evils and their remedies, as stayed the ever-recurrent plague, with the consequent appeals for lowland subscriptions and Government relief to a famine-stricken population. The same year witnessed the defeat of Mr Macaulay in his candidature for Edinburgh, which to the parties who had had charge of the Liberal organisation in the city came very much in the nature of a surprise. It was not so, however, to Mr Russel, who, in his conferences with the leaders, had at an early stage in the contest discerned that their hopes were too sanguine and their arrangements insufficient. Another notable local contest in which Mr Russel took special interest, was that of 1856, on the final retirement of Mr Macaulay, and which resulted in the return of the late Mr Adam Black. On the part which the *Scotsman* took in that contest—a fierce struggle, in which it may be said to have fought single-handed—it is not necessary here to dwell. Nor is it, perhaps, now desirable to do more than allude to the action for damages raised by Mr Duncan McLaren, a leading promoter of the candidature of Mr Brown-Douglas, in reference to articles that had appeared in the course of that election, or to the handsome public subscription which was raised to defray for the *Scotsman* the expenses of that action and the £400 damages which the jury awarded to the pursuer. Among other matters to which in subsequent years Mr Russel lent the weight of his advocacy was that of the Burns' Centenary, contributing in no small degree to the success of the celebration.

On the change in the Newspaper Stamp Act, which took effect in June 1855, the *Scotsman*, which up to that time had been published twice a-week, began to appear also as a daily paper. This of necessity entailed an enormous increase of work upon the editor; but, with many difficulties to contend against, Mr Russel never failed to meet the daily-recurring requirements of the paper; and for three or four months scarcely a day passed on which he did not write one or more articles—seventy leading articles having been written by him, we believe, day after day. If this extreme pressure on his energies and resources caused any deterioration in the quality of his work, it was certainly less obvious to his readers than to himself. It would be difficult, as well as tedious, to attempt to recount the public occasions or public questions on which Mr Russel's pen was brought into requisition during his career of over thirty years of editorial life in Edinburgh. No political topic, general or local, of any magnitude was left untouched; nor was any taken up but to be handled with trenchant vigour. In his practical sagacity, his political wisdom, his intimate and extensive knowledge of men and their relations to parties and shades of opinion, the leaders of the Liberal cause had the most profound confidence; and as a natural consequence, his influence in election movements and the like was not confined to Scotland. It need hardly be added—for his action has been all along before the public—that this influence was employed solely for public purposes, and in promotion of what he believed to be the worthiest ends, and that no personal motive or consideration ever biassed his views or guided his course in dealing even with the most complicated and difficult of such matters. Of course all this brought Mr Russel into intimate connection with the leading political men of his time, and in his visits to London—at one period of his life almost annual—he was a welcome guest in the highest social circles, not only among men of his own side, but with many whose political opinions were entirely opposed to his. There, as in his home sphere, his brilliant social qualities were highly appreciated, and his acquaintance was sought by almost every man of mark in literature and science as well as in politics. Among his literary acquaintances

mention may be made of Thackeray, whose peculiar genius the *Scotsman* was one of the earliest journals to recognise, and who thoroughly reciprocated Russel's cordial admiration when they became acquainted on the novelist's first visiting Edinburgh in 1851; and as the latest example of his friendships among scientific men, we may cite the intimacy which within the last two years grew up between him and Professor Huxley. A typical man in politics as well as in literature and science, Lord Brougham may be named as a friend with whom he lived in constant correspondence for a period of ten or twelve years. Another close friend was the first Lord Dunfermline, formerly speaker of the House of Commons, who gave him the benefit of his intimacy, counsel, and support; and their mutual friendship and confidence remained unimpaired to the end of Lord Dunfermline's long and honoured life. This connection he originally owed, along with many other good offices, to Dr John Hill Burton, whose early and cordial friendship Mr Russel highly appreciated, and never failed to enjoy.

In 1859, the public services to which reference has been made met with gratifying public acknowledgment. At a meeting held in Edinburgh in May of that year, it was moved, by Sir W. Gibson-Craig, seconded by Mr James Moncreiff (now Lord Moncreiff), and unanimously resolved that Mr Russel, "by his able, consistent, and powerful advocacy of enlightened political principles, having largely contributed to the diffusion of sound Liberal opinions in Scotland, a testimonial be presented to him in recognition of these services to the community, and as a mark of respect for his honourable and independent conduct in public and private life." The long list of subscribers to the proposed testimonial included the names of the Right. Hon. W. P. Adam of Blair Adam, M.P.; the Marquis of Breadalbane; the Right. Hon. E. P. Bouverie, M.P.; Mr Adam Black, M.P.; Mr Walter Buchanan, M.P.; Rev. Thomas Barclay, D.D., Principal of Glasgow University; Lord Belhaven, Viscount Dalrymple, Lord Dunfermline, Sir William Dunbar, Bart., M.P.; Sir F. H. Davie, Bart., M.P.; Mr Robert Dalgleish, M.P.; the Right Hon. Edward Ellice M.P.; Mr Edward Ellice, jun., M.P.; Mr William Ewart, M.P.; Colonel Ferguson of Raith, M.P.; Rev. Robert Lee, D.D.; Earl

of Minto (late), Lord Macaulay, Viscount Melgund (Earl of Minto), Lady Murray, Mr Dudley C. Majoribanks, M.P.; Lord Pannure, the Duke of Roxburghe, Earl of Roseberry, Mr David Robertson of Ladykirk, M.P.; the Earl of Stair, Professor Simpson, Mr H. E. Hope Vere of Craigiehall, Mr J. H. Erskine Wemyss, M.P., of Wemyss Castle; Mr George Young, advocate. The sum subscribed amounted to £1770, and the testimonial took the form of a presentation of silver plate, which was publicly made at the Waterloo Rooms. Still more flattering was the compliment lately paid by what may be considered as the central organisation of the Liberal party, in the spontaneous election of Mr Russel as a member of the Reform Club. This graceful act was performed in April 1875, and in the intimation of it by Mr James Caird, on whose motion it had been done, mention was made that the committee of the club had power to elect two members every year, but had not exercised the privilege since 1873—the gentlemen heretofore elected being—1869, Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville; 1870, Lord Hartington and Lord Spencer; 1871, Lord Lansdowne and Mr Cardwell; 1872, the Duke of Bedford and the Duke of Westminster; 1873, Lord Odo Russell.

In the minds of many people the name of Mr Russel was intimately associated with the sport of angling. His predilection for this engaging pursuit, in which he found an invaluable relaxation from professional toil, may be said to have been inherited from his father. While yet a child he was introduced to the pastoral scenes and charming waters of the St Mary's Loch district, where he came a good deal in contact with James Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," and formed associations which were cultivated in after years in frequent visits to Tibbie Shiels'. As a boy, he was wont to make frequent fishing excursions to the Pentland Hills, as also to the banks of the Almond and the Water of Leith, not then as now an eyesorrow to the angler, but streams affording excellent sport. His subsequent residence in Berwick and in Cupar afforded continued opportunities for indulging what had by that time become a sort of passion; and after his return to Edinburgh he spent many a day's hardly-earned absence from work on the banks of the Whittader, the Gala, and the Tweed. In course

of years Mr Russel naturally acquired an extensive acquaintance with the angling waters of Scotland, as well as with their tenants—from the humble burn trout to the lordly salmon. With the Tweed in particular he was as familiar and of it as fond as Sir Walter Scott. Its praises were constant in his mouth, and he had ready store of quotation for illustration of its many charms. He knew, it may almost be said, every foot of its beautiful banks from Berwick to Tweedsmuir, not to speak of its numerous tributary streams. In this, as in other matters, Mr Russel was ever prompt to turn the knowledge he had acquired to practical account. The habits of the salmon had especially engaged his attention, and the results of his inquiries into that mysterious subject, besides being from time to time given to the world in the columns of the *Scotsman*, were embodied in an elaborate article in the *Quarterly Review*, which was subsequently expanded into a good-sized volume. Other papers on angling matters, including a “Saunter in Sutherlandshire,” in which the rod came in for its due share of attention, were contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*. The reputation which Mr Russel thus acquired as an authority on fishing led to his being repeatedly examined before parliamentary commissions, and his evidence, as well as the arguments he had placed before the public in his various writings on the subject, undoubtedly influenced subsequent legislation, more particularly with reference to his favourite Tweed. With Mr Russel, as with other genial men, angling served to foster, if it did not originate, highly valued friendships. He was one of the band of chosen spirits who formed the Edinburgh Angling Club, an association of whose early days at “The Nest,” bright with the feast of reason and the flow of soul, there are, if we mistake not, but two original members now left to tell.

While finding in the rod a never-failing means of recreation, Mr Russel from time to time sought relief from arduous labour in somewhat extensive excursions. In 1847 he paid a visit to Skye, in which he accomplished the double object of gaining health and investigating the phenomena of Highland destitution. Some three years later, in company with his intimate friend Mr Hill Burton, he made a short tour in Ireland; and in 1863 he first made acquaintance of the Continent in a visit

to Brussels and other well-known tourist haunts. The winter of 1869 afforded him an opportunity of visiting Egypt to witness the opening of the Suez Canal; and in November 1872, after his first serious illness, he made a long journey in the south of Europe, in the course of which, after spending some time at Arcaehon, near Bordeaux, he visited several places in Portugal, Spain, and Northern Italy. Of most of these excursions interesting notes were published in the *Scotsman*, from which it appeared that if political disquisition and controversial argument had mainly exercised his pen, it was not less qualified to excel in descriptive writing.

Mr Russel was twice married, and leaves a widow, sons, and daughters.

Any attempt on our part to say what Mr Russel was to the world and to his friends is rendered supremely difficult, not only by the stun and suddenness of the blow that has taken him from us, but by the perplexity that arises in trying to decide at what point of his character to begin. He was a man of so many brilliant and really noble qualities, both of brain and heart, that it is hardly possible to fix upon any one in particular, and say of it, here was the central and essential element of his nature. Even the physical energy, elasticity, and capacity of endurance by which, until almost the last, he was distinguished, would have set up a reputation for many of those to whom eminence in such gifts by itself is regarded as something to be coveted. None but his own many-sided powers of observation and graphic pen could, with due leisure, have paid in anything like just measure that tribute to the marvellous combination of faculties that was in him, which, amidst the great sadness of this unexpected moment, it is our duty to try as best we may to offer to his memory. Regarded on the side of general intellectual power, his mind presented a union of strength, swiftness, and subtlety, rare even in the comparatively narrow circle of those who might be entitled to be called his peers. He had comprehensiveness enough to span the widest, power enough to take up the weightiest, and grasp enough to fix down the most elusive subjects of thought ;

while no distinction could be so fine as to escape the keenness of his analysis. It was not merely that nothing to which the mind of a literary man can be directed ever presented any serious difficulty to his mastering it, or as much of it as was possible and necessary, but that he could do this with a rapidity that is so much oftener absent than present in men of real calibre and thoroughness. He was one of those readers who seem to possess a special faculty of pouncing at once upon those parts of a book that are necessary for knowing what is really in it. Two or three volumes, stiff enough to employ average readers for a week, would be got through by him and marked for reference, and often significantly annotated, in a night; and long political or ecclesiastical debates, that probably killed the best part of a day in many a country mansion or country manse, had such substance as might be in them taken out and laid past for use in so incredibly brief a space of time that, were we to mention it, there might be doubt of its possibility, and it certainly would not be relished as a compliment by sundry laborious orators. Besides, he could read men as well as books, and just as quickly and thoroughly. He very soon distinguished the man who was worth talking to from the man who was not, and speedily extracted from him whatever speciality of ideas or information he had to give. It did not matter very much what the subject was. It might be science, theology, art, literature, politics, law, trade, travel, field sports or other amusements, antiquarian or contemporary history, or merely the ordinary personal news and particulars of town and country, he found out at once where his man was strong, and distilled the essential contents of him into his own mind. He had a wonderful power of disentangling the general principles and central facts that were worth preserving, from the mass of details with which men of special information are always apt and often anxious to load their communications. We are not exaggerating when we say that in an hour's conversation with an expert, or man of original research or speculation, he could draw out the marrow of half a lifetime's application or discovery. Then the tenacity of his memory was quite upon a par with his omnivorous and rapid power of intellectual assimilation. In several respects his memory was a very

remarkable one. Some great memories have been oppressively and confoundingly, as well as extensively, retentive, bringing up to the thoughts of their possessors experiences that would have better fallen into oblivion. But Mr Russel's was apparently what may be called a discriminative memory. He did not absolutely remember everything that had come before his mind, but he seldom failed to recollect whatever it was not advantageous to forget. If he did not recall exactly what it was, he knew where to find it. And this remarkable power of reproduction extended not merely to facts and ideas, but to phraseology as well. An epigram, an eloquent or brilliant sentence, or a striking passage in a poem, could be brought up verbatim and with facility, months, and even years, after it had arrested his attention for the moment. Materials of the most multifarious character—bluebooks and poetry, Isaac Walton and the Shorter Catechism, the intricacies of European diplomacy and the intrigues of the Town Council,—were all pigeon-holed away, and within easy reach, in the recesses of that capacious recollection, ready to be produced when wanted. Many a time in daily debate this faculty has stood its possessor in good stead, and effected the ready demolition of an adversary, when some act or utterance of his, long ago forgotten perhaps by himself, or, at all events, supposed by him to be forgotten by others, has been fished up from the murky depths of the past, and furbished into a bright and fatal weapon of the "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee" order. As a consequence of the action of these great and varied powers over a vast range of literature, and throughout a long and endlessly changing social intercourse with representatives of every phase of thought and knowledge, his mind was an almost unique magazine of the class of principles and facts immediately wanted for the purposes of contemporary discussion in its numberless ramifications,—a store-house not more remarkable for the amplitude of its contents than for the ready command of them continually maintained by its possessor.

Of the powerful and brilliant fashion in which these resources were turned to account for the purposes of his vocation, no one who has kept his eye upon the current of Scottish public life at any time during the last thirty years

requires to be informed. Strong, condensed, incisive, sparkling, his style may be described as a structure of closely cemented argument, based upon an earnest purpose of reason, softened in its outline by a ubiquitous humour, and flashing from foundation to pinnacle with points of wit. Like all vigorous natures that have sought their sphere of action among ideas, he despised falsehood and folly, not only on their own account and for their contrariety to what is alone of value in thought, but also for the weakness which is in most cases the source of them. Accordingly, he never argued except in behalf of what seemed to him to be a reality and truth worth arguing for, and which we are free to say very generally was so. He was perfectly incapable of spinning sentences without sincerity and without aim, as the manner of too many of his profession is. He could not have done it had he tried ; but he never tried. He fought only for what he believed in ; and whatever feeling of anger or anguish might be experienced by the adversary who might happen to be the object of assault, he would not complain that he had been trifled with, or dealt with otherwise than became a critic who seriously regarded him as an offence to be argumentatively suppressed. Beyond doubt it was the moral inspiration derived from this fundamental veracity and impatience of unreality, falsehood, and cant of all kinds—literary, political, or ecclesiastical—that made the one-half of his strength and of his success. No man can hold on who not backed by his own consciousness of veracity and the desire to serve it ; and it is only the blunder of the superficial and the stupid to suppose that there is no depth of genuine moral purpose beneath a light and playful form of expression. It is often just because it is so deep that they are unable to see it. Without the power derived from this consciousness of fighting for something true and valuable, the subject of this notice could not have maintained the up-hill struggle with a various and bitter opposition, ecclesiastical as well as political, which marked the earlier period of his journalistic career. Nowhere was the truth of this more signally illustrated than in the stand which he made on the Ecclesiastical Titles Act. Here he took the clear position dictated by fairness and good sense, which is now the merest commonplace of political action, but

which was then shrunk from in terror by people who were afraid to be just because fanatics might call them Papists. Friends vacillated, scores of subscribers gave him up; but he persevered, relying on the simple conviction of rectitude, and when the Act turned out a dead letter, his subscribers came back with a body of recruits in their train.

This same quality of argumentative earnestness was really the characteristic and the backbone of Mr Russel's literary style. We need not dwell upon the well-known attractions of his writing, the compact, always graphic, often racy statement, the apposite quotation, the sudden surprising wit, the mirth-moving irresistible exuberance of humour, which made the leading articles that came from his own pen a literary *bonne bouche* for all his fellow-countrymen not destitute of the national mental characteristics, and which have created a small host of well-meaning but not over-successful imitators. What is of more importance to point out is that, easy as was Mr Russel's command of these means of popularity, his mind never yielded to the temptation of parading them simply for their own sakes. Not a few writers, with a little fun in them, lug in a sort of dummy argument to show off their fun upon. The fun, in fact, with them is the serious part of the business; the argument is a mere joke. But with Mr Russel there was none of this trick and mockery. It was all honest work. The charm of his wit lay in its spontaneity, in its bubbling up, naturally, out of the soil of the subject that was in question. What he really wanted to do was to prove his point; the amusement came out entirely by the way, in a sort of inevitable manner, as if it could not possibly be helped. The sparks and flashes that were struck out as he went along were really not planned by him; they were the mere mechanical result of the blows dealt by his logical hammer on the stocks and stones through which he had to pursue his argumentative course. For the same reason his humour was essentially genial and sympathetic, not biting and acrimonious. It was of course, occasionally, personal enough, but never malignantly so. It was ideas not persons, "measures not men," that he was earnest for or against. If a particular individual happened to connect himself with an obnoxious idea, more especially if he

happened to stand in front of it, in an apparently defensive, not to say ostentatiously pugilistic attitude, and if he caught the full force of a blow that was really and ultimately intended for the idea, all that could be said was that he had no business to be there. But the malignant persecution of a person merely for personal reasons formed no part of his system as a writer. The stiletto and the poisoned arrow were absent from his armoury. His style is thus properly describable as serious appeal, chemically interpenetrated, not mechanically overlaid with brilliancy, and hence it was often happiest in its briefest statements. Some of the most effective things he ever wrote were the notes, frequently a single sentence, added by way of reply to self-complacent and aggressive correspondents. In such cases the rash assailant found himself not seldom tripped up and danced upon by the same foot, in the same moment. And owing to this inartificial and unforced character of the leading grace of his style, he could, albeit not given to the melting mood, glide without effort into simple, tender, or pathetic statement when it was wanted. Obituary notices, from his own hand, even of opponents, were generous, if by nothing else, by their absence of unpleasant reflection, and of friends, often touching in an extreme degree to those who can understand how much feeling may be condensed into a few graceful strokes.

Of the undeniably powerful and widespread influence exercised by Mr Russel upon the mind of his contemporaries in his own country, and which in its more immediate and popular aspect was certainly unsurpassed, if it was equalled, by that of any other public man, the larger share was, as might have been expected, achieved in his special and professional capacity as a journalist. To edit a newspaper, so as to make it at once a great attraction and a great power, is as much an art as to paint a picture that will sell, or to build a ship that will outsail or sink its rivals; and if success be any criterion of artistic power, Mr Russel was undoubtedly a great artist. That the *Scotsman* is the sole representative of Scottish public opinion in England and abroad, and that it represents it so that that opinion does not need to hang its head on the arena of cosmopolitan discussion, is largely due to the independence

of spirit, the tact, the discernment of character, and the unflagging energy, as well as the literary genius by which Mr Russel imparted a dignity to the work of editing a newspaper, which it can hardly be said to have possessed in his own country before his time. It need scarcely be said that this was not effected without incessant vigilance and labour. Undoubtedly the native power which enabled him to throw off his work with an almost incredible ease and rapidity, and the exact memory which enabled him to venture on statements of fact in the heat and hurry of composition, whose accuracy was scarcely ever shaken in any appreciable degree by the subsequent researches of opponents, were both powerfully contributing elements to his professional success ; but his anxious and unremitting attention to all parts of his calling was not less so. The literature—the news—the correspondence—before he was stricken with disease his eye was on them all, continually on the watch to get in all that was worth public attention, and to keep out what was not. In the more strictly didactic part of his work, in his leading articles, he was continually devising how he might educate public opinion up to what seemed to him the correct view of things, and it will not be denied by any that in many ways he was successful ; and not seldom he was most widely awake, when his opponents thought they had caught him napping.

As a politician, Mr Russel's peculiar place in his party in this country will not be readily supplied. His long experience, his perfect acquaintance with the history of imperial politics, not only for the past thirty years, but as far back as it is necessary for us of the present day to go, his minute knowledge of the lie of local events and attitude of local magnates all over Scotland, and the influence which he could exercise through the leading columns of his journal, necessarily gave him a commanding influence in the counsels of that political party with which he was identified by conviction and associated in fortune. His personal influence on politics was scarcely less than his public, and many an aspirant to the political career, as well as not a few actually engaged in it, from the House of Commons down to the municipal ward, will miss the useful advice and information which were so readily supplied by the veteran advocate of enlightened Liberalism.

There was a sense in which Mr Russel might be called an ecclesiastic, and no uninterested or uninfluential one. Understanding perfectly the power of the ecclesiastical element in the daily feeling and life of his countrymen—a feature of it totally unintelligible to the majority of strangers—he rightly assigned to it an important place in his discussions of public affairs. But he most carefully limited himself to the ecclesiastical as distinguished from the theological or religious sphere. As a journalist, he would neither be religious nor irreligious, neither theological nor anti-theological; he attacked no article of orthodoxy, and vindicated no position of heresy; he took his stand and made his remarks on the line that separates the Church from ordinary social or political life. And even here he declined either to advocate or oppose any special ecclesiastical organisation or type of life. He confined himself to the task of vindicating freedom of conscience, and consequent conscientious action, and of suppressing, as far as he could, intolerance, Pharisaism, inconsistency, and pure nonsense, and to the promotion of liberty, honesty, and charity; with what success the ineffectual anger of a considerable body of baffled bigots is the best testimony.

As a member of private society, Mr Russel was not less of a power than on the field of public controversy, although, certainly, in a very different way. It is difficult to say whether he was more liked or admired. His great conversational ability, his mastery of multifarious information, his ready, exquisite, and inexhaustible wit and humour, his boundless fund of anecdote, always fresh and always appropriate, his watchful consideration for the feelings of others, and his amazing and ceaseless flow of animal spirits, which nothing but disease or grief could check, made him an irresistible companion to all in whom the social instinct was not entirely dead; while the wide range of his sympathy placed him at once sympathetically *en rapport* with all kinds and classes of people that had anything in them to sympathise with—with *savans* and salmon fishers, bishops and graziers, intellectual women and Highland gillies. But it was in a more sacred, if a narrower, circle still that what are probably the best parts of any man's nature found in his case full scope for their exercise.

No truer friend to those who were his friends, no kinsman more tender-hearted to those bound to him by the ties of natural affection ever breathed, than he whose qualities this notice has attempted to delineate. The hand which the one hour had been felling an ecclesiastical oppressor or a political pretender, would be found the next caressing with the touch of a feather the tresses of a little child, or giving the grasp of condolence to afflicted friendship, or doing the secret deed of kindness. But on these things we may not dwell. Nor can we venture to intrude with a merely inquisitive aim into that holiest region of the spirit where man's relation to the Eternal and the Unseen,—his religion,—has its seat. Suffice it here to record the fact that, while certainly devoid of every form of the "preaching cant," and indignantly opposed to sham religion of any kind, he was to the last a member and supporter of the Church of his childhood, a regular worshipper in the parish church of the Greyfriars, to which he had been attracted by the ministrations of the late Dr Robert Lee, and where he remained during the ministry of his successor, the present incumbent. Take him all in all, we who have been associated with him in the work which he did with so much power, courage, and justice, but in which his place must henceforth be empty for evermore, do not expect to look upon his like again. The earth which has closed over him has received the dust of few who have done their special work to better effect, or with a braver or gentler heart.

THE SCOTSMAN,

JULY 22, 1876.

THE funeral of the late Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, took place yesterday afternoon, the interment being made in the family burying-ground, Dean Cemetery. At two o'clock the friends invited to take part in the obsequies assembled at the residence of the deceased, 9 Chester Street, where a religious service was conducted by the Rev. Dr Wallace, minister of Old Greyfriars. Among those present were:—

The Right Hon. the Earl of Minto, the Right Hon. the Earl of Roseberry, the Right Hon. Lord Lindsay, the Right Hon. Lord Young, the Hon. Lord Deas, the Hon. Lord Shand, Sheriff Nicolson, the Rev. Dr Sandford, Rev. H. G. Graham, Nenthorn; Captain Maynard, Professor Fraser, Dr Potts, Fettes College; Dr Balfour, Walker Street; Dr Foulis, George Harrison, Dr Findlater, W. Brodie, R.S.A.; James Hay, Leith; Charles Morton, W.S.; Walter Grindlay, Fettes College; George Menzies, Seafield; L. La Cour, Inverleith Row; J. Lindsay Bennett, London; James Dundas of Dundas, W. Scott Dalgleish, James Hay, jun., of Whitmuir; J. R. Findlay, *Scotsman*; James Law, *Scotsman*; Charles Henderson, S.S.C.; C. C. Cotterill, Fettes College; James Black, Atholl Crescent; P. Cameron, Regent Terrace; C. Jenner, J. T. Brown, J. Irvine Smith, Thomas Knox, Dr Richardson, *Advertiser* Office, Berwick; James Steel, *Carlisle Journal*; David Douglas, W. A. Brown, advocate; T. C. Hanna, C.A.; D. Crawford, advocate; Dr Mackenzie, Kelso; James T. Smith, Duloch; W. Law, Chester Street; John Black, Burnbrae; and the staff of *The Scotsman*.

