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Peter Henderson

Fac simile of Mr. Henderson's last signature.

PETER HENDERSON,

GARDENER—AUTHOR—MERCHANT.

A MEMOIR.

BY

ALFRED HENDERSON.

NEW YORK:
PRESS OF MCILROY & EMMET.

1890.

To the Memory of

MY MOTHER,

This Memoir is Lovingly Inscribed.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

In the preparatory announcement of this memoir, it was stated that it only professed to outline the magnitude of Peter Henderson's services to American horticulture. Those familiar with my deceased father's career, will quickly perceive that I have kept within the boundaries of that announcement. Further, I fully realize how much of his labors in many directions have not been touched upon at all. The original intention was to prepare a larger, and I had hoped a more thorough and careful record of his life. It was, however, suggested, that as such a volume from its size would preclude a large distribution, it would be more satisfactory at this time if an abridged sketch was prepared which could be placed in the hands of every one who had known him in any or all of his various relations to horticulture.

I have, therefore, prepared this memoir on the lines suggested, and in begging your acceptance of it, I am conscious that the story has been but crudely told. At the same time I shall feel satisfied if I have succeeded in emphasizing the declaration made by one of his many eulogists that "Peter Henderson justly earned the honor, gratitude and respect of the greatest of nations."

ALFRED HENDERSON.

New York, December 1st, 1890.

PETER HENDERSON.

BORN IN PATHHEAD, SCOTLAND. JUNE 9, 1822

DIED IN JERSEY CITY, N. J. JANUARY 17, 1890.

THE 17th of January, 1890, will be a date forever memorable in the annals of American horticulture; for, on the morning of that day, at half past ten o'clock, at his home in Jersey City, a gray haired man lay dead; a man who although long past the meridian of life was when death touched him still in the zenith of his fame.

A man whose peaceful achievements had won for him an illustrious name throughout the land of his adoption, and who by his wise counsel, cheering words, and unselfish aid, had endeared himself to thousands of his fellow-men.

Crowning all, by a life so true, a character so lofty, that his steadfast friend John Thorpe* voiced the feelings of a multitude when he declared "that to have known him was an honor." That gray haired man was Peter Henderson.

Half an hour after his death the sad fact was flashed, not only over this continent, but to other lands, where also the echoes of his fame had sped, and strong men and gentle women wept even as his kindred, at the termination of a career in whose unsullied glory two continents had a share.

That Peter Henderson died universally regretted, the gardening world already knows; but that his passing

* "Father" and first President of the Society of American Florists.

away left a void in thousands of hearts, perhaps only we who knew him best and loved him most, can thoroughly realize.

Yet, had we in any sense, failed to understand or appreciate either the magnitude of his services to American horticulture, or the grandeur of his character, the host of sympathetic messages, which in the dark days following his death, fell fluttering at our feet, would have been all-potent reminders of our irreparable loss.*

That this remarkable man, possessed in an unusual degree, the power to invest all he said, wrote, or did, with his strong, dominant, yet kindly personality, there was no doubt, and while the reasons were as clear and simple as his own irreproachable life, here we can only outline a few of the many noble attributes with which he was endowed.

Turning first to his business career, it will be found that his straightforward and generous dealings with over a million people, extending over forty years, made his name from the outset, a synonym for all that is honorable in trade, and yet such characteristics alone, could scarcely have evoked the thousands of touching tributes his death called forth, for while great business success honorably achieved, should always command our admiration, still after all, such distinction is ephemeral, unless supplemented by deeds or works that will endure long after commercial success has been forgotten. Few are the business houses that last for a generation, and fewer still are they, on whose roofs the mosses of a century rest.

But it is when we approach Peter Henderson, the horticultural writer, that we find his power and personality displayed in the highest degree. "*Gardening for Profit*" published in 1866, was the first book ever written exclusively on market gardening in this country, that, and also his subsequent works have ever since been recognized as the highest American authorities on the subjects

* From the day of his death up to this time, November, 1890, the family of Mr. Henderson have received from all parts of the world, nearly eight thousand letters of sympathy and condolence

of which they treat. The best proof of the popular estimation and value placed upon Mr. Henderson's books, is to be found in the enormous circulation and steady annual demand that the various editions have enjoyed. Up to this time, there has been distributed of his six works on horticulture and agriculture, a quarter of a million copies, a circulation unparalleled in such literature in this or any other land.