The compositors and other employés of the *Scotsman* Office had meanwhile assembled in Chester Street; and when the funeral cortege started, they walked in procession in front of the hearse, which was followed by a number of mourning coaches and private carriages. On reaching the cemetery, the mourners on foot ranged themselves on either side of the central walk, and stood uncovered as the hearse passed through, when they followed up to swell the crowd round the grave. The last sad rites were performed with the usual simplicity of Scottish funerals, the pall-bearers being J. S. Russel and Patrick Russel (sons of the deceased), Robert C. Russel (brother), George W. Gordon M'Haffie of Corsmalzie (nephew), James Murray and A. E. Henderson, advocate (sons-in-law), James Somerville, S.S.C., and Colonel Grindlay (relatives). The funeral arrangements were conducted by Messrs John Taylor & Son.

FUNERAL SERMON BY DR WALLACE.

(From the Scotsman of July 24, 1876.)

YESTERDAY, at the afternoon diet of worship, the Rev. Dr Wallace, of Old Greyfriars Church, preached a special sermon in reference to the death of Mr Alexander Russel, who had been a member of that church for many years. There was a very large congregation. The Reverend Doctor took for his text Proverbs xxii. 29—"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men,"—and concluded as follows:—"The truth of these simple, but not the less valuable, principles of practical life has seldom received a more conspicuous illustration than in the career of a member of this congregation, who during the past week has been numbered with the dead, and whose memory I cannot, for many reasons, refrain from recalling on the present occasion. As a rule, I am averse to the preaching of what are called funeral sermons, because when habitual it is apt to degenerate into certain very obvious abuses; and you are aware that I have not preached such a sermon during all the years I have been minister of this church. But the death of the conductor of the greatest of Scottish and not the least of British journals may well, I think, be treated as an exceptional case. The voice of the country, with an unanimity of regret, in which affection seems to combine in equal measure with admiration, assures us that in the late Mr Russel, Scotland has lost one of its brightest ornaments, and its public life an influence unique as it was vast. In the case of one of such admitted and exceptional distinction there is little danger of false or unworthy panegyric, and in the place where his form was for so many years familiar to us all, and where he was wont to bow his head along with us in the most sacred of all human acts,—the public adoration of God,—it seems only natural to linger for a moment of farewell upon his memory before it becomes a mere tradition of the past, and to point the lesson of his career to those for whom it is most fitted to be useful. It is for others to dwell upon the characteristics that made him great; the acquisitions and the native power that enabled him to mould to issues of immense practical conse-

quence the thoughts of a wide circle of his fellow-countrymen ; the inexhaustible and genial brilliancy that made his presence everywhere a spring of high and peculiar social happiness ; the deep tenderness and fidelity of nature that linked his heart in an indissoluble tie to the hearts of his friends. I wish to point out the commentary which his life conveys on the method by which men rise to true distinction, valuable influence, and an honourable name. He stood before kings, not before mean men,—and this happened simply because he was “diligent in his business ;” because he found out what his real business in the world was, because he did it with all his might, because he was satisfied with doing it, and sought for nothing more. The business which he found for himself is, in the true conception of it, one of the highest and most important in modern times—the history and criticism of the contemporary life of the world in all its multiform aspects. The daily newspaper, one of the greatest triumphs of the scientific discovery and invention of the present era of human progress, is not less remarkable in its relations to the moral education of the race. It is the glass in which the world may stately see itself, and consider how the faults of its appearance may be amended. It is the school of the individual, the unit of the race, in which he can to-day hear the voice and see the example of the world of yesterday, can get instruction from its wisdom and warning from its folly, and be made less self-centred by repetition of the feeling that his own life is a part of the great life of humanity. To present this historical portraiture rightly, to give all of the history that deserves to be known and no more, to bring out all the parts of it in the due proportion of their importance, to pass judgment on the salient faults and merits of the picture as it passes on in its ceaseless panoramic march, is a work demanding a very peculiar combination both of moral appreciativeness and intellectual readiness and skill. That Mr Russel possessed this capacity in an unsurpassed degree seems to be admitted by all competent judges, besides that it is witnessed to by the facts of his career. What I desire, however, mainly to emphasise is the fact that having this peculiar grouping of faculties, he gave them to the work for which they were

suit. Amidst a hundred possible careers, he made his way into his natural calling, and made it not seldom amidst circumstances that seemed calculated to cast him back. In any other sphere of activity,—on an exchange, in a bank, in a laboratory of science, in a pulpit, at the bar,—we can hardly imagine him as being what he was in journalism. His merit lay in knowing what he was fit for, and shaping his life accordingly. Not the least part of any man's faithfulness is to be faithful to himself. Then next, having found his true business in the world, he was 'diligent' in it. The whole country is a witness to the energy by which he communicated an interest that was ever fresh to his diurnal narrative of the world and its ways; to the fulness with which he threw his whole heart into the discharge of his function of critic of the various phases of life, especially of life among ourselves; to the almost lavish prodigality with which he expended the riches of his literary genius in popularising his views of whatever question stirred the hour. Of the vigilance with which he discharged the moral responsibility devolving on the critic of contemporary events, so as to stand free of any charge of abetting injustice, hypocrisy, bigotry, pretence, tyranny, or spite, or of pandering to base, impure, or unworthy tastes existing in any quarter of the public mind, the public voice has itself spoken with sufficient emphasis. What may be called without offence Pharisaism of the unconscious kind (of the other I decline to speak) may sometimes have complained that in exposing the mockeries and falsehoods that wished to speak in the name and with the authority of religious truth, he impaired the reverence that was due to God; but it is a common and a perfectly explicable confusion of this type of spirit to construe the exposure of themselves and their errors into an attack upon Heaven and what is truly venerable. Others of a different spirit have been of opinion that he cleared a large space of action for a valuable religious freedom, promoted comprehensiveness in the Church and toleration everywhere; while all must acknowledge that at least he did not spare himself in his contendings. He worked with a will, and postponed his work to nothing else. Though fitted in an unusual degree to take in the happiness that comes to man

from nature and society, as well as to be himself a source of happiness to others, he was not one of those who sacrificed labour to enjoyment. His work was with him the first thing in life; everything else was a secondary consideration. Had it been otherwise he could never have become what he was. And then, further, he was satisfied with doing the business he found to do, and sought no further glory. To some whose eyes are apt to be dazzled by the glittering and the remote, it may have seemed that powers so great and varied were comparatively thrown away upon the work of a journal, and that they might have been turned to greater account for mankind, and have purchased a wider and more lasting reputation for their possessor, had they been devoted to the construction of some work of permanent interest. And I have heard from himself words which showed me that the visitings of such thoughts were not altogether foreign to his mind, and that he sometimes had dreamt of some abiding literary achievement with which his name might have been associated, had it not been his fate, as he phrased it, to live intellectually 'from hand to mouth.' But such words on his part were not words of complaint; they only showed that he had thought the matter over, and that he had come to the conclusion that must be come to by every nature that can identify resignation with wisdom—the conclusion that it is better to do well the work that we can get at, and not sigh after the inaccessible, or permit ourselves to be distracted from the present by visions, however alluring, of achievement or renown which destiny has foreclosed. It is not necessary that a man should be famous, it is only necessary that he should be faithful. Often it is not the most glorious, but only the most vain-glorious power that transmits its name to the future. In the great intellectual callings of this country, to say nothing of its departments of moral and religious enterprise, in the senate, in all the professional and scientific callings, there is daily expended by multitudes of men who will never be heard of, power in no way inferior to that whose memory in other cases is emblazoned on monuments, perpetuated in biographies, or embalmed in mausoleums voluminously piled in their own lifetime by those whom they commemorate. But who will say that such ephemeral power is wasted, that such

anonymous lives are in vain? As well say that the daily sunshine, flung with broad and radiant liberality over plain and sea, is lost and in vain, because when night has come its presence and its very image have perished amid the darkness. But the instructed know better; they know that not a pulsation of its power has been lost; that it has been caught up and taken in by millions of organisms, and that it will still work its marvels in the world, though in a different form and under another name than its original. And so the true worker is chiefly desirous that his work should be good at the time of its being done; certain that if good it will not perish, though the author should be forgotten; and as far as any judgment of the future is concerned, satisfied to feel that "his witness is above, and that his record is on high." These are the reflections that have occurred to me in connection with the memory to which I trust you will think I have been justified in trying to pay a sad tribute of honour in this place. For their substantial truth I venture to appeal to the older part of my audience, who may have known the subject of them, and who like myself counted it no mean privilege to be numbered among his friends, and for many of whom I know that the extinction of his life will be an irreparable blank in their hearts, and cause them to walk in shadow for many a day. To the younger portion of my audience, before whom the main part of life's race still seems to lie, I venture to commend the observations I have made as valuable lessons for the construction of a true career, lessons on which they may possibly improve, but which they may not safely despise, and which, if obeyed, will surely lead to eminence or success in some degree—a success whose value is not merely that it commands the applause of men, but that it communicates the firm if unexpressed and secret consciousness of the approbation of the Eternal Judge. And now it only remains that we bid adieu to the memory of our former fellow-worshipper as it retreats silently down the already growing vista of the past. As two days ago I stood in the beautiful cemetery where they laid beneath the turf the silent clay that had once given bodily presence to such an amplitude of energy and brightness, while nature around was green, living, and vocal, and the blue distant firmament seemed

to speak of the infinite repose that encompasses all human sorrow and toil, the refrain of the ancient Hebrew dirge not unnaturally came back to recollection—‘How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished.’ Yet that wail of despair does not echo the feeling with which we should bend our steps from our brother’s tomb back into that work of the world where he played his part so valiantly while it was his day. Not in the dull hopelessness of those who regard themselves as mere clods of the valley mysteriously galvanised into a transient state of motion, but with the immortal longings of those who recognise in their own conscious being a spiritual essence eternally transcending its material organ, and believing that the Christian hope is justified that descries, amid the darkness and perplexity around us, the intimations of a higher destiny and an everlasting home, let us give ourselves in cheerfulness and resolution to whatever work may lie to our hand, seeking to bear our burdens with patience and accept our griefs without rebellion, ready at the call of the Eternal Word to lay down this earthly form of our existence, and return into the bosom of Him beneath whose fatherly rule we trust that no real being perishes, no righteous aspiration is mocked, no pure affection is in vain.”

THE REV. DR WALTER C. SMITH IN THE FREE HIGH CHURCH.

(From the Scotsman of July 24, 1876.)

YESTERDAY forenoon, the Rev. Dr Walter C. Smith, of Free High Church, after preaching from Isaiah xlv. 22, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ends of the earth,” said—“I cannot close this service without, at least, a brief allusion to the great loss which our city, and, indeed, the whole country, has suffered this week in the death of one of the foremost and ablest of our fellow-townsmen—one to whom we have all often looked for words of shrewd counsel in many emergencies. At a time when the newspaper press was to become a leading power in the land, both for guiding the opinion of the people and shaping the action of the legislature, it fell to the lot of

two remarkable men, both of them in a way self-educated men, to stamp the character of our Scottish press, and place it on a level with the highest in Europe. Hugh Miller and Alexander Russel had the making of the Fourth Estate in Scotland, and they were singularly fitted for the work that was laid to their hands. Both men of great natural force and independence of character, of various gifts too, and wide culture, earnest, sincere, and fearless, they were so far like each other in their genuine patriotism, in their clear integrity of mind, and in their honest love of freedom—yet they were also curiously unlike, both in the build of their minds and in their general bias of thought. For while Hugh Miller was slow in his intellectual movements, as became the reflective man of science, and worked out even his exquisite literary beauties in a heavy, lumbering kind of way, the other was brisk, nimble, and agile, having an almost Socratic keenness of reason wrapt up in a lightsome and playful humour. He could never have done the higher scientific or literary work of his great rival, but he was the very type of the able editor—shrewd, intelligent, sharp-witted, and ready—and the able editor has a considerable part to play in these days. Yet the chief difference between them arose, after all, not so much from original mental characteristics as from the fact that while Miller's patriotism was shaped, like that of most Scotchmen, in the moulds of our ecclesiastical life, and by the men it met there, Russel's, on the contrary, was fashioned by our modern political activity, and by his associates in that sphere. Hence there was a sort of historic solidity in the former, while the other had a certain modernness in all his ideas; for the Church life of Scotland is historical, but its political views are a thing of yesterday. In the struggle for political freedom and progress, then, Alexander Russel did a great work—second almost to none of our time, and did it with no less courage than clearness of mind. We could have sometimes wished that his sympathy with Scottish Church life and work had been as deep and lively as that which entered so heartily into national political life. Yet we are not disposed to think that even in these matters he failed to do good service. It is a wholesome thing for churches to have a vigilant critic.

Many excellent people have thought that his criticisms were too light and contemptuous, or even irreverent in their tone; and if that be true it is a pity, for it would so far weaken their influence for good. Yet, on the whole, when I look back on the thirty years during which his pen has been a power, whose winged words flew over all the land, while I doubt not there were some of these words he would gladly have recalled—as there are none of us who have not sometimes spoken in haste—yet I cannot but feel that churchmen and church-life have profited in many ways by his strictures, and that without them we probably should not have made the progress that we have made. Of his deeper inner life I cannot speak, for I had no personal knowledge of him whatever. But a bright, nimble, humorous, and quite sincere man has gone from among us, after many days of diligent labour for the good of his country; and it seemed no unfitting thing to express, even here and on this day, our unfeigned sorrow for the departure of one who so largely helped the political amelioration of the people. He is gone now, and we shall see his face no more. But he did his work, and it was such work, on the whole, as few indeed could have done so well; and if we have differed from him in some things, and been vexed at some things, yet we can bury all that in his quiet grave, and only remember now the many good services he did to his day and generation, and especially that he and his great rival created for us a newspaper press which is independent, liberal-minded, high-toned in its general aim, and high-cultured in its literary form. The irritations, the grudges, the occasional bitterness of party struggle are all silent now beside the green mound where he sleeps among so many of his fellow-labourers, and we can weep with those that weep as we think of that busy brain and unwearying hand which toiled on with such patient diligence in the honest and courageous service of his country, mistaking at times, erring at times, failing at times, as we all do, yet, on the whole, so manly and clear-sighted as to merit surely from his fellow-townsmen a tributary tear as to one who had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”

THE SPECTATOR,

JULY 22, 1876.

It would almost seem as if Scotland were this year to lose all her representative men. Scarcely have the lamentations over the death of James Baird, the bulwark of Scotch Churchism and Conservatism, ceased in the pulpits which he endowed, than it is announced that Alexander Russel, for a quarter of a century the leading Scotch advocate of political and ecclesiastical Liberalism, has, after an enviably short illness, and at the comparatively early age of sixty-two, died at his post. In a few days the tourist tide will surge across the Border, and yet what a strange Scotland it will be without "Russel of the *Scotsman*,"—the broad-shouldered, ruddy-faced man, whose features had, in these latter years, become almost as well known in the Strand, or in the lobby of the House of Commons, as in the thoroughfares of his native Edinburgh; who looked like three of Dickens' best characters rolled into one,—with the bald, benevolent head and spectacles of Pickwick, the shrewd expression of Sam Weller, and the abrupt enunciation of Alfred Jingle; who told innumerable good stories, and of whom innumerable good stories were told. Russel was the greatest Scotch force of his generation, greater than even Norman Macleod or Thomas Guthrie, because he appealed directly to the Scotch head as well as to the Scotch heart; and indeed his influence during the last fifteen or twenty years in Edinburgh was not less than that of Wilson or Jeffrey, when they were the adored of rival coteries. Now that he is gone, Edinburgh may be almost in danger of becoming absolutely parochial, and degenerating into the elegant paradise of half-pay officers, fussy educationists, and "ecclesiastical ladies' doctors." As for the journal which he made and loved, who among his admirers and imitators will be found able to bend the bow of Ulysses, or—seeing that we are for the time on Scotch ground—to draw the sword of Wallace?

Alexander Russel had not the all-embracing ambition of many of his countrymen; he had not the "slovenly omniscience" of Brougham, or even of Wilson, but whatever he did,

he did well, and with Scotch heartiness. He was a first-rate angler, a first-rate publicist, and, in his own sphere, a first-rate humorist. It is in the last character that he will be best remembered, for it was his sallies and sarcasms sustained day after day, that first gained for the *Scotsman* its unique reputation, and identified him with it. Russel could not, indeed, be better described than as Scotland's refutation of the time-honoured joke of Sydney Smith, that a surgical operation is required to get a joke into the head of a Scotchman; or perhaps one might put the matter otherwise, and say that, as a humorist, he was the natural son of Sydney Smith. He was not a pure humorist—no Scotchman ever has been, except, perhaps, Dr John Brown—in the sense that “Lewis Carroll” is, or Charles Lamb, or even Sydney Smith, when in the bosom of his family was, for like Smith, in his “Essays” and “Peter Plymley's Letters,” he made humour a vehicle for conveying argument to the judgments of his readers. Russel had too much journalistic dignity, possibly too much modesty—for he was inarticulate except in his writings—to identify himself with certain writings in magazines or in his newspaper—although it would be as advisable to republish some of these, as it was to reprint the similar productions of Albany Fonblanque—and therefore we shall not attempt to trace his pen without his own authority for doing so; but yet in the *Scotsman*, under Russel, the articles revised if not written by him were, as a rule, elaborate argumentations “set” in humour; and hence the success which attended their appeal to the Scotch intellect, which is, above all things, polemical. We have already mentioned the name of Albany Fonblanque in connection with that of Alexander Russel, and the two men resembled each other in being sincere advocates of Liberalism, and in using humour in its advocacy. Yet the styles of the writers were very different. In a tribute to Fonblanque which appeared in the *Scotsman* immediately after his death, and which was probably written by Russel, it was said, “In the excited political times from 1830 for a few years onwards, an epigram, an illustration, a witticism in the *Examiner*—and there were often a dozen, more or less admirable, in one short article—went off like a great gun, echoing all over the

country," and the description is not overdrawn. But while Fonblanque's method was to seize the comic side of a political situation, and present it in a single sentence—as when he described Sir Robert Peel as "a man of all principles, or an all-principled man"—Russel's was to get hold of a good, humorous idea, and work it out, much as Scotch clergymen write their sermons, in deliberate fashion, with iteration and recapitulation, and Pelion piled upon Ossa of quotation and illustration. His humour, to take a word from the railway terminology of his country, was of the "circumbendibus" order; but it was genuine, and suited the genius of that country. Occasionally when he dealt with individuals, he was merciless, if not brutal, and "slew the slain" once too often; and in the fun which he brought to bear upon religious or social subjects there might occasionally be found a "blue thread" of irreverence or indelicacy, but never the semblance of shoddy; and when Russel was at his meridian—latterly he would appear to have devoted himself absolutely to politics—when he was engaged in that duel with Mr Duncan M'Laren which made the fortunes of both, or when he had a particularly good case of clerical intolerance, Tory "jobbery," or intemperate teetotalism in hand, his long articles "echoed all over the country" as much as ever did Fonblanque's artillery of Joe Millerisms. Hardly a day passed but, as the case might be, the grocers of the Edinburgh Canongate, or the weavers of Paisley, or the shepherds of the Lammermoors saluted each other with the question, "Have you seen the *Scotsman*?" And then there was a comparing of notes, a rolling of the "hits" as sweet morsels under the tongue, a hearty guffaw, and a final declaration that it was "Russel all over." Henceforth Scotland should consider Alexander Russel as one of its chief, if not its chief humorist in prose. Why it should so long have sat at the feet of Christopher North, how a writer of the refined taste of Mr Skelton should have thought the riotous nonsense of the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*," all reeking of haggis and toddy, and not its prose-poetry, which is exquisite in its way, worth preserving, we fail to understand. Henceforth let this big, but somewhat blustering, deity be overthrown, and let Scotland make its choice between the bubbling fun of Norman Mac-

lead and the opulent and masculine humour of Alexander Russel.

We have said that Russel was not a pure humorist, that he made his humour the vehicle for argument; and, indeed, he was too much in earnest not to be a reasoner first and a humorist afterwards. In politics he belonged to the robust section of the Whig party, whose prophet is Adam Smith, whose philosopher is Sir James Mackintosh, and that wished before the "leap in the dark" to place the political centre of gravity in the middle-class. A loyal partisan, who had no patience with "crotcheteers" who interfered with party discipline, he yet maintained a wholesome independence, and on some questions, particularly on that of secular education, held views more in accord with those of the Birmingham wing than of the main body of the Liberal party. On the other hand, he had but little sympathy with "new departures" in politics; he was disinclined to make Disestablishment a "burning question," unless, indeed, the churches lighted their own faggots; the young Radicals of Edinburgh probably loved him less than the old Tories; for the "working-man mania" he had no liking; for trade-unionism only opposition, and that continually. In regard to religious matters, he adopted a purely critical attitude, holding that newspapers have nothing to do with the expression of theological doctrine, one way or another, and despising self-styled religious journals if possible even more than what he used to call the "kept papers" of Conservatism; but in spite of the negative attitude he adopted—or perhaps because of it—the influence of the *Scotsman* was, during his reign, all in favour of free thought and Broad Churchmen; while good men in all churches, as well as the good men who go to none, rejoiced in his scathing denunciations of clerical humbugs and heresy-hunters, and indeed of cant, intolerance, pretension, and meanness of all kinds, and in all places, high or low. As for social questions, Russel will be chiefly remembered for his opposition to the Permissive Bill and coercive legislation generally on the question of intemperance; he held the "stout, old-fashioned creed" that there should be no laws "for the belly or the back." That he was as sincere in the opinions he held as he

was fearless in expressing them, there can be no question ; while his multifarious reading, his retentive memory, and his well-filled note-books made him one of the most effective controversialists in Great Britain. Were his political articles to be republished, we are morally certain that there would be found in them the most formidable indictment in existence against the present Premier on the charge of inconsistency,—because with the help of his memory, and his accurate knowledge of recent political history, he was able to convict Mr Disraeli in the best possible way,—out of his own mouth.

Even in these busy days, Alexander Russel, as a humorist and a publicist, will live, nor will he soon be forgotten as a man. In all relations of life he was emphatically true and tender. Although, to use the words of Macaulay, whom he resembled in many things, especially in power of memory, he had a “quick relish for pleasure,” and was an eminently clubbable man, and although his homely accent, indicative not so much of want of University culture as of love of Scotland and of Burns, and his inexhaustible fund of stories were the delight of every angling “roost” or dining-room he entered, his mind was far too massive and his professional pride far too high to allow him to indulge in anything like journalistic Bohemianism, or to tolerate it in others. He was fanatically attached to duty, and he had no other fanaticism. We have it on the authority of those who knew him best that in domestic relations he was all affection and simplicity, and no one who ever came in contact with him, or even looked upon his kindly face, could think anything else. Perhaps a brief spasm of illness was the proper close for a career so active and so honourable. Scotland is rapidly becoming provincial, and we hardly expect she will be able to keep to herself in the future a head so hard and a heart so warm as the head and the heart of Alexander Russel.

LEEDS MERCURY,

JULY 19, 1876.

ONE of the most eminent and influential Scotsmen of his generation has just been removed by the hand of death. Mr Alexander Russel, who for thirty years was known and honoured as the editor of the *Scotsman*, died somewhat suddenly yesterday morning, from heart disease, at his residence in Edinburgh. To many Englishmen the very name of Mr Russel will be unfamiliar, just as to the great majority of the people of this country the names of the editors of the *Times* and the *Daily News* are utterly unknown. But in Scotland, at any rate, it was the good fortune of Mr Russel to enjoy all the benefits of the anonymous system in journalism without any of its drawbacks. Whilst he never appended his name or his initials to those masterly political and polemical essays which for the lifetime of a whole generation have made the *Scotsman* one of the phenomena of journalism, the ring of his sentences, the breadth and grasp of his logic, his kindly Northern humour, and above all, his brilliant common sense, were instantly recognised in all that he wrote by thousands of readers throughout his native land. Thus it came to pass that the *Scotsman* and Mr Russel were identified with each other, as perhaps no other newspaper and its editor ever have been. The reputation of the paper was made by the great journalist who first became associated with it in a subordinate capacity in 1845, and by a kind of reflex action, which will be perfectly intelligible to our readers, Mr Russel's reputation was in turn created by the newspaper of which he was the guiding spirit. Whatever may be the ignorance of the English public concerning the character and career of the man whose busy and useful life closed so suddenly yesterday, throughout Scotland to-day there will be such a feeling of personal loss as can only be created when a great public teacher or public leader falls at his post. In ten thousand homes, in a thousand places of public resort, it will be as though the shadow of death had suddenly crossed the threshold and entered the family or the social circle; and multitudes who never saw Alexander Russel in the flesh will mourn for the loss of the wise, manly,

vigorous, and true-hearted friend and guide, whose voice they can never hear again.

It was Mr Russel's happy lot to exercise, through the columns of the *Scotsman*, an influence over the currents of public opinion in his country which was almost incalculable. Other Scotchmen could boast of greater wealth, of a higher social position, of more profound learning, in some cases perhaps of a brighter or keener intelligence; but we believe that no living Scotchman had so much power over Scotchmen during these thirty years as that which he possessed. The Lord Advocate is a great and powerful personage in the eyes of all who live beyond the Tweed; or, at any rate, he was, until the self-sufficient gentleman who now sits at the Home Office chose to degrade him to the level of a private secretary. But what was the Lord Advocate, who came in and went out again with a ministry, to the editor of the *Scotsman*! The great divines of the Scotch churches have wielded vast influence over the minds of their fellow-countrymen; and at no time have those churches been served by men of larger intellectual capacity than those who have been prominent since the Disruption. But it is no exaggeration to say that Mr Russel showed himself the equal of the ablest of these divines in controversy, and that even when he found himself opposed by all the forces of ancient tradition and popular prejudice, he could still boast of successive victories of no common order. Many powerful influences have been at work among the Scotchmen of the generation which is now passing away, and marvellous is the change,—it might almost be called the revolution,—which has been wrought in the whole tone and temper of the Scottish mind by means of these influences. We venture to say that amongst them none was more prominent, more consistently active, or more energetically employed than the influence of the editor of the *Scotsman*. It was not, of course, always used on the right side. Mr Russel, like other mortals, had his faults, and occasionally he stumbled and even fell. But taking his work as a whole, it presents a record of which any man might be proud, and which many men will feel grateful to have set before them as an example and an encouragement. In one department of his

labours he had achieved a success which was, we believe, unique. As a Liberal, sound, strong, sincere, but wholly free from the dangerous crotchets of Radicalism, on the one hand, and the timid fears of traditional Whiggism, on the other, he helped to make the political creed of Scotland. It was, indeed, as a political writer that he was best known and esteemed outside the limits of his own division of the United Kingdom. We pay no idle compliment to the *Scotsman*, when we say that under Mr Russel's editorship it took a position as a political organ not second to that of any other newspaper in the country. There were times, indeed, when thinking men, who were not carried away either by the panics of the clubs or the clamour of the streets, were compelled to look to it for the sound views and clear expressions of opinion which for the moment had been banished from the columns of the London press. It was seldom in such circumstances that men looked in vain. Thoroughly loyal to his party, and blessed with an inbred Liberalism which no earthly power could have eradicated, Mr Russel was yet essentially independent in his tone of thought, and entirely fearless in the expression of his opinion. If the political wire-pullers in London, whose field of vision is too often confined to the narrow strip of ground bounded by Piccadilly on one side, and Westminster Abbey on the other, were misled by the follies or fancies of the moment, the editor of the *Scotsman* was always ready to take them to task, and to support that which in the end was generally seen to be the right view, with the trenchant arguments and admirable clearness of exposition which he could always command at will. It was as much in recognition of this independence and fidelity to honest personal convictions, as in return for the splendid services he had rendered to the Liberal party, that the committee of the Reform Club conferred upon him the highest honour it could bestow, by electing him, in succession to Mr Gladstone and Lord Granville, a special member of that institution.

Mr Russel, as we have said, enjoyed many of the advantages and few of the drawbacks of that system of anonymous journalism which, in nine cases out of ten, makes but "a man in a mask" of the writer for the press. Perhaps it was the

knowledge that his readers identified his paper with his own name, which gave him that deep sense of personal responsibility without which no man can ever become a great or trustworthy leader of public opinion. But, in any case, it was evident to all who knew him that his chief object in life was not personal aggrandisement, nor even personal indulgence, but the maintenance of the great journal with which he was connected in that position of well-deserved authority to which his efforts had raised it. For this purpose he was content to sacrifice ease, comfort, the chances of acquiring personal wealth, and the hope of gaining an independent literary reputation. He had his reward; for, as we have said, the solid position and vast influence gained by the *Scotsman* make it a phenomenon in the journalism of our day. If he was but one of many men who are thus content to throw their whole energies into a work which is in some respects a thankless, and in all respects an arduous one, he was at least so far raised above the level of his fellow-journalists by his abilities, his energy, and his great experience, that his death must cause a gap which we can hardly hope to see filled up. He has fallen at his post. The newspaper which he has controlled so long, and which his powerful mind so constantly enriched, will appear to-day as usual, though the pen has fallen from the master's hand, and the vigorous brain is at rest for ever. The work will proceed, though the worker "home has gone and ta'en his wages." Modern journalism has attained so astounding a development, and holds so great a place in the national life, that the disappearance even of the most prominent unit in the mass of journalists could have no effect upon the institution as a whole. But those who know something of the trials and difficulties of the task which Mr Russel performed with such exceptional success during thirty eventful years, cannot allow this prince among journalists, this brilliant ornament of a great profession, to pass from the view of the generation he served so faithfully, without paying a well-earned tribute to his memory.

EDINBURGH COURANT,

JULY 19, 1876.

MR ALEXANDER RUSSEL, editor of the *Scotsman*, died yesterday at his residence, Chester Street, at half-past nine in the morning. He had been under medical treatment for some days, although the gravity of his condition was not generally known, and the painful event, which has produced a universal gloom, had been but too frequently foreshadowed; but the news came at last with the most harrowing suddenness and surprise. As the telegraph is flashing the sad tidings through every corner of the country, and even to a large circle of admirers beyond, it is difficult to realise the absence of one whose manhood was expressed in every feature of mind and person, who was a tower of strength to the city that he loved so fondly. The time is not yet at which we can rightly estimate the value of the work he was privileged to accomplish, either as a journalist or a politician. Such a forecast could not fail to be affected either by the partiality of friends or by the detraction of opponents. But it is not on such an occasion that we feel disposed to measure our words with the sober judgment that is due to history. *Nil nisi bonum* is our text, and we very greatly doubt whether any public writer who has so manfully stood in the breach and in the field in defence of his opinions ever more completely earned his title to this sentiment. In the profound feeling of sorrow that moves every section of the community, there is nothing present to our mind but regret for the all too premature extinction of rare genius and accomplishments.

It was not necessary to be acquainted with Mr Russel in private life to appreciate the versatility and compass of his gifts—these were everywhere and daily manifested in his public career. But there can be no doubt that in the eminence to which he rose his first distinction was acquired as a politician. His knowledge both of home and foreign politics, and of the influences that govern them, was something quite remarkable; and although there is no doubt that much of this advantage was due to his access to the best sources of information, it is equally certain that he possessed an unusual

aptitude in detecting their true import and significance. He was nothing, indeed, if he was not a great Whig. Attachment to the Revolution Settlement, and to the principles which, by a curious combination of causes, came to receive a peculiar expression in Edinburgh and its circles, was a dominating impulse of his life. Nor was he anything if not a great partisan. Devotion to his political creed—and in this as in other matters he had profound convictions—never left him unfaithful, or anything but strictly loyal to the men who were, with the consent of the country and the party, its authorised exponents. His loss, primarily, will be to his party. He served it with a fidelity which was not to be alienated either by the irresolution or cowardice of friends, or by the frowns of adversaries. Never was eye more watchful to detect a chink in the armour of his opponents; and although it is hardly for us to admit that he had many opportunities of this sort, it is not to be denied that wherever he found them they were most rigorously used. It does not occur to us that we are imparting too high praise in according to him the place of leader of the Opposition of the press, and that, too, taking the full limits of the empire. We seldom agreed with the political articles of the *Scotsman*; but among the numerous productions of that description with which it is our duty to become familiar, we can honestly say that, in respect of knowledge and grasp, and point and vigour of expression, they have had no superiors in the literature of the country.

But Mr Russel was not only a great and successful party man—it would hardly be our province to proclaim his merits if that were all—he gave to party warfare a distinction of fairness and uprightness and honour which have been too frequently found wanting in the history of the press. He had no doubt a single eye to damage his opponents, but he had resources enough to be able to look facts manfully in the face, and to place him above the temptation of seeking victory either by distorting issues or misrepresenting the arguments he had to cope with. A fair field and no favour was doubtless both his maxim and his practice, and it may be that now and again, from the keenness of the warfare of which he set the example, blows were exchanged that were for a time re-

membered even with bitterness and anger. But deep below the surface of a nature inured to conflict, and reared in all the partialities of party strife, there lay a current of supreme conviction, a real devotion to the institutions of the country, a full appreciation of the responsibilities of his office, and a steady recognition of the fact that political contention is, after all, but the highway to the glory of the commonwealth. It is this *residuum* which really formed his strength, not only in this country, but in England, and will make him memorable even when salient features in his character have been forgotten. He was a great Whig, but he was also—and notwithstanding that his politics were never kept in the background—a great constitutional writer; and therefore it was that, when last year the news arrived that the Reform Club had unanimously conferred upon him the rare distinction of election to membership without a vote, there was a universal feeling of satisfaction that honour had been done to one who was, in view alike of Whig and Tory, an ornament to his country.

In speaking of Mr Russel's eminence as a politician, we are, of course, only referring to the capacity he exhibited in this direction in connection with journalism—he had no other opportunities, and it is doubtful whether he possessed the necessary gifts to use those had they been within his reach. But in the domain of literature itself he has left a name scarcely inferior to that by which he acquired his large reputation before the world. It is well known that he found time to contribute to various publications, including *Blackwood's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh*, and *Quarterly*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, &c.; but we have never been of opinion that these were his happiest efforts. His full strength was told on the columns of the *Scotsman*, and his peculiar faculty of hard-hitting, combined with rapid flashes of wit and humour, clothed in alternating language of satire and invective, were better suited to the tone of a newspaper than to the statelier polemical writing of magazines and reviews. But, the question of adaptation apart, there is no doubt that his whole heart was in the one kind of work, and was only partially in the other. He wrote an article for the *Scotsman*, whether political, literary, or ecclesiastical, with scarcely less zest than that with which he angled for a

salmon ; and those who were privileged to see him only in his recreations, will, failing other tests, be enabled to form a not inaccurate idea of the vigour and thoroughness with which he addressed himself to the graver pursuits of life.

This passing personal reminiscence forcibly reminds us of the blank which the death of Mr Russel has caused, not only in our city, but everywhere throughout the country. We doubt whether any man who has written the same quantity of hard words was ever received in general society with the same smiling good-will and friendship. He could be bitter—none more so : he had an unsparing rod for all sorts of shams and affectations ; with his political opponents he was everywhere and always at open war. In his day and generation he found out, doubtless, that such traits of character cannot be indulged without producing a full share of troubles. But when the hour of strife was over, there was none, whether friend or foe, who was not charmed with an urbanity that was seldom at fault, a kindliness that extended itself to every rank and relation of life, and an intellectual life and joyousness that diffused itself through all the trodden ways and the laughing sunshine of the world. From the social circles of Edinburgh a light has died out that will not speedily be replaced. Peace be to his ashes ; all respect and honour to his memory !

“ Never to mansions where the mighty rest,
Since their foundations, came a nobler guest.”

No one conversant with public affairs in Edinburgh during the last thirty years, can fail to have learned with deep regret the death of one of the ablest—and, it may be said, one of the most honest and honourable—men that during that period have had a share in the conduct of the daily press. Mr Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, is removed from the scene which has so long been enlivened, and, let us say, enlightened, by his labours. Opposed as we have always been to his opinions on party questions, we have never failed to recognise his great ability in the discussion of them. But assuming, as we readily do, the inevitable necessity, and even the great advantage of a conflict of political opinions, we feel that there were few men

who brought to such noble warfare the same amount of talent, courage, good humour, and with so little exaggeration or bitterness. Lamenting, as we do, the removal of such an adversary, it is easy for us to understand the loss that must be experienced by his political friends, whose opinions he so ably advocated, and whose zeal he was not slow to stimulate.

Mr Russel had for several years been suffering from *angina pectoris*, which troubled him at intervals, but till recently his medical advisers seemed to think that there was no cause for alarm. Three or four years ago they recommended him to go to the Continent for a change. He followed their advice, and came back much better. Since then, although occasionally suffering from his old complaint, which attacked him with a violent spasm that disabled him for a time, he had been enjoying good health, and was attending to duty with his customary diligence and vigour, until about a fortnight ago, when he had a pleuritic attack. This completely prostrated him for a few days, and from it he never effectually recovered. On Monday, when seen by Dr Keith, he was considered to be so much better that it was anticipated he would be able to go off to his country residence at Nenthorn, near Kelso, to-day. He did not sleep well during Monday night, and did not feel well yesterday morning when he rose. While in the act of dressing, he sat down on a chair and complained of pain, remarking that the sensation of the spasm was something different from any which he had previously experienced. Mrs Russel at once sent for medical assistance, and in a few minutes Dr G. W. Balfour, Walker Street, was in attendance. By this time Mr Russel was almost pulseless, but still able to speak, although gradually sinking. He breathed his last in about ten minutes after speaking of the severity of his illness.

The deceased was a solicitor's son, born in Edinburgh on the 10th December 1814. He was first employed as a printer in the office in which *Tait's Magazine* was published, and it was while he was yet an apprentice that his literary powers became known. After contributing to the *Magazine* and other periodicals, he was appointed in 1839 editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. In Berwick, though quite a young man, he took a prominent interest in local politics, more especially in connection with

the elections which occurred at that time in North Northumberland. After being in Berwick three years, he went to Cupar as editor of the *Fife Herald*, and remained there for a number of years, in the course of which he became acquainted with the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, M.P., and his son, the present member for the St Andrews burghs, which he has continued to represent since 1837. Mr Russel also formed an intimacy with Admiral Wemyss, the member for the county, and the various leading politicians on the Liberal side. In these days provincial journals exercised much more influence than it is possible for them to do now with their numerous daily rivals, and strangely enough, the position of editor was at that time accompanied with much less drudgery than it is now. Like many of those engaged at the time in the editorial profession, Mr Russel acted as editor and sub-editor, and also did a good deal of reporting. From Cupar he went, at the end of 1844, to Kilmarnock, where he took part in the starting of a Liberal journal, but had been there only a few months when he was recommended to Mr Ritchie, then proprietor of the *Scotsman*, as a young politician of apparently good promise. He was invited to take the post of assistant editor under the late Mr Charles Maclaren, and entered on this service in March 1845, since when his fame has become more than national. Mr Russel was intimately associated with the chiefs of the Liberal party both in England and Scotland, and the various Lord Advocates on that side of the question.

As is well known, Mr Russel was a most enthusiastic angler, and was one of the original members of "The Edinburgh Angling Club." His appreciation of the art was shown otherwise than by being one of its keenest followers. By the use of his facile pen he did much to extend the knowledge of his fellow-disciples of Old Isaak. He wrote an article on "Salmon Fishing" in the *Quarterly Review*, which attracted a great deal of attention, and was subsequently expanded into a volume on "The Natural History of the Salmon, and Legislation connected with it." But his substantial contributions to literature were by no means confined to the illustration and elucidation of matters connected with his favourite amusement. He wrote a series of sketches on a tour in Ireland, and having

attended the opening of the Suez Canal, he penned a considerable number of articles in reference to it, which were subsequently reprinted. Still more recently, since his health began to give way, he wrote a series of sketches of a tour which he made on the Continent, which were also republished.

Mr Russel was a man of much energy and vigour, great practical sagacity, and common sense. He had a thorough knowledge of the work connected with the production of a newspaper—from the most practical departments of printing up to all the mysteries of editing. He possessed a good education, although his knowledge was pretty much confined to English literature. Accordingly, in his amusing conflicts with Mr James Hannay, which most of our readers will remember, he always got the worst of it on any question affecting classic lore. In depth of learning and scientific research, he was hardly to be compared to some previous editors of the *Scotsman*, such as Mr Charles Maclaren, although in other respects, as a newspaper editor, he was greatly superior. For many years Mr Russel worked with great assiduity, and it was only within the last three or four years, when his health began to give way, that he was compelled to relax his exertions, and hand over a considerable part of the general editorial work to others. Till that time, it may be said that during his whole career there had been scarcely an issue of the *Scotsman* which did not contain a contribution from his pen. There is a tradition that he could write or dictate no fewer than three leading articles in the course of an afternoon. He was thoroughly acquainted with the political history of this country since the passing of the Reform Bill, but he never evinced any great knowledge of political occurrences before that event. Indeed, he appears to have drawn his information to a great extent from his constant mingling with politicians. He was, as we have elsewhere stated, taken into confidence by the leading men of his party, such as the late Lord Dalhousie, Lord Dunfermline, and others, and was thus enabled to understand precisely the current of feeling of the party, and to make the *Scotsman*, in every sense, the organ of the Whigs. He was, however, very resolute and decisive in his modes of thought, and very adhesive to his own opinions. Accordingly, at various times he brought

the *Scotsman* into collision with different sections of the Liberals. Thus, at one period, he assumed a hostile attitude towards that large, and then rising, section of the Liberal party which was led by Mr Duncan M'Laren. At another he showed his hostility towards the most zealous party in the Free Church, and he also was not on good terms with other Dissenters—a circumstance which led to the establishment of the *Daily Review*. It may be here mentioned that one of the latest and most marked incidents in Mr Russel's life was his recent reconciliation to Mr M'Laren. This closed a long period of alienation, commencing with the incidents which led to an action for libel at the instance of Mr M'Laren against the *Scotsman* about eighteen years ago. It must be said, however, to the credit of Mr M'Laren, that it was he who proffered the hand of reconciliation. In 1859, Mr Russel was presented with a testimonial of the value of about two thousand pounds by his political friends and admirers. Mr Russel was a consistent Whig of the Macaulay type—a position which he maintained with great power. He evinced a deep hatred to the crotchet-mongers in his party, and was not slow to inflict such castigation upon them as seemed to be merited. In ecclesiastical matters, he was well known to belong to the Broad Church school, being bound to it by professional as well as personal ties.

Mr Russel was twice married, and had issue by both marriages. His first wife was Miss M'William, and his second Mrs Evans, who, with several sons and daughters, survives him. In private life he enjoyed the esteem and affection of all who knew him. He was a delightful companion, and as ready to listen as to speak, for no man had less of the disposition to dictate to the social circles, or to monopolise conversation. We feel the deepest sympathy for the family, by whom he was deservedly beloved, and many private friends will miss the hours of recreation in which they found him a most welcome companion.

DUNDEE ADVERTISER,

JULY 19, 1876.

THIS widely known journalist died at half-past nine o'clock yesterday morning. Mr Russel had been in delicate health for several months, but he had only for a short time been confined to his residence. It had been arranged two weeks since that he should leave Edinburgh for his country seat, but he became worse, and the journey was delayed. On Monday, however, he was thought to be so much better that it was expected he would be able to undertake the removal in the course of a few days. Yesterday morning he rose as usual, but was unable to partake of breakfast, and at half-past nine suddenly expired. Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh in 1814, and has thus died in his sixty-second year.

A leading journal, though it should be the guide of public opinion over a wide area, seldom gives a share of its influence and fame to the man who, by his talents, sagacity, and tact, has raised it to its high position. He is the concealed oracle; and the broadsheet monopolizes all the credit of his wit and discretion. The late Mr Fonblanque, editor of the London *Examiner*, emerged—by superior brilliancy or by a happier luck—from the obscurity which generally shrouds our ablest journalists. The articles which he contributed to the *Examiner* were, in the political and literary world, duly credited to him at the time of their appearance; and he afterwards published a selection of them under the title of “England under Seven Administrations,” so that his labours will remain permanently associated with himself, instead of being, as is the case with the writings of his brethren of the press, *detached* from him at the moment of their first publication, and never permitted to reflect a single ray of honour upon his name.

Another striking example of the journalist breaking through the shell of his anonymous condition, and having the vigour and raciness of his writings during a long period faithfully assigned to him, is that of Alexander Russel of the *Scotsman*. *Russel of the Scotsman* was, indeed, almost as widely known as the *Scotsman* itself. Though it kept to its old device—the Scotch thistle—and never showed either his face or his name,

yet it was for the last thirty years stamped with his intellectual image. The qualities and characteristics of the twain—the journal and its editor—were nearly the same; and he liked the identity, for through the greater part of his life, by day and by night, he gave his “heart, soul, mind, and strength” to the *Scotsman*, and its influence and prosperity, as if assured that his own influence and prosperity were therewith bound up. It is not too much to say that he made the *Scotsman* what it has been in the political and literary world for more than thirty eventful years; and that the *Scotsman* made him. The *Scotsman* was indeed, as we do not forget, a leading organ of Scottish Liberalism long before Russel was connected with it, and the eminent men, who had been his predecessors, left it to his charge in a highly flourishing condition; still, unquestionably, he has given to it a remarkable development of literary power, political influence, and commercial success. From the day of its birth a few years after Waterloo (though the time was unfortunate for the Liberal cause in the North, where the ascendancy of Toryism was maintained rigorously by Government force and *espionage*), it was conducted with distinguished ability, and with a happy blending of fearlessness and discretion, which at once secured for it a select and steadily increasing support. Mr M'Culloch (afterwards the renowned political economist) and Mr Charles Maclaren did their utmost to promote its success; and in its early years it received important, though unavowed help from the Liberals belonging to the Faculty of Advocates, who were eager to render it an effective organ for advancing those political views that lay under such a weight of Government and official censure and proscription. Jeffrey, though burdened with his manifold professional engagements as the foremost advocate at the Scottish Bar, and with his onerous duties as Editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, did not decline giving occasionally the ever-welcome service of his practised pen to the columns of the *Scotsman*. He who loaded and fired the ponderous artillery of the *Edinburgh Review* for its quarterly discharges against the oppressions and corruptions of dominant Toryism, was ready to take his place in the rifle corps of the *Scotsman*, and use the smaller, more rapid, and

frequent firearms of the newspaper article. Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Murray, with other Liberals of humbler rank at the Edinburgh Bar, were deeply interested in the growing efficiency of the new journal; and there were, too, valuable coadjutors from among the city burgesses. Of these we may mention one—Mr Duncan McLaren—who, though he lived to become, both previous to and during his Parliamentary career, a standing target for the *Scotsman's* raillery, had at an earlier stage, and for many years, been a regular and highly-esteemed contributor of leading articles, as well as a confidential adviser of the Liberal policy to be advocated in its columns.

The *Scotsman* then had run through an eminent career of more than a quarter of a century, and attained to a very high position in Scotch journalism, when Alexander Russel was engaged to be its *sub-editor*, the veteran Mr Charles Maclaren still retaining supreme and exclusive control over the leading columns department, and continuing to labour for this with his own pen; for the *Scotsman's* success engrossed the old man's heart, as it soon did that of the young man, who was now his assistant, and in due course his successor. Mr Russel went into the *Scotsman* office with varied experience, and with high recommendations as to his abilities. His early and formal education had been far from being good or broad—it entirely lacked an acquaintance with the ancient classics; yet by his own energy he must have thoroughly mastered the English language. When an apprentice compositor in the office of Mr John Johnstone (known for several very useful compilations, but more widely interesting as the husband of one of our most distinguished literary ladies—the famous authoress of the “*Edinburgh Tales*,” and several novels, and for long the editress of *Tait's Magazine*), he attracted the notice of his employer. This is not the place for an attempt to supply what is a serious blank in our literary biography—a sketch of Mr and especially of Mrs Johnstone, though the materials are far richer in interest and more copious than in the case of most authors. Suffice it here to say, that to this excellent pair Mr Alexander Russel ever gratefully ascribed the impulse and encouragement which trained him for and started him upon his literary career, and that both of them lived long enough to

witness his influence and fame. Mr Russel's case, apart from its brilliancy, is far from being uncommon; for, as the First Napoleon said, that a French soldier carried in his knapsack the baton of a Field-Marshal, so it may be affirmed that a compositor has it in his power to rise to the editorial chair, though he would need the rare talents as well as the luck of Alexander Russel to attain to the celebrity and power which Russel possessed in his editorship of the *Scotsman*.

Before entering the *Scotsman* office he had been editor of provincial organs of Liberalism in Berwick-on-Tweed, Cupar Fife, and Kilmarnock, and had impressed all who knew him in those situations with his keen power of observation, his rapid and racy power of description, and his remarkable faculties of logic and humour for carrying on a written debate. He was also credited with a singularly retentive memory, which held almost everything he had heard, seen, or read of, and could reproduce it at pleasure. Then and afterwards it was a very "mirror of Parliament," giving him the name of every representative and the characteristics of every statesman and politician of note, and it was almost a *Hansard* for their debates. Latterly, when admitted (as he was widely and freely) to the high circles of Liberalism, he astonished Ministers and Prime Ministers with the extent, minuteness, and accuracy of his knowledge about all their past connections and proceedings. Once, in company with Lord John Russell and other magnates, mention having been made of some gentleman, all were in ignorance of his antecedents, whereupon the editor of the *Scotsman* supplied the information, and assured Lord John that the gentleman in question had formerly been Under-Secretary to his Lordship.

He had early, in Fife, made himself master of the whole question of the corn monopoly—a subject which he afterwards, in the columns of the *Scotsman* and in the pages both of *Tait's Magazine* and of the *Edinburgh Review*, discussed with the amplest knowledge of facts and statistics, and a thorough elucidation of the principles of political economy.

He discharged admirably for some years his *sub-editorial* duties, skilfully abridging and arranging the general news, and giving a new conciseness, safety, and readableness to

many " letters " from correspondents. The paragraphs about Edinburgh entertainments were written with all the spirit and ease which Leigh Hunt was wont to exhibit upon similar topics. He then, too, wrote occasional " leaders," which struck Mr Charles Maclaren by their sound and vigorous thinking, their apt and humorous illustrations, and their racy style. He had produced a number of leading articles upon a variety of subjects, so that his intellectual calibre must have been satisfactorily ascertained by Mr Maclaren, who, indeed, must have judged erroneously if he did not conclude that the Russel articles were superior to his own. Mr Maclaren then required, or was advised to make a sojourn of several months on the Continent, and though the *Scotsman* was only then a bi-weekly publication, it was considered impracticable that the absentee could regularly fill the leading columns. Mr Russel was, in the absence of Mr Maclaren, entrusted with the whole of the editorial functions and responsibilities, which he discharged with such admirable effectiveness and discretion that Mr Maclaren expressed enthusiastic approval and confidence, and proprietors and readers were alike more than satisfied. He had been fully tried in the particular in which he was thought to be from temperament rather weak. He had been supposed to be somewhat wanting in *discretion* and *caution*, and to have a tendency to give utterance rashly to views and opinions ; whereas Mr Maclaren had shown pre-eminent sagacity and tact in holding the balance equally between the various parties that supported the journal, and had scrupulously abstained from giving offence to any of them. Mr Russel, it was feared, would be far less wary ; but by sarcasm, sly hit, or mere outspokenness, would frequently mortify a patron. Yet the trial which he had in Mr Maclaren's absence was universally admitted to show that his constitutional rashness had been thoroughly repressed, and that he had conducted the *Scotsman* with consummate tact and discretion. Long afterwards, when he was unfettered, and relied upon his own judgment, he, in the midst even of apparently wanton recklessness, was guided by the strictest caution, and as there was " method in the madness " of Hamlet, so there was the coolest consideration, the most exact calculation, in Alexander Russel's rashness. A

peculiar growth of Scotch *pauciness* might be found under his hasty outspokenness. He seldom, by an over-emphatic or blunderingly strong utterance, made an enemy without simultaneously compensating for this by securing several new friends. If he by injudicious sarcasm alienated a few who had been steady supporters, he thereby attracted to his side many who had hitherto been indifferent or hostile. The "wisdom of the serpent" seemed to be associated with his most violent outbreaks. On a morning when some old subscriber, deeply irritated by the *Scotsman's* invective or raillery against *Sabbatarianism*, sent to the office an order—"Drop sending my copy of your paper!"—the proprietors of the *Scotsman* felt sufficiently consoled, and its editor felt himself sufficiently justified, by an application from dozens or scores of strangers to be entered on the list of regular subscribers. The proprietors not only admired his varied talents, but trusted in his sagacity and discretion long before he was admitted to be one of themselves and to have a very considerable share of the property; and it is understood that they accorded him the most generous and ungrudging support whenever he was exposed to the censure of a party. On not a few occasions when, from less magnanimous overseers, he might have expected blame or chiding, along with gloomy looks at darkening prospects, he received not only the kindest encouragement, but handsome presents, that indicated a still growing appreciation of his services.

For some time after the return of Mr Charles Maclaren from the Continent, the latter, instead of resuming his old single control over the leading columns of the *Scotsman*, associated Mr Russel with himself as a full equal in the editorship. They worked together most harmoniously, and without the occurrence of personal jealousies or political differences. The younger man felt it to be no painful effort to defer to the much larger experience of his senior; and even for years after the latter had resigned all share in the editorship, Mr Russel frequently consulted him, and followed the old man's advice with a gracefulness that would scarcely have been looked for by those who only knew his rather *brusque* and blunt manner and address.

There was one crisis at which there were decidedly gloomy prospects for the *Scotsman*; and, indeed, that crisis proved permanently injurious to the majority, and fatal to not a few, of its Scotch contemporaries, though to several others it has given immensely extended influence, and has directly conduced to a remarkable and unprecedented diffusion of public intelligence. We allude to the time when the "Taxes on knowledge" [some sceptics of the Tory school called them "Taxes on *ignorance* !] were abolished—a change which has bestowed on the nation such incalculable benefits as have amply compensated for all the deaths and losses that it inflicted upon the newspapers—old and young, small and great—in Scotland; and certainly the mortality among newspapers (if many of the literary abortions of the period could be said to have had any breath of life) was great beyond parallel. Mr Russel was not strongly opposed to *all* of the so-called "Taxes on knowledge," nor did he for a considerable time cordially acquiesce in the changes that ensued. The *Scotsman* seemed to think more of its own interests than of the public advantage, and was very slow in perceiving that those interests would be signally promoted by the release of the press from Government restrictions and imposts. It is a strange fact that though in Scotland the agitation against the knowledge taxes was far weaker than in England, yet on their removal the multiplication of cheap broadsheets was incomparably greater in the former than in the latter; and Edinburgh and Glasgow had each forthwith five or six penny dailies, whilst London then started only two. It was this foolish rushing into existence of a number of penny dailies in Edinburgh, where all or even the half of them could not find subsistence, that perplexed and alarmed Mr Russel, who feared that, in such a reckless competition, all the competitors would sooner or later die of starvation. He hoped, however, that by submitting to temporary sacrifices the *Scotsman* would outlive all the foolish upstarts, and, having then a clear field for itself, might rise to a more reasonable price than the *penny*, which he seemed to dislike for its vulgarity. The *Scotsman* did survive, and has proved what a vast amount of political influence and financial success lay within the despised *penny*, which rose mightily in Mr

Russel's estimation—even though the London *Times* had not condescended to give its *Jovian* sanction to the small coin.

The *Scotsman* had not the honour of being either the first daily paper in Scotland, or of being the first *penny daily* in Edinburgh. The fact is that it followed slowly in adopting the changes that were necessary upon the abolition of the taxes—so slowly, indeed, as if after yielding to the public whim of the moment it might retrace its steps. It feared that its readers, accustomed hitherto to only *two* of its publications weekly, would be bored by no fewer than *six*, and that the *penny* per copy would be ruinously inadequate. Accordingly, the first issue of the *penny daily Scotsman* was a decidedly diminutive sheet—a mere fraction of what it has since become for the same price—a towel or table-napkin compared with a coverlet! Yet Mr Russel took care that the small, cheap, and frequently-issued paper should have nothing in it to excite the least indifference, weariness, or contempt, and that it should be more than ever a vehicle for the soundest and raciest exposition of Liberal politics, and for the most lively and brilliant discussion of the national progress in literature and the fine arts. Each penny daily broadsheet of the *Scotsman* was more than equal to its rare and costly predecessors; for Russel threw into it all his force of logic and humour, all his skill, and all his tact. Writing with immensely increased rapidity and regularity, his daily articles showed a far greater penetration and power of reasoning, a brighter and keener wit, a broader and richer humour—all couched in a style that had new clearness, terseness, and fascination. The leading columns were all over instinct and impressed with the Russel superiorities of intellect. Weekly there were *six Russels in the field*, and each of them fought more gallantly, bravely, and irresistibly than of old. At elections, when these were disputed, Russel revelled in his strength, and the candidate who had to endure the manifold tortures inflicted by the editor of the *Scotsman*, must have felt that for such a pressure of suffering the solace of a triumphant election was needed, yet would only prove a slow and partial soothing. Russel had innumerable, yet highly characteristic, methods of victimising his opponents, and in all of these he was never less than formidable. If he ever failed, it was in the

case of the man whom for many continuous years he kept attacking, "in season and out of season," upon all kinds of pretexts, and with every kind of weapon,—Duncan M'Laren, —and he failed, not because Duncan was more than his match in gladiatorial prowess (for Duncan was far his inferior), but because the excess of passion *blinded* the assailant, so that his incessant strokes were really quite at random, and either fell upon some invulnerable points of Duncan, or missed Duncan altogether. De Quincey has a paper on "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts;" and it must be confessed that while many of the *literary murders* attempted by Mr Russel were "rough and ready," knock-down blows—furious thrusts that had more of *goring* than of *stabbing*—many others were effected by means of rare humour and sarcasm, employed with exquisite yet easy skill, and with irresistible force. Perhaps his most characteristic and not least effective method of assault was that of broad and genial banter; and this he used with peculiar felicity and equal gusto when he had *clerical* opponents. The mighty Hebrew champion of old, Samson, sometimes associated cunning with his terrible strength, as when, having caught a large herd of foxes, he fastened firebrands to their tails, and then sent them in to devastate picturesquely the standing corn of his own and his country's great foe—the Philistines; so Mr Russel acted in a similar way, and, taking a collection of facts and statistics, he attached jokes to these and drove them into clerical statements and representations with destructive yet humorous effect. "Sandy," as he was often familiarly called, had a strong propensity to "worry" the clergy, whether he met them singly or in groups, in Presbyteries, or in General Assemblies, and not a few of them regarded him as "Beelzebub's dog"—graphically described by John Bunyan. Yet few editors had so many friends, or maintained such pleasant intercourse among the clergy; and not seldom, it was a curious fact, that a *Scotsman* article, which "fluttered" and irritated ecclesiastical circles, and was long remembered and resented therein, had been written by a clerical pen! Mr Russel could quote Scripture as readily and aptly as any clergyman, and he often did so with a striking satirical effect, though sometimes, too, with a

freedom that rather profaned the sacred words, and shocked good taste. Frequently the laughter which he then produced was exactly such as would have arisen among the citizens of Edinburgh if they, at the favourite hour of promenade, had seen the editor of the *Scotsman*, arrayed in full canonicals,—the clerical gown and bands,—walking solemnly in Princes Street. In private, he was wont to say that by far the best qualification for debating triumphantly with clergymen was not a stock either of theological or of ecclesiastical learning, but a thorough acquaintance with only two books—the Bible and the poetry of Robert Burns.

When, in the insane competition among half-a-dozen penny dailies for subsistence in Edinburgh, both the old and the upstart rivals were passing away, and hastening to die without offering an obituary of their own suicide or death, and when the *Scotsman* saw a clear field for itself without any jostling, it not only abandoned the idea of ever returning to the dear old price, but resolved that, though only a penny daily, it should, as a mirror of the time and an exponent of Liberalism, be far more complete, satisfactory, and influential than ever. Soon after becoming a daily paper, the proprietors of the *Scotsman* were fortunate in securing two coadjutors in its management, to whom its wonderful success in recent years is largely attributable—Mr Law in the business department, and Mr Cooper as assistant editor—both of whom are endowed with rare faculties of discernment and application, with remarkable courage, energy, and perseverance. Naturally timorous himself in new paths, Mr Russel soon had cause to be satisfied with the bolder enterprise and more adventurous spirit of his comparatively youthful colleagues; while the late Mr John Ritchie, and then his accomplished nephew, Mr John R. Findlay, the chief proprietors, accorded them ample freedom to carry out their plans. They resolved that the readers of the principal Edinburgh paper should each morning at their own firesides feel as if they were seated within the marvellous *Ear of Dionysius*, where they heard of all that was being done or spoken in Edinburgh, in Scotland, in Britain, in Europe, and in the world, along with news about other planets and heavenly bodies. By means of telegraphic wires, spreading like network

over the world, and through accomplished correspondents stationed in the capitals and great cities of Europe to observe and sagaciously anticipate, as well as through a large herd scattered over the provincial towns of Scotland to tell quickly and briefly whatever of note there happens, the *Scotsman* aimed at being what a Frenchman calls a *daily edition of the World*; and to this the vigorous and racy discussions of current politics, the impartial and merciless anatomising of the characters, principles, and motives of the men that come to the front in every great movement, civil or ecclesiastical, and the honest criticising of new books formed a most important editorial supplement; for neither the *Scotsman* nor Mr Russel was in *Uriah Heep's* style so "umble" as to believe that, being out of London, and not being the *London Times*, it was neither necessary nor expedient that it should have *original* leading articles. Mr Russel felt and showed that he was qualified, called, and expected to give out his views not less than the editor of the *Times*. He was no pensioner upon the thoughts and oracles of the Jupiter of the press, and readers could not fail to see his credentials as an independent instructor. What the *Scotsman* did in providing itself with peculiar and costly mechanical appliances for throwing off a very large impression of copies in a wonderfully short time; what it did, too, by special railway trains to put these copies into the hands of distant subscribers and readers early each morning—as early, indeed, as though those subscribers had lived in Edinburgh—we need not seek to tell, for did not the *Scotsman* at the time, and frequently after, itself loudly trumpet those achievements?

But remarkable as Russel's qualifications and achievements were in the general *conducting* and *editing* of the *Scotsman*, it was as an article writer that he attained to his crowning distinction and influence. His illustrious contemporary, Hugh Miller, though nominally the editor of the *Witness*, and giving undoubtedly the weight of his reputation to this journal, and accepting some general responsibilities of the situation, was still an indifferent editor, and, indeed, his duties of management were undertaken by others; but he was justly celebrated as an article writer. His best articles have been collected and

republished in three or four volumes, and they are worthy of this honour, for he composed them slowly and with painful care. Yet out of the incomparably larger and more varied mass of the *Russel-Scotsman* articles there might be formed a collection more striking as to the truths and ideas placed in the clearest daylight, and more interesting as to the intellect that dealt with those truths—an intellect that seemed to be “covered with eyes all over.” For a comprehensive and thorough, yet brief and racy, discussion of their topics, the *Russel* are far superior to the *Miller* articles. The former are *essays* admirably complete, though of but a miniature size; whereas the latter are full-length introductions of ponderous *treatises*. The *Witness* articles were but *porches* to what should have been a vast edifice; they were, indeed, magnificent porches, but when Hugh Miller sought to go further, and to proceed to construct his elaborate discussion of a subject, he had already more than filled the space of an article, and must break off. First, by some simile or historical allusion he levelled and ornamented a lengthy avenue winding up to his subject, and then by some reasoning, meditation, or moralising upon a general principle involved in the subject, he built up an elaborate porch, and there he paused and was done, where Russel would at once have struck in and begun! Mr Peter Bayne, in a preface to the republication of the Miller articles, describes them as peerless models of “completeness”—a judgment as perversely and preposterously inaccurate as if he called black white. They have several remarkable and brilliant characteristics, but completeness is the one thing which they utterly lack. Invariably they are mere fragments. On the other hand, Russel’s articles are ever singularly complete, and if he had been confined to a quarter of a column, they would still have been complete, for within the smaller area the discussion of his theme, symmetrically reduced, would yet have been thorough, as the face of the Queen on a three-penny coin is not less complete than on a shilling or a crown-piece. In Hugh Miller’s hands the whole surface of the three-penny piece would have been occupied by the *erown*, which would, doubtless, have been prominently and splendidly represented. When he prepared to treat a theme, the associa-

tions and analogies, suggested by his vivid imagination pressed in upon him for illustration, whereas the intellect of Russel instinctively at once seized upon a subject in its chief aspects and bearings. Russel had all the incisiveness of Cobbett, without his perverse love of paradox; a far richer humour than Cobbett, and all Cobbett's plainness and force of speech, along with a style that was both less homely and less monotonous. A Russel article of the best kind (and such he often furnished with marvellous prodigality) possessed every merit and excellence, minus *poetry*, for his capital deficiency lay in the imaginative faculty. The Muses had not been present at his birth, and it was in no spirit of envy, but in sheer contentment, that he mocked and scorned them; for he had done, and done not only well but splendidly, without them. Even for such article writing on a vast variety of subjects as should be strikingly effective upon all classes of readers, he had conquered a brilliant and uniform success, whilst he either lacked poetic gifts or kept them hidden in his napkin. His writing is without the poetic fascination which accompanies that of Hugh Miller; but it possessed in a rare degree, both of single development, and of combined development, all the other influential attractions; and as these gave him when he was living a pre-eminent position, so they are not likely to allow his name for a long time after his death to sink down to the common level of journalists. Hugh Miller was the first newspaper editor whose articles were after his death republished in permanent memorial of what he was and did, and this exceptional tribute was greatly owing to a remarkable ecclesiastical crisis in Scotland; still, while no Church in Scotland feels tempted or disposed to call for a reproduction of the Russel articles as a grand mirror in which she might see herself and her heroic strivings and exploits, we believe that a selection from the choicest of his innumerable contributions to the leading columns of the *Scotsman* would not only lengthen out his well-earned reputation, but prolong and extend his eminent usefulness as a political and social instructor of his countrymen.

We do not seek here to point out his failings as a journalist; we leave this task to those who like it, and who

are specially eager to indulge in the depreciation of eminent men.

For very many years Mr Russel had free and frequent access to the most distinguished of those aristocratic circles that favour Liberalism. He was a welcome guest both in their Edinburgh or London mansions, or in their Lowland or Highland country-houses, and peers as well as commoners delighted to do him honour and to show him hospitality. They were ever ready to help him to his favourite holiday recreation—that of salmon-fishing with the rod, in which he was remarkably skilful, and about which he has written sometimes scientifically, sometimes practically, and always most pleasantly. When, in the society of sportive legislators, he took the *gun*, they had endless amusement, for in the use of that weapon he was as awkward and blundering as he was expert and sure with the rod ; and even Mr Duncan McLaren might have safely consented to be the “game” at which Mr Russel shot. In the House of Commons he, as a visitor, had a privileged seat; and when he appeared there he was instantly surrounded by many friends, English as well as Scotch.

In 1868 his eyesight, which had served him so faithfully, began to fail him, and Edinburgh and London oculists enjoined him henceforth to release his eyes from the hard and constant strain of literary labour which he had long imposed on them. More recently—about four years ago—the first symptoms occurred of the very painful disease—*angina pectoris*—to which he yesterday succumbed. During the intervals of the excruciating spasmodic attacks—which latterly chloroform alone sufficed to alleviate—he still took a keen interest in his journalistic work, although more and more withdrawing from its details, which he entrusted to his able lieutenants, whom we have previously mentioned. Of late the attacks of heart spasm were so frequent and so distressing that their fatal termination came to be regarded as inevitable, and its occurrence yesterday was therefore not wholly unexpected.

The strongest political individuality in Scotland—for his personal force of character working through and aggrandising the power of a great organ of the press more than compensated for the territorial influence exercised by a Buccleuch or an Argyll—has been removed by the death of the chief of Scottish journalists, Alexander Russel. Gifted with a prodigious memory for facts, figures, and personal characteristics, he had the true journalistic readiness of statement, argument, and ridicule. Hard-headed, well-read in the political economy of the school of Adam Smith and M'Culloch, he was a first-class statistical reasoner, and gave powerful support to Bright and Cobden during the Anti-Corn Law agitation, although he strongly combated their views on peace and other questions. He was a faithful adherent of the Russell and Palmerston administrations, and gave a general but more critical adherence to the Gladstone government. Like most political economists, he did not deal with questions from a humanitarian point of view, and defective sympathy made his writings on trades' unions and other working-class interests appear peculiarly hard and unfeeling. His style was eminently masculine and trenchant, and was often singularly felicitous in its refraction of language, whereby he illuminated facets of character, or threw side lights on questions that were remarkably telling. He probably appeared at his best during the varied excitement of a general election or an ecclesiastical struggle, when his minute yet widely-extended knowledge of persons and things was conspicuously serviceable, and his rough-and-ready humour most telling. The exuberant animal spirits which distinguished him in private overflowed in his writing. A Whig in action as well as in theory, he very hesitatingly and reluctantly assented to the enterprise of daily publication, which, under the splendid business management of Mr Law, and the invaluable editorial assistance of Mr Cooper, has developed the *Scotsman* into one of the best newspaper properties out of London—the aim of both, successfully accomplished, having been to make it not merely an Edinburgh but a truly metropolitan and national journal. Mr Russel must be missed; but the resources of the leading journal of Scotland are sure to command the highest literary skill

in the country, and we have no doubt that the *Scotsman* will still continue a foremost advocate of civil and religious freedom.

LIVERPOOL ALBION.

JULY 20, 1876.

BUT for one man who yet lingers among the living, it might be said of the death of Mr Alexander Russel that Scotland had not a greater son to lose. This is saying much of a journalist, whose province, properly understood, brings him at best but indirectly before the public, and especially is it much to say in an age like the present, when individual influence can be but little felt in the diffuse abundance of general intelligence; but if we weigh the unique influence of the *Scotsman*, and consider the part which Mr Russel has had in building up and maintaining it, we may well ask, what other Scotsman could leave by his death so obvious a gap? Not only in the circle of journalists is it felt that a Saul among the prophets has fallen; Mr Russel's fame was wide as his power, and the *Scotsman* is his monument.

Speaking of the *Scotsman* as the evidence which alone we have here to do with of Mr Russel's great individual superiority, it will pay those who are interested in the maintenance of an able and independent public press to examine what has been the groundwork of the eminence which so worthily distinguishes it. Mr Russel has aptly been spoken of as a born politician, in the sense of which we speak of a born poet; his was the natural insight and grasp, which, through the confusion of others' thought and effort, could see directly the vital points of a subject, and fix them with an accuracy and force that permitted neither of distortion nor escape. What his mind conceived and thought out one day, all Scotland saw with his own clearness of view the next. He had the happy knack of looking things straight in the face, and of saying what had to be said with a freshness and simple vigour of expression, that while amazing from its subtlety, had its charm

and meaning for the lowest comprehension. But it was not by any means the easy exercise of strong natural abilities merely that gave Mr Russel his peculiar influence, or rather the journal under his control, and in making this remark we come to the point that is most to be noted. It is not the exercise of power alone, but the conscientious exercise of power, that has made the *Scotsman* the great journal it has become—one which all honest politicians and intelligent men, whatever their party or creed, unite in praising. The *Scotsman*, during the whole of its noble career, has never stopped to consider what would pay; it had a policy to pursue, and it has pursued it with an unflinching determination to make that policy succeed, or honourably to sink in the attempt. Clear and above all suspicion, morally and politically, it has never given out an uncertain sound; it has been true through every echo, and as fearless as honest. No man's position has served to protect him from its attack if public interest pointed him out for its notice; and similarly, merit in the humblest, if of public worth, had ready and hearty recognition. In the fullest and best sense it has been a public journal, giving itself conscientiously to the public service, working for it as, we venture to say, no other journal ever has worked, with the result of gaining a confidence and reaping a reward in honoured appreciation that are unrivalled. It is the amount of work that has been and still is being put into the *Scotsman* that has won for it its proud position—work of brain and heart that is a wholesome reproof to those butterfly journalists who glibly run off their columns with no more effort than the mechanical exercise of their pen, and who, astonished at the little influence of their prints thus flimsily manufactured, seek consolation for their wounded vanity in petty platform parades and dinner-table conceits. It is men like the late editor of the *Scotsman* who win fame and influence for the press, by honestly upholding its dignity, and giving it stability and guiding power becoming its claims. Such journalists do not write to please advertisers, or in fear of them, but they respect the public confidence, and by so doing command it.

Nor is it intellectual power and political honesty alone that have distinguished the *Scotsman* during these thirty years

past; another secret of its success is to be found in the healthy tone that has characterised it through every section of its work, and in its absolute freedom from personal and disgusting scandal. Again and again the miserable cry has been raised that it is, to quote the familiar language of its unforgiving victims, an "ungodly" paper, but it is not those who have watched it longest and most closely, or who have read it most consistently, who say this. The *Scotsman* has never pretended to be a religious journal, in the sense of echoing the platitudes of a hum-drum pulpit, and certainly, it has never spared the follies of the clergy when these were rendered conspicuous, or encroached upon public rights. Mr Russel knew the Kirk well, both its strength and its weakness, and if he often hit hard when the defence of public liberties required this, there is not a town or parish in Scotland that is not to-day enjoying the benefit of his championship. But however smarting clerics may have reviled, and well-meaning people have acquired a habit of speaking of the *Scotsman* under their breath, as a thing too evil to name openly, no journal has more scrupulously guarded its columns against all manner of nastiness and personal scandal. Those who were brought into professional contact with the late editor have reason to congratulate themselves on the schooling they thus received; his mind was felt in every department, and scandal and filthiness being absolutely forbidden, there was no danger of these creeping into the columns "by accident," as editors less scrupulous, or less competent, are wont to plead when trouble overtakes them. British journalism owes more to the *Scotsman* and to Mr Russel than readers may yet generally know, for apart from the paper's influence with the outside public, we believe there is no journal that has more strongly commanded the appreciation of the conductors of the press. This combined testimony to its ability and honesty is some reward for its labour and endurance; and if there need be not the slightest fear that the past greatness of the *Scotsman* will be maintained and even surpassed in the future, we cannot but cordially pay the honest tribute demanded to the memory of Mr Alexander Russel, a name which has none we know of to overtop it in the annals of journalistic fame.

CARLISLE JOURNAL.

JULY 21, 1876.

THE death of Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, which occurred on the morning of Tuesday last, is a great loss to Scotland, to journalism, to the Liberal party, and to the public in general. Many of his countrymen have stood more prominently before the world of late years, but few, if any, have exercised so wide-spread and real an influence. In the earlier portion of his career, Mr Russel had not much of fortune's favour to aid him, though he belonged to a good family, and he commenced his journalistic experience, when quite a young man, as editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. After that he conducted papers in Fifeshire and the West of Scotland, and came on the staff of the *Scotsman* as sub-editor, when that paper was under the direction of Mr Charles Maclaren. Here his remarkable abilities found a satisfactory and permanent field, which not even tempting offers made by most distinguished London newspapers could induce him to leave. Practically Mr Russel was editor of the *Scotsman* long before Mr Maclaren's retirement on a well-earned pension, and on that retirement he became formally editor, and remained so up to the day of his death, never relinquishing control of the editorial columns at least, though during the last few years much of his time was spent at his country-house near Kelso. In his hands the *Scotsman* became a distinct power in the country, especially in the regions of politics and religious thought. In politics he was a Whig of the old school, and, in the best sense, a keen party man. The Liberal party received from him the most hearty and effective support, and in giving that support the ardour of his character and the trenchant nature of his satire often led to his writing articles which his political opponents were disposed to regard as violent and virulent attacks; but it was the truthfulness and pointedness of his criticisms, rather than any ill-nature or disregard of the conventionalities of journalism, which made him so formidable an adversary. We do not say that under the excitement and pressure of daily editorship he never published paragraphs which overstepped due limits; but that rarely happened, and

the most worthy of his opponents had the least reason to complain of him. On the occasion of the lamented death of Hugh Miller, Mr Russel himself said, in his paper, that it was a source of great satisfaction to him that he could look back on their many controversies with the feeling that he had never treated the departed editor with any other than the respect and admiration due to his high character and remarkable genius; and a similar remark may be made of all, or almost all, his controversies with worthy opponents. And though a keen Liberal, and devoted to the interests of his party, one condition of that was that Mr Russel was himself an important element in the formation of the opinion of that party, and would oppose its conclusions in the most vigorous and independent manner, when he judged that these were both wrong and of serious consequence. In truth, and notwithstanding his value to his party, he was far more independent of mere opinion, let it come from whatever side, than are nearly all modern journalists, and it may be emphatically said of him that

“ He never sold the truth to serve the hour.”

In religious matters the *Scotsman* (under Mr Russel, assisted by many able coadjutors, such as the late Rev. Dr. Robert Lee) has exercised a peculiar, subtle, and profound influence, all tending in the direction of an enlightened, but not profane or indifferent, liberalism. Up to the time of the Disruption, and indeed for some time after, Scotland was almost as completely isolated from the philosophical and religious thought of Europe, and from the almost new sciences of criticism and critical history to which this century has given birth, as if its people were ancient Hebrews wandering with Moses in the Mount Sinai Peninsula. A dark Calvinistic gloom, an intellectual and moral terrorism, pervaded the Scotch mind, and forbade, as a mortal sin, the mere questioning of the smallest clause in the most elaborate and extraordinary formularies which any Christian Church has contrived to evolve, and which had been evolved, not only by men absolutely ignorant of by far the greater part of all that is indubitable in our modern scientific and historical knowledge, but also by men who, being themselves subject to iniquitous persecution, and even a good deal

of physical torture, were far from being in a critical or catholic frame of mind, and were pre-eminently in need of very strong views for their own moral support. Through this powerful and injurious element the *Scotsman* worked its way, leading the people of Scotland to perceive that, with all their admirable qualities, they were not quite the measure of the universe; that they had much to learn, and that their best interests and the loftiest realisation of their purest and most unselfish desires would be far better served by an open reception of the truth as it is known to us, than by an ignorant and bigoted resolve to know nothing beyond what had descended to them from their fathers, and which, in the past, had served excellent purposes which it could no longer serve. In these and similar ways, Mr Russel became an important influence for good in the life of Scotland, and an influence far beyond Scotland encouraging all that was manly, truth-seeking, and fearless in public writers everywhere who used the English language. London editors and leader-writers acknowledged with surprise that there, in the North, was a publicist who could surpass themselves in his pointed dealing with public affairs, in his practical treatment of the subjects of the day; and who could do so not from laborious, and, at the best, a very doubtful process of testing public opinion here and there—in the smoking-rooms of clubs, and the boudoirs of the *semi-demi haut monde*; but from his own clear conscientious judgment of public affairs—a judgment justified by long acquaintance with, and laborious attention to them, on the basis of a large, shrewd, practical mind, capable of dealing with them. In addition to this, Mr Russel's personality was of a large, genial, and friendly kind. He was one of those men who, if he had never done or written anything notable, would yet have exercised a great influence in the world, from the mere capacity of his nature and his wide sympathies. Many are the men, both young and old, now scattered over the world, who will remember his kindness, encouragement, and aid, and all the more that there was no touch of falsehood or of self-seeking in these his relationships, but simply the action of a man of hearty, friendly, kindly nature, who knew well that the world was not altogether friendly or kindly to struggling

youth, and desired only to assist it without using it, or misleading it from any motives of vanity as to his power to aid it. A course thus steadfastly pursued, without shadow of turning, brought its own reward. Public acknowledgment in any shape was rather avoided by Mr Russel, but that came occasionally, as in his honorary election to the Reform Club; but his real satisfaction lay in his work, not in any acknowledgment, and, perhaps, very little in any consciousness of it. Even the power of the "unseen hand" was scarcely felt by him, so much interest had he in moving the hand itself, and in the homely pleasures of the life which lay around him. To literature outside of the *Scotsman*, he contributed a little, as in his book on the Salmon, and in various articles in *Blackwood*, the *Quarterly Review*, and other publications; but his special work lay in the manner in which from day to day and from year to year he wrote on public affairs. In this respect he probably never had his equal except in Mr Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*. The intellectual labour of some men destroys their pleasantness in society, but Mr Russel had strength for both, and it is questionable whether he was not more amusing and effective in unrestrained social intercourse than he was when, pen in hand, a certain caution descended upon him which would hardly have been expected from the freedom and hilarity of his conversation. The greatness of his ability and the loftiness of his character were partially concealed from contemporary view by genuineness itself, and by a modest desire to pass for no more than he could prove himself at the moment to be, and for the purpose in hand. This peculiarity of Mr Russel's has been sometimes misunderstood; but it really arose from the perfect genuineness of his character, and his remarkable want of egotism. We do not ascribe it to any high moral spring in his nature, but rather to his intense love of mental activity—to the feeling that, having done the work to the very best of his ability, and as the circumstances would allow, it was not worth while stopping to examine it while so much more remained to be done. Kindly, sagacious, powerful—these are the three terms which occur to us as best descriptive of what Mr Russel has been during his long career; and he was all that in no ordinary degree. For some

years he had suffered from an affection of the heart, which put a limit upon both his hours of work and his enjoyment of society, and which was all the more painfully felt that his previous experience had unprepared him for such limitations; and on Tuesday morning he succumbed very suddenly to an unusually severe attack of the disease, following closely upon an attack of pleurisy from which he was just recovering. Surrounded as he was by some of the ablest writers in Scotland, other pens will do fuller justice to his memory than ours; but we cannot refrain from paying this passing and hasty and (as it seems to us) all too cold tribute to the powerful, the kindly, the truth-loving spirit which has now passed from the abodes of men, after bearing, in its earthly manifestation, so much of the burden and heat of the day, without self-seeking and without pausing to rest.

EDINBURGH EVENING NEWS.

JULY 18, 1876.

WE regret to have to announce the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman* newspaper, which took place at his residence in Edinburgh this morning. The deceased has been in delicate health for several months, but he has only been confined to the house for a short time. About a fortnight ago he was about to leave town for his country residence, when symptoms manifested themselves which necessitated the putting off of the journey. He has since then been under medical treatment, but he was so much better yesterday that it was expected he would be able to leave the city in a day or two. He rose at the usual hour this morning, but was unable to partake of breakfast, and he died somewhat unexpectedly at half-past nine o'clock.

Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh on December 30, 1814. He was educated in his native city, where his father practised as a solicitor. He was intended for a printer, but changed his views, and after contributing to *Tait's Magazine*, and other periodicals, became in 1839 editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*.

Having occupied that post for three years, he became editor of the *Fife Herald*, and remained at Cupar till 1844, when he started a Liberal paper at Kilmarnock. In the beginning of 1845, Mr Russel became connected with the *Scotsman* as assistant to the late Mr Maclaren, who a few months afterwards resigned, and Mr Russel succeeded to the editorship. He has since conducted that journal with signal ability and success, proving himself unquestionably one of the ablest journalists of his time, and undoubtedly the ablest journalist in Scotland. In politics he was a Whig, and gave the consistent support of his pen for the advancement of the interests of that party.

Besides his literary labours in connection with the editorship of the *Scotsman*, he found time to contribute to various publications. Among others may be mentioned the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. His first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, entitled "Agricultural Complaints," was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Lord Jeffrey, and he has since written on a variety of topics. He was a great authority on salmon-fishing, on which subject he gave valuable evidence before committees of the Houses of Parliament. In 1875, he was unanimously elected as a member of the Reform Club, by virtue of a special power entrusted to the committee, and which is intended to be used as a compliment to men who have rendered conspicuous service to the Liberal cause.

GLASGOW EVENING CITIZEN.

JULY 18, 1876.

SCOTTISH journalism has sustained a severe loss to-day in the death of Mr Alexander Russel, who, for something like thirty years, has filled the office of editor of the *Scotsman*, the leading journal north of the Tweed, and indeed the leading provincial journal in the kingdom. Besides his newspaper work, Mr Russel found time in the intervals of a busy life to contribute to various reviews and magazines, and to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and also to write an exhaustive book on salmon

angling, that having been his favourite pastime. He was, however, above everything, a newspaper man. His articles were popular beyond measure;—they perhaps wanted lightness of touch now and then, but they had strength and dash, and they were full of that rough, rollicking humour, which invariably commends itself to popular readers. At his death Mr Russel was in his sixty-second year. For some time past he had been in rather failing health, and necessarily the conduct of the newspaper with which his name has so long been connected was to a considerable degree given over to other hands, but it was only at the beginning of the present summer that he had ceased to exercise an editorial supervision over its pages. The deceased gentleman was twice married, and the second Mrs Russel, who survives him, is well known for the interest she takes in questions connected with the University training of women.

GLASGOW HERALD.

JULY 19, 1876.

MR ALEXANDER RUSSEL, editor of the *Scotsman*, died at his residence in Edinburgh yesterday morning. Mr Russel had been troubled for some years with *angina pectoris*, but his medical advisers did not consider that there was any cause for alarm. Three or four years ago he visited the continent on their recommendation, and but for the fact that he was attacked with spasms at intervals, enjoyed comparatively good health. He had a pleuritic illness about a fortnight ago, by which he was completely prostrated for a few days; but had so far recovered that it was expected he would soon be able to go to his country residence at Nenthorn, near Kelso. He complained of severe illness when he rose yesterday morning, and medical advice was called for and obtained, but he died in about ten minutes. He was quite sensible to the last. Mr Russel entered upon his career as a journalist thirty-seven years ago, as editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. In 1845, he went to Edinburgh to assist Mr Maclaren in conducting the

Scotsman, at that time a bi-weekly. Here his eminent abilities as a writer attracted attention. He brought a clear forcible intellect to the discussion of public questions, and he never failed in good humour and rough, manly wit. For more than thirty years he has upheld the credit of Scotch journalism, and exercised no mean influence upon political and ecclesiastical affairs. His pen was always ready in favour of broad and generous measures and political and ecclesiastical freedom of expression, and quite as ready—perhaps a little more so—to denounce cant and narrow-mindedness. We sympathise with our contemporary in the great loss which it has sustained.

DUMFRIES COURIER.

JULY 25, 1876.

SINCE the death of Jeffrey no event has caused a more widespread feeling of regret than the death of Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, which took place here, at his house in Chester Street, on the morning of Tuesday last. For four years past the deceased gentleman was known to have been suffering from *angina pectoris*, but his otherwise strong constitution led his friends to hope that, in spite of that insidious malady, he might yet be spared for some years. These hopes have proved fallacious. The rest which he so much needed, his active ardent-minded temperament could not, or would not, take, and engaged to the last on his editorial duties, he broke down in harness, and passed away in a momentary spasm from the turmoil of politics and daily bustle of the living world to the quiet of the grave. His funeral, which was of a private nature, took place on Friday, and as the green sod was flung over him in the Dean Cemetery, many a friendly cheek was wet, and all present felt that Edinburgh in particular, and Scotland in general, had lost one of her foremost literary and political writers. For upwards of thirty years his powerful pen has made the *Scotsman* what it is—one of the institutions of the country; and the high position it holds among newspapers has been mainly due to the untiring energy,

exuberant humour, and spendthrift talent of Alexander Russel. He literally spent himself upon it. Under his management it became a daily paper, and he saw it growing up under his eyes from a single sheet to its present large size, and spreading itself yearly over the land like a green bay tree. It was dear to him as his own offspring, and it was his chief delight to sit under the covert of its branches; for he had tended it with parental fondness through long laborious days and nights of exceeding watchfulness and care. None but those who have had to do with a daily paper can know or estimate aright the abilities needed in an editor of a journal like the *Scotsman*. Undoubted capacity for, and an acquaintance with, the whole practical details of business, punctuality, sound common sense, patient forethought, knowledge of men, the pen of a ready writer, with the information of a politician, and the courage and independence of a hero; and these qualities, joined to an active and accurate memory, were all blended in a remarkable degree in the person of Mr Russel. Born in this city in 1814, he commenced life as apprentice to a printer. From setting up the writings of others he took to writing himself, and through the kindness of a lady, Mrs Johnstone, authoress of the "Edinburgh Tales," was first initiated into literature, and became a contributor to *Tait's Magazine*. Thereafter he edited successively the *Berwick Advertiser*, the *Fife Herald*, and a paper in Kilmarnock, and thus, having passed through every grade in the service, he rose, by his own good conduct and industry, from the humble post of a "printer's devil" to the proud position of being the editor, and, latterly, a proprietor of the *Scotsman*. To conduct that journal required as strong a hand and nerve as to guide a man-of-war; and if sometimes he endangered its safety by running too near the rocks to show his wit, and, at other times, dashed with characteristic courage through opposing breakers, one can only wonder at his hardihood, and admire the consummate skill and able seamanship he invariably displayed. Success crowned his efforts, and he died with the assurance of having honestly earned the esteem of his fellow-countrymen by ministering to their daily pleasures, and adding somewhat to their advancement in political and intellectual freedom.

Mr Russel was brought up in the Whig school of politics, and served that party with all the vehement ardour of his nature. Macanlay was not more attached to, or a more chivalrous champion of their principles. Even after the party was broken up in this city he did not desert them, but was ready to share obloquy and reproach, and go with them even into exile, rather than ally himself with the more advanced or Radical school of politicians. Like most men who have got to the middle age of life and been fortunate, he reposed upon the past, and feared to encounter the problems and perplexities of the future. For this reason he was disinclined to extend the franchise, or enter upon new measures of political reform, content to follow Earl Russell's advice of bidding the country rest and be thankful. Lord Palmerston's skilful but dangerous time-serving policy of tiding over difficulties by staving off the evil day, had also too much of his support and approval. But, after Mr McLaren had been firmly fixed in the representation of Edinburgh, and especially after 1868, when the Household Suffrage Bill was passed by a Tory Government, Mr Russel woke up to a sense of the responsibilities of the new situation, and adapted himself to the change that had come over the country. The old Whig armour was laid aside, and joining the Liberal ranks, he threw himself into the midst of the elections with his old ardour and buoyancy of spirit. Day after day there appeared in the columns of the *Scotsman* articles in support of the Liberal candidates, written with a zeal, earnestness, and ability, that contributed much to their success. The result of the election was an overwhelming majority in Scotland for the Liberal party, and, in consequence, increased power and influence to the *Scotsman*. This was Mr Russel's greatest political triumph. A strong Liberal Government, which he had helped into power, was in office, and the leaders of the party had expressed their obligations to him in the most flattering terms. Personally intimate with the most of the Cabinet, he became their unaccredited representative in Scotland. Even the *Times* had not such easy access as he had to the direct sources of information, and the secret power of Printing-House Square seemed for once to dwindle and be transferred to the *Scotsman*. The editor's room in Cockburn

Street had become a political *bureau*, where members of the House of Commons jostled each other; and his favour and advice were "sought for by all aspirants after Parliamentary honours, as being that of a man who could either make or mar their political fortune. When Mr Russel went to London he was admitted into the highest social, literary, and political circles, and the Reform Club not only gave him an especial mark of distinction, but its members vied with each other in showing him hospitality and kindness. Thus high had the printer's boy climbed, and thus powerful had he become! The flattering attentions of the great did not spoil him, nor make him change his somewhat simple tastes and habits. He returned from the gay saloons of London to his daily work in the gray metropolis of the North, the same outwardly rough-looking, but genial, kind-hearted Sandy Russel as before, ready to join with, and be happy, in the humblest as in the highest society. His rich, racy conversation, power of fun, banter, and *bonhommie*, made him a cheerful companion, and as he had noted every side of many-coloured life, his experience and the anecdotes he had picked up, were a perpetual fund of knowledge and delightful entertainment. Some of his best articles were just his conversation, condensed and printed off for the amusement of the hour. Without a classical education or much school learning, he wrote clear, terse, vigorous English, that sometimes reminds one of Swift, and sometimes of Cobbet. His style was eminently suited for the work he had to do—that of writing animated essays or epistles upon the current topics and politics of the day. When he tried a longer or more ambitious work, as he sometimes did in the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood*, he soon got exhausted, and his hilarity deserted him. Like Horace Walpole, he could make something out of nothing, and by his happy manner of setting it, tell a story, or confute an opponent, with an amount of pleasantry and humour irresistibly charming. All his articles had a peculiar mellow, though sometimes too coarse, and savoury richness of flavour—a Russel *bouquet*, so to speak, which marked them out as unmistakably of his vintage. Time may and will make them lose their value; but, while he poured them forth, thousands in this city and elsewhere, had their labours

ceased and their breakfast-tables made the happier by his innocent overflow of spontaneous mirth. His chief defect as a writer was a want of imagination; but for his humour and playful fancy he would have been a dry, statistical, matter-of-fact man. Poetry to him was "ingenious nonsense," and his inability to comprehend it made him insensible to the higher, more emotional feelings of man's nature, and to the hold they have over human opinion and belief.

A successful angler, a keen curler, and fond of field sports, he dwelt latterly much in the country; though, like Dr Johnson, he preferred the social society of men and life in cities to the endless monotony of mountains and green fields. He was twice married; his first wife being Miss M'William, from the neighbourhood of Gatehouse, Kirkeudbrightshire; and his second an English lady, Mrs Evans, who survives him; and he has left issue, sons and daughters, by both. To his relations he was exceedingly kind, and even in his busiest moments loved to have his family around him.

Thus lived, thus died Alexander Russel, the pride of Scottish journalists; one that gave sundry hard hits, and held a Damocles' sword over the heads of many in this city, but who, in all his wit combats, and they were not few, never used poisoned foils, or fought his Conservative opponents in any other than an honourable and manly way. His failings, such as they were, were on the surface, and he bore no malice.

BORDER ADVERTISER.

JULY 19, 1876.

A VERY wide circle of readers will regret to hear of the death of Mr Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, which took place yesterday morning at his residence in Edinburgh. According to the *Edinburgh Evening News*, the deceased had been in delicate health for several months, but was only confined to the house for a short time. About a fortnight ago he was about to leave town for his country residence, when symptoms manifested themselves which necessitated the putting off of

the journey. He has since then been under medical treatment, but was so much better on Monday that it was expected he would be able to leave the city in a day or two. He rose at his usual hour yesterday morning, but was unable to partake of breakfast, and died somewhat unexpectedly at half-past nine o'clock.

Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh on December 30, 1814. He was educated in his native city, where his father practised as a solicitor. He was intended for a printer, but changed his views, and after contributing to *Tait's Magazine*, and other periodicals, became in 1839 editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. Having occupied that post for three years, he became editor of the *Fife Herald*, and remained at Cupar till 1844, when he started a Liberal paper at Kilmarnock. In the beginning of 1845, Mr Russel became connected with the *Scotsman* as assistant to the late Mr Maclaren, who a few months afterwards resigned, and Mr Russel succeeded to the editorship. Besides his literary labours in connection with the editorship of the *Scotsman*, he found time to contribute to various publications. Among others may be mentioned the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. His first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, entitled "Agricultural Complaints," was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Lord Jeffrey, and he has since written on a variety of topics. He was a great authority on salmon-fishing, on which subject he gave valuable evidence before committees of the Houses of Parliament. In 1875, he was unanimously elected as a member of the Reform Club, by virtue of a special power entrusted to the committee, and which is intended to be used as a compliment to men who have rendered conspicuous service to the Liberal cause.

In the death of Mr Russel journalism in Scotland sustains a severe loss. His long and varied experience in political life—his knowledge of Scotch affairs—his unswerving attachment to Liberal, in the sense of progressive, principles—his consistent advocacy of free institutions and the enlightened administration of law—and his sound views on questions of a politico-economic character—have all combined to raise the *Scotsman* to an exceptionally high position in the country;

and it may be safely enough said that Mr Russel has not left behind him in Scotland another single individual, either connected with press or pulpit, who enjoys so wide and intelligent an audience, and exercises such a sway over public opinion, as he did. As was to be expected from the nature of his calling and the strength of his attacks on what was objectionable to him in men and institutions, he will have left not a few enemies behind him, and these principally within the ecclesiastical horizon, where his attacks were generally trenchant and severe, always vigorous and witty, though not unfrequently extreme. But however his style of treating politico-ecclesiastical topics may have jarred upon the feelings and occasionally wounded the finer susceptibilities of the Scottish religious mind, yet there was in the main a strong under-current of sound common-sense running through his writings, which went a long way to commend his views even to those who could not always appreciate the manner in which he handled his subjects. In such discussions, his sympathies were always on the side of a wider and more enlarged liberality of thought and expression in the treatment of religious questions, whether practical or speculative, and his opposition was never put forth except against bigotry, hypocrisy, and pharisaical narrowness; more especially against those conventional forms of them which are often least open to attack, not because they are invulnerable, but because they have the ægis of custom and respectability thrown around them. It has been clear of late years that his criticism was having a sensible effect upon Church courts, and that the dread of being held up to contempt or ridicule in the columns of the *Scotsman* has gone further in the direction of preventing the more illiberal class of churchmen from exercising their powers of persecution upon their weaker or less conservative brethren, than these reverend Bourbons of the pulpit may be inclined to allow. At any rate, it has been very generally felt, if not always acknowledged, that the *Scotsman* exercised a healthy check upon the vagaries of a certain sincere though not very tolerant order of Scottish ecclesiastics.

But it was as a purely political writer that Mr Russel exerted the greatest and most salutary influence. A number

of years ago, a large body of Liberals in Scotland testified to the influence for good which he possessed within the arena of politics, by presenting him with a handsome gift in appreciation of his services, and few will be found even in the ranks of political opponents, to say that it was not deserved. His advocacy did not always meet the views of the extremer section of Liberals, and on questions between capital and labour he was frequently charged with supporting the employer at the expense of the employed. This is a kind of charge easily flung at the heads of those who, occupying a position removed from actual conflict, are the better able to judge of the respective merits and demerits of the combatants, as well as of the rights and wrongs of the matter in dispute. It is a charge also which generally originates in the mouths of those leaders of working-men who are themselves the "petty tyrants of their little field." It would of course be the merest exaggeration to say that Mr Russel was always right in these disputes, but it was open to all impartial observers to remark that on questions affecting capital and labour his views were singularly wise, and that in respect to the results of many movements which he opposed, his forecastings were often strikingly verified in the event. His honorary election to the membership of the Reform Club was a well-deserved testimony to his activity and influence in the larger field of imperial politics, and if it was that his efforts in the reform of local administration and local taxation were less conspicuously acknowledged, it might be because they touched upon the more recondite walks of political knowledge, where fewer had the inclination or the intelligence to follow him.

But not even this meagre review of the position which he occupied among Scotchmen would be complete without a reference to those social qualities in which he shone conspicuous, and for which he may be said to be known to everybody from Maidenkirk to John o'Groat's. As an angler, he was known on every stream in the country, and many a fisher will to-day, with mingled feelings of happiness and regret, recal to memory those sallies of wit and outbursts of humour and eccentricity with which the districts he most frequented have long been, and will long be, redolent. And no district

in Scotland more so than along the basin of the Tweed, every foot of which as an angler he has trod many and many a time, and where no name than his is better known among the followers of the "gentle craft." It was in this respect that "Russel of the *Scotsman*" was different from other journalists. People know as a matter of course that all the daily papers have editors, but nobody knows who they are, or possibly cares; but the *Scotsman* in the popular mind was identified with Mr Russel, and Mr Russel with the *Scotsman*. While other editors were mere names enshrouded in the mist of professional reserve, he stood forth a living personality—the chief of Scottish journalists, yet a thing of flesh and blood—known and understood of all. It was this mixed character towards the public—the bold advocate of social and political rights on the one hand, and the genial humorist and wit on the other—that won and maintained for him his well-known reputation; and many not much given either to sentimental effusiveness or ostentatious regret, will to-day experience a falling of the heart when they learn that Mr Russel of the *Scotsman* is no more.

KELSO COURIER.

JULY 21, 1876.

JOURNALISM, since the death of Hugh Miller, has not sustained a severer blow than it did on Tuesday morning in the demise of Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*. Not that the rôle of Mr Russel and Mr Miller was either uniformly or mainly in the same direction, but rather that their genius found its outlet in almost opposite courses. The bent of Mr Miller's mind in its earlier journalistic productions lay very largely in the ecclesia-political region, and he seldom for years after his connection with the newspaper press, discussed either public or popular subjects, save in their bearing on what was then the great question of the day. On purely political topics Mr Miller seldom essayed to write. Mr Russel, on the other hand, entered journalistic life as a political writer, and treated

the questions of the day in their diplomatic, social, and moral aspects. No two newspaper writers for the last half-century, in their distinct lines of thought, have wielded a wider or stronger influence in their respective spheres; and up to the time of the death of the editor of the *Witness*, the individual circulations of the *Scotsman* and *Witness* were within less than one hundred copies of each other per week. Judged by their writings solely, the two journalists were anything but fairly or properly estimated caterers for the press; for each in his own direction dealt out most trenchant and merciless blows to his opponents; but, having known them both apart from the element of the disputable and the debateable, we can aver that never did two more happy and genial gentlemen breathe.

But we digress in our attempt to perform what we feel to be a painful duty—viz., to record the death and recal some of the virtues, journalistic and otherwise, of one who for the last forty years has been so mighty a power in connection with the newspaper press of the country. Alexander Russel was the son of an Edinburgh attorney, and was born in that city on December 10, 1814. In early life he received an education befitting the social position and means of his father; and, when business became a necessity, young Russel was apprenticed to that of a practical printer, in an office of good standing in St James' Square, Edinburgh. It was while he was undergoing his novitiate in this establishment that Alexander Russel began to evince literary proclivities and power of no mean order, for which he found an outlet in a serial printed in the establishment—*Tail's Magazine*, a periodical which, in its day, did good and real political work. Encouraged by this outlet for his literary genius, the young politician was meantime making steady progress on the literary ladder on which he had planted his foot, and his writings were finding ready access to the pages of other periodicals than the one in which he had made his start. In 1839, still a very young man, we find him appointed to the editorship of the *Berwick Advertiser*—a position which then, much more than now-a-days, embraced a vast amount of literary drudgery. Mr Russel in his new sphere had not only the writing of the leading articles on the current topics of the day to attend to, but also the collating

of the news and reporting besides, and all this at a salary now almost unknown in connection with the newspaper press. After being in Berwick for three years, his next appointment was to the editor-ship of the *Fife Herald*. In connection with this journal he remained for several years, and had the good fortune while there to be brought into intimate contact with some of the leading politicians, not only of the district, but of the period, on the Liberal side; and while in Cupar the pen of Mr Russel began to make itself felt as a power, and by its advocacy of Liberal and progressive views the cause of the Whig party there was widely advanced. Leaving the *Herald*, he afterwards formed one of a party in an attempt to launch, towards the end of 1844, a Liberal newspaper at Kilmarnock. His stay in the West of Scotland, however, was only of short duration; and next we find him in the office of the *Scotsman*, as assistant to the editor, Mr Maclaren, the accomplished geologist, whom he ultimately succeeded in the sole conduct of that journal. In his new position his power was at once felt, and here he became associated with the leading Whig politicians, both south and north of the Tweed, especially the latter. When Mr Russel joined the staff of the *Scotsman*, it was only a bi-weekly journal, published on the Wednesdays and Saturdays; and during his editorship the paper has developed into the powerful journal of opinion and most wonderful commercial enterprise that it now is, giving by its énérgy impetus to almost all contemporaries in the daily line, and surpassing in its business enterprise some of the best metropolitan journals. Mr Russel has for many long years been the literary mainspring of the *Scotsman*, and the amount of work which he got through daily and weekly was something surprising. In writing and dictating "leaders" he seemed to be possessed of unequalled capabilities, and in this respect we have known him employ at once two and sometimes three assistants extending his ideas on different topics, while he himself was writing on a different theme. Mr Russel had special endowments for his work, and where others would have lost time and patience in searching for facts and turning up authorities, Mr Russel ever had them in his memory and ready for use. Of this the daily columns of the paper has given ample evidence from the

freshness of the writing on the latest topics discussed in Parliament or on the platform, evidencing that there was a presiding genius of no ordinary calibre in the editorial chair. But although day after day, and week after week, Mr Russel was steadily at the helm, accomplishing a task which few if any one else could have achieved, so systematic was he that he always found time more or less for his pastimes as well as for the occasional enjoyment of the company of a wide circle of acquaintances. Even at this time, too, papers from his pen appeared not infrequently in our high-class magazines and quarterlies. His favourite pastime was angling, on which he has given his observations and experiences over many years in a most readable volume on the salmon. With a friend or without one accompanying, he was most enthusiastic in the prosecution of this pastime, as not a few of the frequenters of the banks of the Tweed and Teviot, with their tributary streams, are well aware.

With these general observations on the character and course of one who will be sadly missed in the walks of journalistic literature, we must draw our remarks to a close. In the mental constitution of our lamented friend as a public writer while there was much with which the public is necessarily familiar, and of which they have formed their own estimate, there were also traits in his more private life of the most genial and warm description, and which those who either desired or needed his counsel or advice could neither fail to feel or appreciate. And here we need not hesitate to refer to the warm interest Mr Russel took in this journal. To him it owes its name of *The Kelso Courier*. At its start and ever since, he has displayed towards it the sincerest favour. Intimate with the late husband of its proprietrix, Mr Andrew Murray, during his Berwick editorship, Mr Russel has never ceased to manifest the most disinterested solicitude for the success of our enterprise. True as a friend, terrible as an opponent, dealing his heaviest blows and keenest satire against all shams and make-believes, whether moral, religious, or political, Alexander Russel was in every sense the *beau ideal* of a newspaper editor. During his lifetime, notwithstanding the severities of his pen, he received numerous and touching evidences that even those

whom he had most thoroughly worsted in argument could well appreciate his motives; and in death we are sure that no aspersions will gather round his bier.

BERWICK ADVERTISER.

JULY, 21, 1876.

WE regret to have to record in our present issue the death, at his residence in Edinburgh on Tuesday, of Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*. Mr Russel commenced his career as an editor in connection with the *Berwick Advertiser* in 1839; and this fact invests the sad intelligence of his death with an additional element of melancholy interest in this quarter. He was well known to our elder readers, who never lost sight of him, but took a lively interest in his success in his subsequent brilliant career. In the death of Mr Russel, the newspaper press of Great Britain has lost one, whose rare gifts and genius in the vocation to which he devoted his powerful pen were such that we shall look in vain for another who can fill the blank which his removal has caused,—one who was undoubtedly the most influential politician in Scotland,—one whose services to the Liberal party as such were perhaps more than those of any other single man in the kingdom,—and one who was second to no journalist of his generation in the surpassing ability, the trenchant vigour, and the racy humour of his leading articles. There were not a few who on many occasions differed from his conclusions. We, who generally agreed with him on political questions, sometimes found ourselves in the category of dissentients from his views. But all readers, whether they agreed with or differed from his opinions, admitted the vast stores of knowledge, the great force of argument, and the wealth of rich illustrations by which his political and other disquisitions were distinguished. We cannot better conclude this brief notice than by quoting from a highly eulogistic leading article in reference to the deceased by our Liberal contemporary, the *Leeds Mercury*, the concluding words of which are as follows:—“Those who know something of the

trials and difficulties of the task which Mr Russel performed with such exceptional success during thirty eventful years, cannot allow this prince among journalists, this brilliant ornament of a great profession, to pass from the view of the generation he served so faithfully, without paying a well-earned tribute to his memory."

KELSO CHRONICLE.

JULY 21, 1876.

MR ALEXANDER RUSSEL, editor of *The Scotsman*, died at his residence in Edinburgh on Tuesday morning last. He had been recovering from an attack of pleurisy, and he was in such improved health that his medical adviser thought that in a day or two he might proceed to Nenthorn House, of which he had a lease. His death took place very unexpectedly. His career as a journalist has been most successful, and under his management *The Scotsman* has attained a commercial prosperity and political importance in which it has no equal in Scotland, and no rivals out of London. In general politics his views were usually sound, and his political writing was so fresh, informed, and piquant that it gained him a high reputation, and made *The Scotsman* attractive. His treatment of some grave Scottish questions was, however, out of sympathy with a great body of the people connected with the Scottish churches; but all classes of Liberals gladly acknowledge that during his lengthened journalistic career he exercised a great power for good in Scottish politics.

HAWICK EXPRESS.

JULY 22, 1876.

ON Tuesday morning a wide-spread regret was caused in the city of Edinburgh and, a little later, throughout the country, by the news of the death of Mr Alexander Russel, for thirty years editor of the *Scotsman*. At intervals since 1872 he has had symptoms of a description of heart disease, which,

however, his medical adviser regarded simply as a slight functional derangement. About a fortnight before his death he had a severe attack of pleurisy, which prostrated him for a few days; but he had so far recovered that on Monday last Dr Keith had hopes that he would be able shortly to remove to his country residence at Nenthorn, Kelso. He got up to breakfast on Tuesday morning, and, feeling very unwell, sat down in a chair, awaiting the arrival of Dr Keith. In a few minutes the doctor arrived, and found him pulseless and sinking fast. Ten minutes later he was dead. Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh in 1814. He received the rudiments of his education in various Edinburgh schools, but it may be said he was an almost entirely self-educated man. He was from his boyhood an ardent reader of all kinds of literature. From an early age, too, he had a thorough love of field sports. Later in life he found means of recreation as an enthusiastic follower of Walton, and might often have been seen plying rod and line in his favourite river—the Tweed. He began his newspaper career on the lowest step of the ladder, and while yet a young man he was appointed editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*, and shortly afterwards editor of the *Fife Herald*. He quitted this paper, in 1844, to take charge of a Liberal paper just started at Kilmarnock. His writings had ere this attracted the appreciation of some of the most eminent men of the Liberal party, and he had only been a few months in Ayrshire when he was invited by the late Mr John Ritchie to become assistant to the late Mr C. Maclaren in the editorship of the *Scotsman*. Mr Russel frankly confessed that this had been his ambition, and went into the work heart and soul. Towards the end of the next year he was sole editor, except so far as that Mr Maclaren occasionally advised him in the conduct of the paper, or took charge during his absence.

Probably his greatest journalistic triumphs have been, after those that attended his assumption of the helm in 1846, his resistance to the popular outcry against the Papal aggression in 1851, and his contest with Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who stood for the Kirkealdy burghs, in 1858. Sir William made a sudden swoop on the Kirkealdy burghs, designing to oust Colonel Ferguson. Mr Russel denounced the intruder in

no measured terms—using for the purpose private information as to what Sir William had written in the *Saturday Review* and said in the Reform Club. Sir William at once rejoined, and every day during the fight there appeared speech and article, each as strong as the author could make it. Another notable contest was that in which the *Scotsman* fought single-handed in 1856, when Mr Macaulay retired from the representation of Edinburgh. Most of our readers will remember Mr Russel's encounter with Mr Cobden, and also his attack upon Mr M'Laren—an attack so severe that an action of damages was raised by Mr M'Laren. £400 was awarded by the jury; but the mistake of having recourse to such means of reparation was soon apparent. The *Scotsman* was presented at the ensuing Christmas with a cheque for £1200 to cover the verdict and costs; and, soon after, Mr Russel was himself presented with a splendid mark of confidence. Mr Russel found time to contribute to the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*, and has published notes of his visits to the Continent and to Egypt. Mr Russel's mode of dealing with ecclesiastical subjects was perhaps the feature in his writings most open to criticism. There can be no doubt that his great object was the suppression, so far as it was in his power, of intolerance, cant, and inconsistency; but in this he sometimes overstepped the bounds of prudence, and too frequently wounded the cherished religious sentiments of the community. The offence he gave in this respect led to the establishment of the *Daily Review*, and recently to the attacks of Rev. George Macaulay and others.

Perhaps no man in Scotland had a more thorough acquaintance with the political history of his country since the passing of the Reform Bill, or a more intimate acquaintance with the leading local magnates. In his youth he had the good fortune to be on terms of friendship with some of the leaders of the Liberal party, including the late Lord Marjoribanks, the late Right Hon. Edward Ellice, and others; and in later years he could class among his acquaintances such men as the Right Hon. W. P. Adam, the Right Hon. E. P. Bouverie, Lord Macaulay, Earl of Minto, Duke of Roxburghe, Lord Dunfermline, and Lord Dalhousie. In short, his great services to the Liberal party were appreciated by all those who were

the recognised leaders in Scotland of that party ; so much so that he had the honour of being elected an honorary member of the Reform Club. In the circle of his literary friends may be mentioned the names of Thackeray, Professor Huxley, Dr John Hill Burton, and others. But it was not in the field of literature so much as in the field of politics that Mr Russel distinguished himself. Few men had a more capacious intellect, or more retentive memory, or a keener insight into the undercurrent of political feeling that agitated the country. Enjoying the confidence of the politicians of his party, with a wonderful power of turning all his resources to the best account, he never failed to make the most of his case. As a writer he had a terse and sparkling style, his keen logic being always embellished with brilliant flashes of wit. Even when most severe he rarely caused bitterness. His literary work in connection with the paper is said to have been enormous, there having been scarcely an issue which did not contain a contribution from his pen. One mentions a tradition that he could write or indite no fewer than three leading articles in the course of an afternoon. Certain it is that his energy was great, and that all his abilities were devoted to the interests of his party, and to the enlightenment and progress of the nation at large.

FIFESHIRE ADVERTISER.

JULY 22, 1876.

No one conversant with public affairs in Edinburgh during the last thirty years, can fail to have learned with deep regret the death of one of the ablest, and, it may be said, one of the most honest and honourable, men that during that period have had a share in the conduct of the daily press. It had been arranged two weeks since that Mr Russel should leave Edinburgh for his country seat, but he became worse, and the journey was delayed. On Monday, however, he was thought to be so much better that it was expected he would be able to undertake the removal in the course of a few days. On Tuesday morning he rose as usual, but was unable to partake

of breakfast, and at half-past nine suddenly expired. Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh in 1814, and has thus died in his sixty-second year.

The deceased was a solicitor's son, born in Edinburgh on the 10th December, 1814. He was first employed as a printer in the office in which *Tait's Magazine* was published, and it was while he was yet an apprentice that his literary powers became known. After contributing to the *Magazine* and other periodicals, he was appointed in 1839 editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. In Berwick, though quite a young man, he took a prominent interest in local politics, more especially in connection with the elections which occurred at that time in North Northumberland. After being in Berwick three years, he went to Cupar as editor of the *Fife Herald*, and remained there for a number of years, in the course of which he became acquainted with the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, M.P., and his son, the present member for the St Andrews burghs, which he has continued to represent since 1837. Mr Russel also formed an intimacy with Admiral Wemyss, the member for the county, and the various leading politicians on the Liberal side. In these days provincial journals exercised much more influence than it is possible for them to do now with their numerous daily rivals, and, strangely enough, the position of editor was at that time accompanied with much less drudgery than it is now. Like many of those engaged at the time in the editorial profession, Mr Russel acted as editor and sub-editor, and also did a good deal of reporting. From Cupar he went, at the end of 1844, to Kilmarnock, where he took part in the starting of a Liberal journal, but had been there only a few months when he was recommended to Mr Ritchie, then proprietor of the *Scotsman*, as a young politician of apparently good promise. He was invited to take the post of assistant editor under the late Mr Charles Maclaren, and entered on this service in March 1845, since when his fame has become more than national. Mr Russel was intimately associated with the chiefs of the Liberal party both in England and Scotland, and the various Lord Advocates on that side of the question. He had early, in Fife, made himself master of the whole question of the corn monopoly—a subject which he

afterwards, in the columns of the *Scotsman*, and in the pages both of *Tait's Magazine* and of the *Edinburgh Review*, discussed with the amplest knowledge of facts and statistics, and a thorough elucidation of the principles of political economy. He discharged admirably for some years his sub-editorial duties, skilfully abridging and arranging the general news, and giving a new conciseness, safety, and readableness to many "letters" from correspondents. He then, too, wrote occasional leaders, which struck Mr Charles Maclaren by their sound and vigorous thinking, their apt and numerous illustrations, and their racy style. Mr Maclaren then required, or was advised, to make a sojourn of several months on the Continent, and though the *Scotsman* was only then a bi-weekly publication, it was considered impracticable that the absentee could regularly fill the leading columns. Mr Russel was, in the absence of Mr Maclaren, entrusted with the whole of the editorial functions and responsibilities, which he discharged with such admirable effectiveness and discretion that Mr Maclaren expressed enthusiastic approval and confidence, and proprietors and readers were alike more than satisfied. He had been fully tried in the particular in which he was thought to be from temperament rather weak. He had been supposed to be somewhat wanting in discretion and caution, and to have a tendency to give utterance rashly to views and opinions; whereas Mr Maclaren had shown pre-eminent sagacity and tact in holding the balance equally between the various parties that supported the journal, and had scrupulously abstained from giving offence to any of them. Mr Russel, it was feared, would be far less wary; but by sarcasm, sly hit, or mere outspokenness, would frequently mortify a patron. Yet the trial which he had in Mr Maclaren's absence was universally admitted to show that his constitutional rashness had been thoroughly repressed, and that he had conducted the *Scotsman* with consummate tact and discretion. A peculiar growth of Scotch *pawkiness* might be found under his hasty outspokenness. He seldom by an over-emphatic or blunderingly strong utterance made an enemy without simultaneously compensating for this by securing several new friends. If he by injudicious sarcasm alienated a few who had been steady supporters, he thereby

attracted to his side many who had hitherto been indifferent or hostile. On a morning when some old subscriber, deeply irritated by the *Scotsman's* invective or raillery against *Sabbatarianism*, sent to the office an order—"Drop sending my copy of your paper?"—the proprietors of the *Scotsman* felt sufficiently consoled, and its editor felt himself sufficiently justified by an application from dozens or scores of strangers to be entered on the list of regular subscribers. The proprietors not only admired his varied talents, but trusted in his sagacity and discretion long before he was admitted to be one of themselves, and to have a very considerable share of the property; and it is understood that they accorded him the most generous and ungrudging support whenever he was exposed to the censure of a party. On not a few occasions when, from less maganimous overseers, he might have expected blame or chiding, along with gloomy looks at darkening prospects, he received not only the kindest encouragement, but handsome presents, that indicated a still growing appreciation of his services.

As is well known, Mr Russel was a most enthusiastic angler, and was one of the original members of "The Edinburgh Angling Club." His appreciation of the art was shown otherwise than by being one of its keenest followers. By the use of his facile pen he did much to extend the knowledge of his fellow-disciples of Old Isaak. He wrote an article on "Salmon Fishing" in the *Quarterly Review*, which attracted a great deal of attention, and was subsequently expanded into a volume on "The Natural History of the Salmon, and Legislation connected with it." But his substantial contributions to literature were by no means confined to the illustration and elucidation of matters connected with his favourite amusement. He wrote a series of sketches on a tour in Ireland, and having attended the opening of the Suez Canal, he penned a considerable number of articles in reference to it, which were subsequently reprinted. Still more recently, since his health began to give way, he wrote a series of sketches of a tour which he made on the Continent, which were also republished.

In 1859, Mr Russel was presented with a testimonial of the

value of about two thousand pounds by his political friends and admirers. Mr Russel was a consistent Whig of the Macaulay type—a position which he maintained with great power. He evinced a deep hatred to the crotchet-mongers in his party, and was not slow to inflict such castigation upon them as seemed to be merited. In ecclesiastical matters, he was well known to belong to the Broad Church school, being bound to it by professional as well as personal ties.

Mr Russel was twice married, and had issue by both marriages. His first wife was Miss M'William, and his second, Mrs Evans, who, with several sons and daughters, survives him. In private life he enjoyed the esteem and affection of all who knew him. He was a delightful companion, and as ready to listen as to speak; for no man had less of the disposition to dictate to the social circle, or to monopolise conversation. We feel the deepest sympathy for the family by whom he was deservedly beloved, and many private friends will miss the hours of recreation in which they found him a most welcome companion.

FIFE HERALD.

JULY 20, 1876.

IN the death of Mr Russel, of the *Scotsman*, which took place somewhat suddenly on Tuesday morning at his residence in Edinburgh, Scotland has lost the prince of her journalists. The melancholy intelligence is learned with peculiar sadness here in Fife, where he spent several years of his early editorial career, where many characteristic stories of him at that period are still told at the social board, and where his marvellously clever articles in the *Scotsman* were the frequent theme of appreciative discussion and merriment. His editorial coadjutors in the *Scotsman*, and his brother editors of the daily press, have given able and exhaustive notices of his career and analytical estimates of his character, social qualities, and singular abilities, and it will be sufficient if we quote some of these. We may, however, remark that Mr Russel had the

power, very rarely to be found, of imparting a distinct individuality and personal colouring to the potent newspaper he so ably edited and controlled. So much was this the case, that when a trenchant "leader" appeared, the question which one gentleman would often address to another on meeting in the course of the day was not "Have you seen the *Scotsman* on so-and-so?" but "Have you seen Russel's article on so-and-so?" and the remark would be added, "Man, it's first-rate; it's capital," with other strong adjectives.

HADDINGTONSHIRE COURIER.

JULY 21, 1876.

AN almost irreparable loss has fallen on Scotch journalism by the sudden and unexpected death of the talented editor of the *Scotsman*. Mr Russel's health, for several years back, had not been very robust, and a tendency to heart disease latterly manifested itself, to which he succumbed on Tuesday morning. He had risen, after a somewhat uneasy night, and was in the act of dressing, when the fatal breast pang struck him. After a few minutes, he lapsed into a state of unconsciousness, and quietly breathed his last. The death of a man like Mr Russel, who had, by dint of sheer mental vigour, made himself a power in the country, is an event that cannot but be deeply felt by all who came within the scope of his influence, whether socially or politically. He was possessed of many noble qualities of head and heart, and while wielding a trenchant pen, and using it with masterful skill and strength, had the rare good fortune to retain to the last the esteem and confidence—we might almost say the love—of all classes of his fellow-countrymen. Who that had any acquaintance with Scottish newspaper literature, was not familiar with the Attic style of Alexander Russel? His keen, incisive, and vigorous denunciation of everything that appeared to him hollow and false; the unmerciful way in which he tore the veil from mere pretentious quackery, whether in Church or State, were keenly appreciated in every household where there was the sense to discern the manly and

the true. Those who knew him best were most able to understand and to admire the breadth and sweep of his intellect, and to appreciate at the true worth the genial, sunny nature of as leal and whole-hearted a man as ever adorned the ranks of literature. He had a pleasant word for every one about him ; and none so ready as he to give the kindly nod and encouraging smile to the tyro just beginning his career in letters, and who could not but feel abashed when standing, as might be the case, for the first time in his life in the presence of the Colossus. As editor of the *Scotsman*, he had so thoroughly identified himself with it for the last twenty years, that to think of the paper and its literary chief were almost synonymous things. He worked for it with all his heart and soul, and gave it of his best. An indefatigable and rapid writer, wonderfully posted up in all matters political, with vast stores of information accumulated on every kind of subject, and gifted with a marvellous power of putting them to ready use, he was the very *beau ideal* of a newspaper man, to whom dexterity in the use of his arms is as invaluable as the strength and temper of the material of which they are composed. We shall in vain look for his equal among the ranks from which he has, all too soon, been called away. He will be greatly missed from his accustomed haunts, and Edinburgh to-day possesses one fewer of those citizens whom she most delights to honour, and of whom she has most reason to be proud.

PERTSHIRE ADVERTISER.

JULY 21, 1876.

THE premier-journalist of Scotland is dead. The editor of the *Scotsman* was the best known man north of Tweed. Thousands of people who could not be enrolled as readers of our leading journal, were familiar with the name and striking characteristics of its conductor. An editor's individuality is often absorbed in his paper—this being especially the case with metropolitan journalism. But Mr Russel, to all intents and purposes, was the *Scotsman*. The renown of that paper, its most glittering achievements, were associated in the public mind, not with a

journalistic abstraction, but with Mr Russel. It is difficult to dissociate the two—the paper and the editor. That Mr Russel did more than any other man or body of men to put a mark upon the intellectual individuality of Edinburgh is admitted to the advantage of the capital. The *Scotsman*, through its editor, succeeded in “educating” Edinburgh, in quickening its intellectual impulses, softening its social angularities, and making it less narrow and pedantic. Liberalism is equally indebted to the wit and wisdom and the splendid strength of “Russel of the *Scotsman*.” No man living in the not inconsiderable ranks of contemporary politicians could confound the sophistry, and uncover the skeleton of Toryism, with better grace or more consummate skill than Mr Russel. Humorous and grave by turns, a master of banter, quick to judge of man and his works, an able political economist, Mr Russel united in himself the most showy, and, at the same time, the most valuable qualities of a journalist. We regret his death, because in his life he had become an institution and a power in Scotland—especially in its political and social concerns.

ARBROATH GUIDE.

SCOTTISH journalism has, in the death of the late Mr Alexander Russel, which took place last Tuesday morning, lost its chief. In general, the conductors of newspapers—except in the case of newspapers published in towns where everybody knows everybody—are neither much known, nor have any particular desire to be known, as the authors say of this or that article. Our journalism bears the anonymous form, and editors, believing it to be best for the public that this should be its form, are quite content to let their work speak for them, without any such help or hindrance as it might derive from considerations of a personal character. But the late editor of the *Scotsman* was too large and strong an individuality to be wholly merged, in the sense of being lost sight of, in his paper. He was as little given as any of his brethren of the press to

associating himself in the public eye with the work which he did, but it was inevitable that such association should take place. For the last five-and-twenty years or so, there has probably not been a man in Scotland who has exercised so much real power as Mr Russel did, and although it was exercised in a sense anonymously, through the columns of a newspaper, the man who wielded all this influence necessarily came to be known far and wide.

It is of course superfluous to say that as a newspaper editor Mr Russel was a distinguished success. He found the *Scotsman* an able, influential Edinburgh newspaper; he has left it a journal of national influence, the foremost organ of public opinion in Scotland. Of course, he must have had able co-operation, both in the literary and business departments of the paper, and the great change which took place about twenty years ago in the law as to newspapers helped this result—indeed, without that change it probably could not have been brought about. Still, as all newspaper people know, the period of change was a period of difficulty, and it was under Mr Russel's management that for the *Scotsman* this period became the starting-point of great prosperity, and not, as was the case with many of its contemporaries, a time of irretrievable disaster.

But the commercial success of the *Scotsman* is not a thing with which the public have much to do; the manner in which its late editor used his great power is a more legitimate theme of interest and discussion. Necessarily it is a subject which admits of discussion. Mr Russel was a tremendously hard hitter, and, naturally, it often happened that the people who were hit did not like it. He was keen for his party, and of course the party or parties he opposed would rather have had him with them than against them. He was a great statistician, was thoroughly well up in the doctrines of political economy, and as he never minced matters, but was entirely true to his convictions, his utterances on such subjects as trade unions seemed deficient in sympathy—a thing, indeed, which he probably could not have recognised as having anything to do with the matter, although in private life he was very far from being an unsympathetic man. Next in importance to

his political writings were his ecclesiastical articles, and these were certainly a cause of offence to some. But they were a source of enjoyment to many more. We do not refer to any particular articles, or justify every joke; but it should be borne in mind that Mr Russel never made theology, as distinguished from ecclesiasticism, a subject of comment, and that, in writing on ecclesiastical subjects, his power of satire and rollicking humour was aimed at insincerity, inconsistency, humbug in short, although the shaft may in some instances have missed its aim and hit better things. He was essentially a fighter, and in his literary conflicts, whether as regards the politics of the State or the Church, he wrote lines which had better have been unwritten—as much might be said of every controversialist; but he was decidedly against cants and shams, and on the side of liberalism, moderation, and common sense.

Mr Russel undoubtedly attained to his great influence as a public writer for the Scottish people, because of his being a typical Scotchman, just as Burns and Scott, in other spheres, and with their larger natures, were helped to immortality not by their genius alone, but by their genius being an outcome of the national life and character.

ABERDEEN FREE PRESS.

JULY 19, 1876.

MR ALEXANDER RUSSEL, the well-known editor of the *Scotsman*, died suddenly yesterday morning at his residence in Edinburgh, from heart disease. Mr Russel, who was in his sixty-second year, had been connected with journalism from his teens, and had been editor of the leading Scotch newspaper for one-and-twenty years. He was a most vigorous and versatile writer, and had signally stamped his individuality on the paper with which his name has of late years been intimately—it might almost be said, is now indelibly—associated. In party politics he was a Whig, in municipal affairs he was attached to what is known as the “Parliament House set,”

and in ecclesiastical matters he was literally a "free lance," his articles on topics pertaining to this last having been of a most marked and characteristic type. Mr Russel was, besides, a frequent contributor to magazines and reviews, and was the author of a well-known book on "Salmon," he being an enthusiastic angler. In private life he was much esteemed; and in public and professional circles his death is greatly regretted.

ELGIN COURANT,

JULY 21, 1876.

THE death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, which occurred at his residence in Edinburgh on Tuesday morning, has created a blank in the journalism, not only of Scotland, but of the United Kingdom. A biographical sketch of the life of the deceased gentleman need not be long. Born in 1814, he began life as a printer, but took to literary work young, and has been an editor for forty years—first of the *Berwick Advertiser*, then of the *Fife Herald*, and for the last thirty years of the *Scotsman*. It is important, however, to say something more than this of a journalist whose writings may be said to have been coming constantly before us for thirty years. For the past two days the life and character of Mr Russel have been employing many pens, and have been viewed from different stand-points, and coloured, of course, with the various prejudices and prepossessions which seldom fail to appear in biographical sketches of men who make themselves eminent in political life. Weak vessels of the newspaper press railing against the deceased editor of the *Scotsman*, strongly suggests the idea of certain creatures kicking a dead lion. Even when he was in life they need not, in fact, have been afraid of the editor of the *Scotsman*, for he would not have deigned to give them a reply. The head and front of his offending would seem to have been, in the eyes of some, that he did not speak with sufficient respect of ecclesiastical affairs. He never wrote a single line against religion in the proper sense of that term. He neither defended peculiar religious beliefs

nor assailed them, but, while thus keeping within the proper sphere of the newspaper press, he took such liberties as he thought proper with ecclesiastical affairs, and unsparingly exposed sham and hypocrisy in every form. Carlyle may be called the hammer of sham in social life. Mr Russel acted a similar part in sacerdotal life, in which, as in society, as all the world knows, there is much that cannot be defended, when put on its trial in the crucible of reason and Scripture.

A journalist setting his face like a flint against the religious prejudices and unmeaning formalities of the age in which he lives, must have many enemies. He does what Junius said a noble Lord could not do—he rises to the dignity of being hated, and thus we see in some of our contemporaries a flood-gate of censure opened upon the departed editor of the *Scotsman*. His trenchant and witty sentences, which seldom failed to have an obvious stratum of truth in them, stung the narrow-minded in ecclesiastical affairs to wrath, and, as the deceased said, his praise was in none of the Churches. He looked at all denominations without partiality for any, and wrote what he believed true of them all, and what deserved the derision of the public. It was in this that the great strength of the editor of the *Scotsman* lay. He was eminently qualified for the work to be performed, by knowledge, wit, and humour, and how he has succeeded is attested by his having made the *Scotsman* the leading journal in Scotland, with no equal in its influence on ecclesiastical affairs. The mass of the reading population north of Tweed have sympathised with what has been written in the *Scotsman* about the proceedings of Church courts and the public conduct of eminent men in different denominations.

In party politics, we must be candid enough to confess, we never had a great admiration of the *Scotsman*. We have said this years ago, and say it again, our conviction being that party spirit has been allowed often to run riot in that journal, for none but its pet politicians and statesmen have been credited with saying a wise thing or doing a good action in public life. The political writing in the *Scotsman* never would have raised it to its present position. It may be said to be found in every one's hand, and in every house, which has not resulted from its railing at opponents, in season and out of season, but from

talented and attractive writing on social and religious questions, and from the paper always being admirably got up so far as news has been concerned, and, it may be added, from first-class commercial management. But the deceased editor was the mainspring of the *Scotsman's* success. We never thought he was deeply read in Continental politics, although some of his eulogistic biographers say he had a profound knowledge of them; but for knowledge of public men in every sphere of public life, and for an acquaintance with and grasp of Scotch affairs, Mr Russel has left no equal behind him among the journalists of the kingdom. Favoured with a remarkably retentive and exact memory, he seemed to have remembered everything in public life that has occurred in Scotland during the last forty years, whether it had reference to social, political, or religious questions. When reading he always took notes, and had the rare faculty of appropriating the pabulum and casting away the chaff of the literature that came under his observation. But mere plodding would never have made the editor of the *Scotsman* what he was. Book-worms and newspaper ones may be found anywhere, but a clear and penetrating intellect, much treasured and ready knowledge, and a facility in English composition, with a style clear as crystal, carrying strong reasoning with it, is not to be got by mere moping over books and newspapers. Something else is required besides school teaching and diligent reading to make such a successful editor as Mr Russel has been, and that something stamped an impression upon the leading articles of the *Scotsman*, especially out of the field of party politics.

The last time the present writer had the pleasure of meeting the departed editor of the *Scotsman* was at a public dinner given to Sir George Brown in Elgin, now twenty years ago. He was then in the prime of life, and amusing himself by angling in the Spey. His periods of recreation were too short for the mental labour he had to go through, and at the age of sixty-three heart disease, which often results from continued and severe pressure on the mind, has carried our old friend away. It is recorded of the famous Dr Paley that one scarcely ever saw any appearance of study about him. It was the same with Mr Russel. Instead of holding down his head like

a bulrush when walking on the street, or sitting in his sanctum in nightcap and slippers in all the dismal solemnity of composition, he was ever ready to laugh and joke and tell anecdotes, of which he had an inexhaustible store. As a conversationalist he had few equals. He was ready whatever the topic might be, and seemed to act on the maxim—

On men and manners be thy thoughts employed,
Leave to the schools their atoms and their void.

No man could have had a more cheerful disposition, or be more anxious to make all happy around him. While exposing the tomfooleries, frivolities, and learned nonsense seen and heard in public life, he had little hesitation in placing the chief actors in a scene on a bed of thorns, but in no case was there the slightest personal ill-will, for the moment the castigation was given all was forgotten. In dealing with public questions he kept a firm grasp of fundamental principles, and his strong inborn common sense sparkled through everything that came from his ready pen. To the Liberal party it was an instrument of strength indeed, and such another they will not easily find in Scotland. No editor in North Britain has wrought so long and done so much for the cause of Liberalism, nor has any other writer north of the Border done so much in freeing the public mind of time-hallowed prejudices, which he regarded as the mere excrescences of true and genuine religion, as inculcated in divine revelation. Peace to the ashes of the editor of the *Scotsman*! He was a lover of truth, and spoke it boldly; a hater of all sham, and treated it severely; and he has laboured with success in making the public wiser, both with regard to Church and State, than when he began his editorial career.

INVERNESS ADVERTISER.

JULY 21, 1876.

SCOTLAND has lost one of her representative men in the person of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman* newspaper, whose decease occurred on Tuesday last. Mr Russel's ability shone forth in every department in which he chose to exercise it, his enterprise and energy were conspicuous and indomitable, and his independence and fearlessness of opinion such as set him in an admired place of his own, apart from most other men, not excepting his brother journalists, while it assisted materially to secure success to the newspaper of which he was so long the presiding literary and political genius. Entirely a self-made man, owing nothing to the accident of birth or the privilege of a college education, he rose from step to step of the ladder, displaying character and ability in every department of his profession, from that of the humble "printer's devil"—he was an actual terror to many when he had got beyond that innocent rôle—to responsible editor and conductor of the most influential daily newspaper in Scotland. The late editor of the *Inverness Advertiser* was a fellow-apprentice compositor with Mr Russel, and the career of the distinguished journalist was watched with sincere admiration, unmingled with a touch of envy, by all the associates of his early years, his pre-eminent ability being acknowledged at all hands, even by his bitterest opponents whilst engaged in the pen and ink warfare indispensable to his profession. With our venerable and esteemed contemporary, the editor of the *Inverness Courier*, the deceased has been for many years on the most intimate terms—they are justly ranked as the most distinguished ornaments, if not actual fathers, of the editorial chair, and in many respects their literary tastes, as well as their business habits, were alike. Mr Russel's decease will leave a blank in the newspaper world, which may not be much felt by the public, as he had for a considerable time past contributed little to the newspaper over which he presided to the last, but will be keenly realised for many years to come among his press brethren, who held him in honour and respect.

INVERNESS COURIER.

JULY 20, 1876.

THE death of Mr Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, has deprived Scotland of its foremost journalist. The sad event was entirely unexpected. Mr Russel had suffered for some years from that most painful of all heart affections, *angina pectoris*; but the spasms were generally at long intervals, and his constitution had always been so robust, that at the age of sixty-two he seemed likely to resist for many years any serious disorder. Lately, however, an attack of pleurisy reduced his strength; and a seizure occurred on Tuesday morning which carried him off in about ten minutes.

Mr Russel was the son of an Edinburgh solicitor, and was born in 1814. At an early age he was sent to learn business as a printer with Mr John Johnstone, who was editor of the *Inverness Courier* before he went to Edinburgh; and Mrs Johnstone, who edited *Tait's Magazine*, was the first to discern his literary ability. While still a young man, Mr Russel obtained the post of editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*; at a later date he conducted the *Fife Herald*; and in 1845, he became the assistant of Mr Maclaren in editing the *Scotsman*. From the first the burden of work was on his shoulder, and in 1849, Mr Maclaren resigned his nominal position as editor in favour of his colleague. Since that time Mr Russel has conducted the *Scotsman* with conspicuous ability. His powerful and trenchant pen never ceased to advocate Liberal principles and opinions; and no man possessed a more extensive knowledge of political affairs at home and abroad. The variety of his information, and the force and inimitable brightness of his style, were the admiration of friend and foe. Whatever side he took up, his case was always presented with great skill and vigour; and the conclusion to which the argument led generally seemed to be irresistible. His own convictions, we may add were always resolute, and he never felt indifferent to the cause which he advocated. Mr Russel was unquestionably the ablest journalist in Scotland. Besides being a first-rate political writer, he was a brilliant conversationalist and humorist, and at all times a man of clear and penetrating

mind. Mr Russel was a keen angler, and has written the best book on the subject of the salmon. As a friend, no man was ever more faithful and warm-hearted. His kindness and cordiality—the strength of his affection and the charm of his companionship—will long be remembered among his acquaintances. Even to very young people he was a source of inspiration and enthusiasm. The boys who contested cricket matches in the neighbourhood of his country seat on Tweedside, and were his frequent guests, felt the influence of his energy no less than the exuberance of his humour, and, like older people, left his company with a deep impression of the duty of work as well as the exhilaration of pleasure. In a word—

“ He was a man, take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again.”

JOHN O'GROAT JOURNAL.

JULY 20, 1876.

THE Liberal cause in Scotland has lost one of its leading men by the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*. Born in Edinburgh in 1814, the son of a solicitor, and obtaining his education from private seminaries there, he began life as a printer with Mr Johnstone, the predecessor of Dr Carruthers in the editorship of the *Inverness Courier*. Through the encouragement of Mrs Johnstone he contributed to *Tait's Magazine*, some time afterwards he obtained the editorship of the *Berwick Warder*, then the *Fife Herald*, and in 1844, the assistant editorship of the *Scotsman*. Since that time his active pen has been engaged in all the leading political, social, and other questions of the day. Able as an editor, well-informed and powerful as a keen and witty leader-writer, he has been a tower of strength during those times when Liberal opinions were less popular, and his counsel was much esteemed and desired. His services were recognised by his party on two occasions, and his consistent advocacy of educational and other reforms has given the leading paper a representative character over the world. Mr Russel was a keen and skilful

angler. In private life, a brilliant conversationalist, and a steady friend. The cause of his death was heart disease. His remains were buried on Friday.

ARDROSSAN HERALD.

JULY 22, 1876.

IT has for many years been the pride of not a few in Ayrshire that the late Mr Russel, of the *Scotsman*, was at one period of his life associated with the local press. His connection with a Kilmarnock paper, now long ago deceased, was only for a few months, but we still remember the reception with which his vigorously expressed articles were received by the public. They were too good, too independent, for a community which has never been able to appreciate independence in journalism, and it was fortunate for himself, and certainly an incalculable gain to the Liberal cause, when he terminated his connection with the local provincial press, and began his brilliant career in Edinburgh.

It is no exaggeration to say, that such another career is unknown in the history of modern journalism. Some men, with business tact and unwearying push, have succeeded in gaining for their journals an extensive circulation; but the singularity in the present case appears to be, that the circulation of the *Scotsman*, and especially its influence at home and abroad, are due for the most part to the intellectual force, the political prescience, the graphic, racy, ready-witted style, and the sturdy independence of its editor. Editors of influential papers are usually understood to be ubiquitous personages. No one, for example, thinks of Mr Delane when the *Times* is referred to; but it was otherwise when the *Scotsman* was quoted. Mr Russel was so identified with that journal, it was so much his, and he was so much the journal, that the two were synonymous terms, and always thought of as one and the same. Perhaps he coveted no higher honour than to be known as "Russel of the *Scotsman*"—certainly no greater could be enjoyed by any man north of the Tweed. It was due to his

unceasing labours, which extended over the long period of thirty years; to his brilliant, incisive, strongly marked mental abilities; to the logical consistency of his political faith; and not a little to the confidence he had inspired in his political foresight, that the *Scotsman* is to Scotland what the *Times* is to England—and the one paper in which all parties alike feel pride in as representing more than any other the qualities which Scotchmen themselves would like strangers to think are characteristic of the country. To be a power is an ambition worthy of a noble mind, and admittedly on all hands he was a great political power in Scotland. It is not difficult to see why he was so. “His practical sagacity, his political wisdom, his intimate and extensive knowledge of men and their relations to parties and shades of opinion,” his friends say, inspired the leaders of the Liberal cause with the most profound confidence in him, and he was trusted and consulted by them on all important occasions; but this will not altogether account for the power he wielded over public opinion. It rather lay, we think, in his possession of a consistent political creed, a thorough conviction that the application of the *principles* of his creed would alone conserve the political good of the country; in his always being in earnest even when playing as he often did with a victim; and in his never being a time-server. It was fortunate for himself that he could afford to be independent; for a nature such as his dared not be otherwise it was an immense gain to the Liberal cause that under all circumstances the party could rely upon one who could bring to the advocacy of Liberal measures a mind of great capacity for grasping the whole bearings of a subject, clearness of statement, and keenness of analysis; but we always felt that the secret of his great political influence lay in his possessing, as already said, at all times, the courage of his convictions, in his earnestness, and in his high regard for truth. This we take to be the lesson of his life; and it would be well for the future of the country if young men would begin their life-work with a similar determination. All through he was true to himself, and faithful to principle; and the deep regret felt all over the country at what may be regarded as a premature death, and the ungrudging honour which has been paid to his

memory by friend and political foe alike, show how much these qualities can be appreciated when they are employed, as in his case they were employed, for the benefit of the country.

GALLOWAY GAZETTE.

JULY 22, 1876.

By the death of Mr Alexander Russel, Scottish journalism has lost one of its brightest ornaments and the *Scotsman* its principal prop. The son of an Edinburgh solicitor, deceased early took to literature; and from the date of his first essay in *Tait's Magazine*, down to his last "leader" in the paper which he brought from comparative obscurity into the front ranks of the British press, Mr Russel abundantly showed that he was made of that "stern stuff" which has forced Scotchmen to the top in everything all over the world. His vigorous mind and trenchant pen are said by those who knew him best to have been wedded to a kindly heart and a genial disposition; like other men who have made an indelible mark in history, the lion in public was as a very lamb in the bosom of his family and among friends. Widely though we differed from him in politics, and much as we were wont to deplore the line of conduct he pursued on many public questions, we had the most unbounded respect for Mr Russel as a man; whilst as a journalist and a successful man of letters, all his brethren of the press were justly proud of him. Few men ever fought so well and persistently for his party as did Mr Russel; and, as is their wont, the Liberal leaders amply recognised and rewarded his services. Mr Russel was connected with Galloway thus far—the late Mrs M'Haffie of Corsemaalzie was his sister. We ungrudgingly place our little wreath on the coffin of the dead journalist.

THE TIMES.

JULY 19, 1876.

WE regret to announce that yesterday morning the editor of the *Scotsman*, Mr Alexander Russel, died at his residence in Edinburgh in the sixty-second year of his age of disease of the heart, from which he had been suffering for some time. He rose a little earlier than usual, and while dressing was seized with a severe spasm. Medical aid was at once procured, but he died in about ten minutes after the attack of which he complained had commenced. Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh on the 30th of December 1814. He was educated in his native city, where his father practised as a solicitor. He was intended for the trade of a printer, but, after contributing to *Tait's Magazine* and other periodicals, became, in 1839, the editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. Having occupied that post for three years, he entered on the editorship of the *Fife Herald*, and remained at Cupar till 1844, when he started a Liberal paper at Kilmarnock. In the beginning of 1845, Mr Russel became connected with the *Scotsman* as assistant to the late Mr Maclaren, who a few months afterwards resigned. Mr Russel succeeded him, and since conducted that journal with signal ability and success. Four years ago, when there was scarcely a copy of the *Scotsman* that did not bear, more or less, the impress of his hand, he was attacked with heart disease. In politics Mr Russel was a Whig. Besides his literary labours in connection with the editorship of the *Scotsman*, he contributed to various publications. Among others may be mentioned the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. His first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, entitled "Agricultural Complaints," was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Lord Jeffrey, and he has since written on a variety of topics. He was a great authority as regards salmon-fishing, and gave valuable evidence on that subject before committees of both Houses of Parliament. In 1859 he was presented with a testimonial of the value of about £2000 by his admirers in Scotland.

DAILY NEWS.

JULY 19, 1876.

WE regret to have to record the death of Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*. Mr Russel, who had long suffered from disease of the heart, died at his residence in Edinburgh yesterday morning, at half-past nine o'clock. He was born in Edinburgh on the 10th of December 1814, and after receiving an ordinary school education, more liberal in Scotland than elsewhere, was apprenticed to a printer. He soon, however, found his vocation in journalism, and successively edited newspapers in Berwick, Cupar, and Kilmarnock. In 1845 he became editor of the *Scotsman*, which under his direction obtained a political influence and authority in Scotland without parallel. Mr Russel's large knowledge and sound and sagacious judgment were set off by a faculty of humour quite unique, which displayed itself perhaps even more in conversation than by his pen, and which made him the life and soul of every society into which he entered. Besides his contributions to the *Scotsman*, Mr Russel wrote largely elsewhere, and notably in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, *Blackwood's* and *Tait's Magazines*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. An eager sportsman, both with the rod and the gun, especially with the former, Mr Russel added to the literature of angling and of natural history a volume on the Salmon. Mr Russel last year was elected a member of the Reform Club without ballot, under a rule which empowers the committee to recognise in this way special claims and distinction. Few persons have more thoroughly deserved this compliment. His services to the Liberal party in Scotland can scarcely be exaggerated, and its foremost members, both in London and Edinburgh, will feel deeply the loss, not only of a valued fellow-worker and adviser, but of a delightful companion, whose society, in whatever circle he mingled, had an irresistible charm. Mr Russel's death removes not only an able and consistent politician and a brilliant humorist, but a man exemplary in every domestic relation, from a scene in which many years more of fruitful work or of well-earned ease and enjoyment might naturally have been anticipated.

DAILY TELEGRAPH.

JULY 19, 1876.

WE announce with extreme regret the death of Mr Alexander Russel, who has been for a great number of years editor and part proprietor of the *Scotsman*, and has rendered to the cause of Liberalism in Scotland services of incalculable value. For some time past he had suffered from the complaint known as *angina pectoris*, but never to such an extent as to incapacitate him from active duty. About a fortnight ago he had a severe attack of pleurisy, which for some days assumed an alarming aspect, but his medical advisers thought that he had so far recovered as to be able to remove in a day or two to Nenthorn, Kelso, his country residence. Yesterday morning, however, while preparing for breakfast, he was suddenly seized with symptoms evidently due to disease of the heart, and died within ten minutes. Mr Russel was in his sixty-second year. He was a native of Edinburgh, where his father practised as a solicitor. For forty years he has had a reputation in North Britain as a vigorous, practical writer. His earliest contributions were to *Tait's Magazine*. In 1839, he became editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*; in 1842, of the *Fife Herald*; and, two years later, started a Liberal newspaper in Kilmarnock. In the beginning of 1845, he joined the staff of the *Scotsman*, and very shortly afterwards succeeded Mr Maclaren as the principal editor. Since that period he has written continuously on political and ecclesiastical subjects. His articles were marked by an earnest and thorough though always moderate Liberalism, and by a certain individuality of style and treatment that were recognised throughout Scotland. Mr Russel was also a contributor to the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Blackwood*. Apart from journalism, Mr Russel had great personal influence in Scotch politics, his opinion and advice being frequently sought by leading politicians of both parties. He gave important evidence to select committees of the House of Commons on the subject of the ballot, faggot votes in Scotland, and the salmon fisheries.

THE PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER.

JULY 29, 1876.

JOVIAL, learned Alexander Russel, editor and part proprietor of the *Scotsman*, died in Edinburgh, the city of his birth, on Tuesday morning, July 18; and as, in the opinion of those able to speak with authority, it is an intellectual giant that is lost to the world of journalism in the person of the late editor of the *Scotsman*, we feel sure a large number of our readers will feel interested in the accompanying portrait.

Alexander Russel, born in Edinburgh on December 10, 1814, became a journalist at an early age; was for some time assistant to Mr Maclaren, whom he succeeded in the editorship of the *Scotsman* in 1845. Since then the *Scotsman* has risen, under the able and vigorous management of Mr Russel, to be the *Times* of Scotland. Indeed, in a popular form of imparting intelligence—*i.e.*, that of the London letter—the *Scotsman* has frequently of late anticipated its London contemporaries in the publication of important items of news. As a politician, Mr Russel did yeoman service for the Liberal cause in Scotland; and his services were so much esteemed by his fellow-countrymen that he was, in the course of his career, presented with a valuable testimonial by the readers of the *Scotsman*. Last year the Liberal chiefs of the Reform Club (who are not too ready to recognise fellow-labourers in the people's cause outside their narrow circle) elected Mr Russel honorary member of their Pall-Mall symposium.

It is, perhaps, too much to say, as the *Spectator* does, that “in a few days the tourist tide will surge across the border, and yet what a strange Scotland it will be without ‘Russel of the *Scotsman*.’” To the vast majority of tourists who “surge across the border” Alexander Russel must have been unknown, esteemed though the *Scotsman*, his paper, may have been by them. Apart from this hyperbolic expression, the *Spectator*'s sympathetic estimate of the sociable nature of the late Mr Russel may be fair enough:—

“Even in these busy days Alexander Russel, as a humorist and a publicist, will live; nor will he soon be forgotten as a man. In all relations of life he was emphatically true and

tender. Although, to use the words of Macaulay, whom he resembled in many things, especially in power of memory, he had a "quick relish for pleasure," and was an eminently clubbable man; and, although his homely accent, indicative not so much of want of University culture as of love of Scotland and of Burns, and his inexhaustible fund of stories were the delight of every angling "roost" or dining-room he entered, his mind was far too massive and his professional pride far too high to allow him to indulge in anything like journalistic Bohemianism, or to tolerate it in others. He was fantastically attached to duty, and had no other fanaticism. We have it on the authority of those who knew him best that in domestic relations he was all affection and simplicity, and no one who ever came in contact with him, or even looked upon his kindly face, could think anything else. Perhaps a brief spasm of illness was the proper close for a career so active and so honourable. Scotland is rapidly becoming provincial, and we hardly expect she will be able to keep to herself in the future a head so hard and a heart so warm as the head and the heart of Alexander Russel."

THE LONDON SCOTTISH JOURNAL.

JULY 22, 1867.

SCOTSMEN at home and abroad will deeply regret the sudden death of an able journalist and a good man, Mr Alexander Russel, who has for so many years conducted the leading Scottish journal. Mr Russel, who had long suffered from disease of the heart, died at his residence in Edinburgh on Tuesday morning, at half-past nine o'clock. He was born in Edinburgh on the 10th December 1814; and after receiving an ordinary parochial-school education, was apprenticed to a printer. Ultimately Mr Russel found his vocation in journalism, and successively edited newspapers in Berwick, Cupar, and Kilmarnock. In 1845 he became editor of the *Scotsman*, which under his direction obtained a political influence and authority in Scotland without parallel. Mr

Russel's large knowledge and sound and sagacious judgment (says the *Daily News*) were set off by a faculty of humour quite unique, which displayed itself perhaps even more in conversation than by his pen, and made him the life and soul of every society into which he entered. Besides his contributions to the *Scotsman*, Mr Russel wrote largely elsewhere, and notably in the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, *Blackwood's* and *Tait's Magazines*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. An eager sportsman, both with the rod and the gun, especially with the former, Mr Russel added to the literature of angling and of natural history a volume on the Salmon. Mr Russel last year was elected a member of the Reform Club without ballot, under a rule which empowers the committee to recognise in this way special claims to distinction. Few persons have more thoroughly deserved this compliment. His services to the Liberal party in Scotland can scarcely be exaggerated, and its foremost members, both in London and Edinburgh, will feel deeply the loss, not only of a valued fellow-worker and adviser, but of a delightful companion, whose society, in whatever circle he mingled, had an irresistible charm. Mr Russel's death removes not only an able and consistent politician and a brilliant humorist, but a man exemplary in every domestic relation, from a scene in which many years more of fruitful work or of well-earned ease and enjoyment might naturally have been anticipated.

NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE.

JULY 19, 1876.

SCOTTISH journalism has lost one of its best known and most distinguished members in the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*. The melancholy event, which appears to have been somewhat unexpected, occurred in Edinburgh yesterday, the deceased gentleman having succumbed to an illness extending over only ten days. Mr Russel was born at Edinburgh on the 10th of December 1814, and was educated at schools in his native city. Having no desire to follow the

legal profession, to which his father belonged, he devoted his attention to literature, and commenced writing papers for various periodicals, some of his earliest contributions appearing in *Tait's Magazine*. His journalistic career had a comparatively humble origin, his first engagement being in connection with the *Berwick Advertiser*, of which he was appointed editor in 1839. Having occupied that position for three years, he accepted a similar situation on the *Fife Herald*; and remaining at Cupar till the end of 1844, he then started a Liberal paper in Kilmarnock. But a higher honour yet awaited him. In the beginning of 1845 he became connected with the *Scotsman*, which then, as now, was regarded as the leading newspaper in Scotland. At first he acted as assistant to the late Mr Maclaren, who a few months afterwards resigned, and Mr Russel succeeded to the sole occupancy of the editorial chair. Although in recent years he had ceased to discharge the more active duties pertaining to the office, he retained his responsible position to the last. To the anonymity generally associated with journalism in this country, Mr Russel was a happy exception. His able and consistent advocacy of Liberal principles, and his devotion to objects of social improvement, had rendered his name familiar almost as a "household word;" and his trenchant and pungent style was so indelibly stamped upon his literary incubations, that for a long period Mr Russel and the *Scotsman* may be said to have been synonymous terms. His services to the Liberal cause were, many years ago, recognised by the presentation of a testimonial of nearly £2000, from his readers and admirers throughout Scotland; and so recently as 1875, he was, for a similar reason, unanimously elected a member of the Reform Club in London. From his journalistic work, the deceased gentleman still found time to devote to periodical literature. Among the publications to which he has contributed papers are the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. His first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, entitled "Agricultural Complaints," was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Lord Jeffrey; and he has since written on a variety of topics, from statistics to salmon-fishing, on which latter subject he has given valuable evidence before committees of

the House of Commons. Mr Russel had been twice married—on the second occasion, a few years ago, to a relative of the late Lieutenant-General Sir De Lacy Evans, who survives him. The deceased gentleman was a brother of Mr R. C. Russel, merchant, Newcastle.

The announcement of the death of Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, occasioned great regret amongst men of all parties when it was known in Parliament. Mr Russel, although a strong political partisan, was as warmly esteemed by the opponents as the supporters of his special political opinions. He has been suffering from heart disease for some time, and his death was not altogether unexpected. Not long ago he was married to Mrs De Lacy Evans, a relative of the celebrated General Sir Hugh De Lacy Evans, who achieved such distinction in the Crimean campaign, and was the leader of the English legion in the Spanish war of independence.

NORTHERN DAILY EXPRESS.

JULY 20, 1876.

MR ALEXANDER RUSSEL, the editor of the *Scotsman*, whose death, in his sixty-second year, was recorded yesterday, had a genius for journalism. He made the *Scotsman* the leading paper of Edinburgh by sheer energy and ability. In his youth he had been intended for a printer, but his literary turn ran away with him. He became a contributor to various periodicals, then took to editing certain local papers, finally going to the *Scotsman*, to which he gave a name almost as soon as he took the editor's chair. Liberal in politics and in theology, bitter in his sarcasm, having a contempt for mere conventionalities, a good hater—and, therefore, often unjust—he tickled the Scotch fancy with his humour and his direct incisiveness. The paper became an authority, and at last the paper of Scotland. Mr Russel contributed also to the quarter-

lies, both the Blue and Yellow, and the Drab, both to the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*. He also wrote articles for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. But he overworked himself, and four years ago was seized with heart disease, which ultimately carried him off.

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

JULY 19, 1876.

IN the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, British journalism has sustained a loss which it is not easy to measure. In this country, the journalist, even when he is a man of rare ability, seldom becomes a celebrity whose name and person are familiar to more than a restricted circle. He works, as it were, behind a curtain; and if the achievements of his pen excite attention and admiration, the man himself, except in rare instances, comes and goes as a shadow. The distinguished publicist whose death we have now to lament was one of the few exceptions to this rule. His name was known from one end of Scotland to the other, and Scotchmen were as proud of him as of the *élite* of their preachers and professors. Nor was his reputation as a clear-headed thinker and trenchant writer limited to his native country. He was widely known and appreciated in England also—a fact sufficiently demonstrated by his recent election to an honorary membership of the Reform Club. It can be said without exaggeration that, wide as was the reputation he enjoyed, it did not go beyond his real merits. In Scotland he was a political and social force of the first importance. With extensive knowledge, and that quality of taking pains which has been described as *genius*, he combined a literary style of singular power. His courage was almost heroic. He was a strong party man; but a blind partisan he never was. He could take an independent course when, as he thought, he saw his political friends swerving from the true lines of Liberalism. He was the special terror of quacks and of quackery in all its forms—political, ecclesiastical, and social. Scotland owes him

much, and will doubtless be ready to acknowledge the debt to the full. He has not died young—he was sixty-two—but his death seems premature.

The figure of Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, was so well known in the lobbies of the House that the unexpected news of his death was one of the chief topics of the afternoon's gossip. Though not more than sixty-two years of age, Mr Russel was perhaps the last of the class of journalists to which he belonged. The field of daily journalism has widened so much of late years that the individuality of the chief conductor of a newspaper can never again make itself felt through every department as it once could. No editor can again be to his newspaper what Theodore Hook was to the *John Bull*, and Leigh Hunt, and even Albany Fonblanque, to the *Examiner*, and what Alexander Russel was to the *Scotsman*. Mr Russel had held his position a little over thirty years, and had acquired an influence in Edinburgh greater probably than was exercised by any other of its citizens. The anonymity of journalism for him had no existence. He not only edited but *was* the *Scotsman*. That he was one of the ablest of living political writers everybody must admit, but he would not have been what he was as a mere writer in any other journal than the one which he directed so long. He was a Scotchman and an Edinburgh man before all things; and it may be truthfully, if paradoxically, said that even his antipathies to some of the prejudices of his countrymen and his fellow-townsmen added to the power which his thorough knowledge of them and general sympathy with them enabled him to exercise over them.

BRADFORD DAILY TELEGRAPH.

JULY 19, 1876.

JOURNALISM and politics have sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*. He had been for more than thirty years editor of that journal, presided over its various changes, and made it a power in the literary and political world. He did so by force of a personality that impressed itself upon everything he had to deal with, and which in the course of years made him as widely known as the fame of the paper. Unflinchingly liberal, he had the courage to express his convictions, even when they were counter to the general opinions of his own party; and Scotland owes much of the liberal spirit that has marked her theologically and ecclesiastically of late, to the unsparing sarcasm and ridicule with which he assailed the faults and foibles of her clerical courts and ecclesiastical proceedings. In politics he displayed the same fearless liberalism, and never allowed even his own strong party spirit to prevent a frank exposition of the blunders of his party. His sturdy common sense dominated even his party feelings, and while pointing out the right principle he could point out the folly of the method in which it was proposed to advance it. He was not without his reward. Whatever their differences of opinion, Scotchmen were proud of him, and chuckled over the trenchant blows he dealt, even when these fell upon their own friends. Nor was his reputation confined to his own country. He was widely known in England, and the Reform Club conferred upon him the unique distinction of electing him, as a journalist, an honorary member of the club, in succession to Mr Gladstone and Earl Granville. He was one of those few journalists to whom journalism is not a mere pursuit into which they have drifted by accident, or chosen as a means of procuring a livelihood, but the one sphere in which they can work and in which all their energies and powers find easy and natural expression,—of whom it could be said, as of the poets, they are born, not made.

WESTERN DAILY PRESS (BRISTOL)

JULY 21, 1876.

THE death of Mr Alexander Russel, of the *Scotsman*, has removed one of the most eminent and successful journalists of our time. His fame had penetrated every corner of Scotland, and raised the journal he edited to a place among Scottish newspapers beyond even that enjoyed by the *Times* in England. As a politician of great practical experience Mr Russel was without a rival, and no election contest in any part of Scotland was thought rightly conducted without his advice being first obtained. The Reform Club last year paid him the compliment of spontaneous election—an honour conferred on very few, and those of high rank or great political service. Mr Russel's style was attractive, but its influence was chiefly won by real power. In sarcasm and invective the editor of the *Scotsman* was terribly effective, yet there were few persons of kinder and more genial temperament. He was exceedingly popular in society, and had quite a genius for gaining friends. These he counted in all circles of life, and as happens to all men of real superiority, he had been favoured with the intimacy of many distinguished persons. There was no name better known than his—perhaps none so well—and every Scotchman who knew anything of the great men in his country was justly proud of Alexander Russel.

NORTHERN WHIG.

JULY 19, 1876.

IT is with great regret that many of our readers will learn that Mr Alexander Russel, the editor of the *Scotsman*, died somewhat suddenly yesterday. He had been for some time in delicate health, and had recently been suffering from an attack of pleurisy. Yesterday morning, however, alarming symptoms appeared, and in a very few minutes Mr Russel expired. He was stated to be about sixty-three years of age, though he cer-

tainly looked older. His death is a great loss to journalism. He had edited the *Scotsman* for some thirty years, and to him it owed much of its popularity and prosperity. His services had been properly recognised by its late proprietor, who admitted him to a liberal partnership in a newspaper which he might be said to have made his own. Mr Russel rose from the ranks of journalism. He was in many respects a self-taught man, as he himself stated again and again, and he was justly proud of the manner in which he thus rose. He was a Liberal of the Liberals, and indeed a Whig of the Whigs, as our political friends are regarded in Scotland. He had a large grasp of politics. If his writing was not distinguished by high literary culture, it was remarkable for its shrewd common sense, for its logical reasoning, and, when occasion required, for much humour. He had great versatility, and wrote with much rapidity and ease. Journalism had, indeed, become with him a second nature. In Scotland he was a power. Now that he is gone, who is there to supply his place? It is not very long since he was elected to an honorary membership of the Reform Club, in recognition of the services he had rendered to the Liberal cause—services which deserved, and more than deserved, such a recognition. He conferred an honour on the Reform Club by accepting its membership. It can scarcely be said that the club conferred an honour on Mr Russel. He was distinguished by what might be called a very strong individuality. He was no commonplace man. We need scarcely say that in the private relations of life Mr Russel was genial and kindly in the extreme. It might be said of him, as of another great Liberal Scotchman, that “he was a diner-out of the first lustre.” He was everywhere welcomed; he had great stores of information, and a marvellous faculty for anecdote. He could, as he pleased, set the table in a roar. His nature was thoroughly genuine. The younger generation of journalists of the first class regarded Mr Russel with astonishment. They could scarcely comprehend him at all. His presence will be much missed, and those who knew him best will regret him the most. That on many hustings in Scotland, for a generation, a Conservative could scarcely venture to show his face was very much owing to Mr Russel. Now that he is no more,

we may all respectfully recognise the great qualities which distinguished this veteran Scotch journalist, one of the ablest of the able, one of the bravest of the brave, one of the most kindly of the kind. All honour to his memory !

The death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, took place somewhat suddenly this morning, at half-past nine o'clock, at his residence in 9 Chester Street, Edinburgh. For four years past Mr Russel has been in impaired health, but has always been able to attend to his editorial duties. A fortnight ago, however, just as he was about to leave Edinburgh for his country seat near Kelso, he was seized by a severe attack of pleurisy. The symptoms for several days were alarming, but gradually he seemed to be recovering from the illness, and yesterday his medical attendant gave hopes that in a day or two he would be able to make his contemplated visit to the country. This morning he rose from bed about the usual time ; but, while preparing for breakfast, symptoms, apparently due to disease of the heart, manifested themselves, and in ten minutes he breathed his last. Mr Russel was born in Edinburgh, December 10, 1814, and educated at schools in his native city, where his father practised as a solicitor. He was intended for a printer, but changed his views ; and, after contributing to *Tait's Magazine* and other periodicals, became in 1839 editor of the *Berwick Advertiser*. Having occupied that post for three years, he became editor of the *Fife Herald*, and remained at Cupar till the end of 1844, when he started a Liberal paper in Kilmarnock. In the beginning of 1845 Mr Russel became connected with the *Scotsman*, as assistant to the late Mr Maclaren, who a few months afterwards resigned, and Mr Russel succeeded to the editorship. In politics he was a Whig of the Fox school. He found time to contribute to various publications, among which may be mentioned the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*. His first article in the *Edinburgh Review*, entitled "Agricultural Complaints," was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Lord Jeffrey ; and he has since written on a variety of topics, from statistics to salmon-fishing,

on which latter subject he has given valuable evidence before, committees of the Houses of Parliament. In 1875 he was unanimously elected a member of the Reform Club, by virtue of a special power entrusted to the committee, and which is intended to be used as a compliment to men who have rendered conspicuous service to the Liberal cause.

IRISH TIMES.

JULY 19, 1876.

It is with sincere regret that we announce the death of Mr Alexander Russel, editor of the *Scotsman*, which occurred at his residence in Edinburgh yesterday morning. For six-and-thirty years the deceased gentleman was one of the main props and mouthpieces of the Liberal party in Scotland—we had almost said the kingdom—and his reputation as a vigorous thinker, incisive writer, and humorist of a style fast dying out, was national. It is hardly too much to say that, in his own peculiar way, no living journalist could surpass, and very few could rival Mr Russel in the art of overwhelming an opponent under a crushing weight of wit, irony, humour, and ridicule, combined with that merciless logic for which Scotchmen are famed, and a style vigorous and terse to the verge of coarseness. As an editor, he was enterprising, fearless, and consistent; an uncompromising foe of bigotry, Free Churchism, and Toryism, Mr M'Laren, M.P. for Edinburgh, the Premier, and everybody who did not delight in salmon-fishing and good dinners. To the Liberal party in Scotland his services, extending over more than a quarter of a century, were simply invaluable. At every election, at every fresh move on the political board, his advice was first sought for, and soonest taken, and so highly were these services rated, not in Scotland only, but in London, that last year the Reform Club paid him the distinguished and most exceptional honour of electing him a member for "conspicuous services rendered to the Liberal cause." Socially Mr Russel was a most genial and lovable man, the best of company, and always in the best. Profession-

ally he stood so high that he was more than once asked—unless rumour went far wrong—to accept the editorship of the London *Times*, and, beginning as a printer, he rapidly rose to be the editor and one of the principal proprietors of a journal which, by its enterprise, courage, and judgment, has earned for itself the richly-deserved title of the Scottish *Times*. Finally, Mr Russel was heart and soul a Scotchman, and a typical one as well. For pawky humour, biting wit, and incisive argument, he was unrivalled; and we are greatly mistaken if some of his articles do not go down to posterity as models of a kind of writing in which, while living, he had no superior, and when dead, has left no equal. Altogether, look at him how we will, Mr Russel was a representative man, and however much one may differ from him in many of his views, political and otherwise, he cannot but profoundly regret the death of a distinguished man, whose disappearance inflicts a distinct and irreparable loss, not only on journalism and his party, but on the country generally.

BOMBAY GAZETTE.

JULY 19, 1876.

MANY Scotchmen in India will be sorry to hear of the death of Alexander Russel, who has for many years past edited the leading Scotch newspaper, the *Scotsman*, with great ability. He was a kindly, hard-headed, and remarkably shrewd Scot—a warm friend, or an enthusiastic enemy. He wrote clearly and vigorously, paying more attention to matter than to style; and no man could be more humorous upon occasion. Like John Bright and other distinguished politicians, he was a keen fisher; and his book upon salmon is considered one of the best authorities extant upon the subject. In politics, he was a thorough-going Liberal, and his services to his party were considered of such value that last year the Reform Club did him the rare honour of electing him a member without ballot. He was a patriot to the backbone, and there was always something in his broad style of speech and bluff hearty manner which

was thoroughly characteristic of a man who combined many of the healthiest characteristics of John Wilson and the Ettrick Shepherd. In Scotland he had many admirers, and in Edinburgh, at all events, with which he has been intimately associated for more than a quarter of a century, his death will be regarded as little less than a public calamity.

THE SCOTSMAN.

JULY 25, 1876.

I N M E M O R I A M.

ALEXANDER RUSSEL.

I.

HE would have laughed to scorn—a happy scorn,
 That searched like light, though it could scorch like flame—
 All tribute false. Now that we speak his name
 Above a grave, let this in mind be borne.
 He served his time and served it not for fame,
 Least sordid of rewards, which yet has made
 Some service sordid, and for him we claim
 That to his task allegiance pure be paid.
 His task it was to mould the thoughts of men
 For daily need of action and of speech.
 For daily use, with ever ready pen,
 The faith in reason and in right to preach.
 Err though he might, he swerved not in his aim,
 Seeking for praise, or turned aside by blame.

II.

Some named him mocker, but he mocked alone
 At that which mocks the truth, at shams and lies.
 Not his the scoffer's heart: to laughter prone.
 The tears that lie in laughter he could prize.
 No hollow trumpet was he, but a man
 Of eager friendships and of tender ties;
 Not one who stood apart all life to scan,
 And echo vanity of vanities;

Nay, rather his the vision clear and true,
 Which saw that nought was common or unclean,
 Or vain, that it concerned a man to do ;
 Though still he wore a gay and careless mien.
 Nor few the friends, nor slow to sympathise,
 That loving while he lived, lament him where he lies.

ISA.

(MRS CRAIG KNOX.)

LEITH PILOT.

AUGUST 5, 1876.

I N M E M O R I A M.

ALEXANDER RUSSEL.

BRAVE heart and true ! still in the van
 Of Freedom's cause thy glittering spear
 And falchion bright were ever seen,—
 Thyself invisible. The public good
 Thy constant aim, and not applause.
 Day after day, through many changeful years,
 Above the loud acclaim of selfish pelf,
 At dawn thy certain voice we heard :
 Nor heard in vain ; keen-witted, shrewd,
 And sensible ; the mirth-provoking
 Products of thine ever busy brain,
 As daily food, were welcome e'er
 To hearts and homes o'er all the land.
 The hollow ring of prating fools
 Thou deftly quelled, but cheeringly
 The poor man's plaint was ever heard.
 From covert of the lion's skin,
 Who could so plainly point the ass's hide ?
 Or tell the adder from the eel ?
 To puncture windbags by the score
 'Twas thy delight, and to the counter
 Nail the base coin wherever found.
 Tender as woman in the inner shrine

Of thy heart's sympathies, thou hadst
 No time to weep luxurious tears
 Nor for the clustering joys of home
 Nor silken dalliance. Thy lot forbade.
 Work ! work ! till the small hours peep,
 And the pattering click of the tell-tale wire
 Has ceased to bother the sleepy clerk.
 Work ! work ! till the shrieking lights
 Flare at the guilt of outrageous toil ;
 Till the thundering wheels and the cylinders huge
 Are big with the message thou hast to give—
 Then hie thee away to thy loved Tweed,
 And bathe thy brow in its silver tide.
 It brawls in the shallows with hoyden glee,
 Or calmly it glides through the flowery mead ;
 It sings of peace to the whispering grass,
 It lightens the grief of the weary and worn.
 Ah ! bootless remede, it comes too late—
 The green sward now covers that brave, true heart.
 Our loss is so recent we feel but the smart.

A. S.

 TO THE MEMORY OF ALEXANDER RUSSEL.

HE'S dead ! he's gone ! we cannot call him back ;
 His pupils, we his loss may well regret ;
 We still shall strive to follow in his track ;
 The seed he scattered will be fruitful yet.

It yields a balm, a solace to our tears,
 While mourning o'er his cold and senseless clay,
 That single handed 'gainst a thousand spears
 He nobly fought, and bore the palm away.

No bigot he, nor fawning hypocrite—
 Great heart and brain, a man in word and deed—
 He threw his shield at all times o'er the weak
 Whate'er their station, or whate'er their creed.

The world's old forms o'er him had no control :

He dared to think, and to express his thought.

No sect could e'er confine his sturdy soul :

He wished for freedom, and for freedom fought.

Of knowledge rare, a man of keen research,

He proved the sophistry which gilded wrong,

Brought down pretension from his lofty perch,

And hoary prejudice, however strong.

No promised honour could make him forsake

The path which he conceived to be the right ;

Nor bribe could gain, nor threat intimidate

This valiant heart, this hero in the fight.

Though dead, a living force—the lamp he lit

Through generations yet to come shall shine.

His words of fire, his keen and sparkling wit,

Shall live engraven on the book of time.

JOSEPH TEENAN.

EAST LINTON, PRESTONKIRK,

August, 1876.



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