Apart from the fact that he was the first writer in this country to make known methods of culture in both the vegetable and floral departments of horticulture that were suited to our climate, the strong individuality of the man stood out on every page, and those who sought instruction from his books, felt as they read, that no secrets of the greenhouse or garden had been withheld, that any new details of culture, labor-saving methods or devices, which in practice his practical and comprehensive mind had laid bare, were not only simply but completely told.

Scarcely second to the personal influence displayed in his published writings was the effect of his enormous personal correspondence. It is quite within bounds to state that in the last thirty five years he wrote or dictated at least one hundred and seventy-five thousand letters.

Of this enormous number more than two-thirds were written by his own hand, for until the introduction of the typewriter ten years ago he never used either a stenographer or an amanuensis. No correspondent, however humble or obscure, who applied to him for advice or information ever asked in vain. Besides it was his invariable practice to reply to correspondents at once. No matter how weary body or mind might be, all letters were answered the day they were received. This habit of promptly and fully replying to all inquiries gave him an influence and a personal following of such magnitude as no horticultural writer of his own or any previous era ever enjoyed.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Peter Henderson was born in Pathhead, a village twelve miles south of Edinburgh, Scotland, June 9th, 1822. He was the youngest of three children, Ann, James, and Peter, born to James Henderson and Agnes Gilchrist, his wife. The father, James Henderson, was a man much respected throughout the district, for his industry, integrity, and many other excellent traits. His occupation was that of a land steward, and for his services he received a stipend of £30 per year. Small as this salary ($150.) appears to our more modern eyes, it was no inconsiderable sum in those days. On this the elder Henderson brought up his children decently, paid for their tuition at the parish school, and "could look the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man." From his father Peter inherited many of his best traits as well as the superb health which was afterwards such a factor in helping him to success. To his mother's side however he was indebted for his intellectual endowments. His maternal grandfather, Peter Gilchrist, (born in 1740, died in 1810,) in whose honor he was named, was early in life a shepherd, but later on became a nurseryman and florist.

Peter Gilchrist was an unusually studious man, and for his station in life the possessor of a pretentious library. It is related of him that on one occasion he paid £20. for a copy of Matthew Henry's Commentaries on the Bible, an enormous sum for a man of his means a century ago. He was a man of marked ability and wielded a very considerable influence, in fact, he was the universal referee for the district on all disputed questions. Grandfather and grandson must have had many mental traits in common, for the grandson later on in his larger field, was arbitrator and referee scores and scores of times on matters both within and without the domain of horticulture.

Peter was sent at an early age to the parish school where he first exhibited that marvelous industry which all through life was his great distinguishing characteris-

tic. At the same time his sister, Mrs. McDougal, says that a utilitarian instinct was very marked all through his school-days, and relates that in the last six months of his school life having a chance to take up Latin, while he embraced the opportunity, he grumbled considerably, because as he said, he could see no practical use for it.

His mother died when he was eight years old, and as his father never married again, the boys, James and Peter, were cared for by their sister. His elder brother, Mr. James Henderson, who was an unusually popular and genial man, died in Jersey City in 1857. Of the three children born to James Henderson of Pathhead, Mrs. McDougal alone remains, a venerable and cultured lady, now in her seventy-fifth year, of whom her illustrious brother was wont to say, "that as long as he had known her he had never heard her make an unkind remark of any human being."

The amusements of country lads in the south of Scotland at that date were limited, their spare time being mostly spent in hunting for birds-nests and for the eggs of jack-daws, (a small species of crow.) The ruins of Crichtoun Castle, so graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in his poem of Marmion, is but a short distance from where Peter Henderson passed his boyhood's days.

"Crichtoun! though now thy miry court,
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and tottered Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honor, or pretence,
Quartered in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence."

The old ruin was a great resort for jack-daws in his time, and he was ever fond of telling of the dangerous risks he and other youngsters ran in hunting there for their nests. Another diversion out of which serious consequences often flowed, were the battles with stones that occurred between contending factions of the village lads.

In these battles the "boy was father to the man," for Peter Henderson always commanded one side. A story is told of him which forcibly illustrates his fertility in resource, even in his very early days. He could not have been over seven years old when an old gun a foot or two taller than himself came into his possession. He had powder, but no bullets, and of what use was a gun to a boy without bullets? At last he remembered that in the rear of Crichtoun House, (the residence of his father's employer) the lower windows were protected by iron bars, sunk in stone and soldered with lead. He got all the lead there he needed for his bullets. A day or two later the desecration was discovered and a hue and cry was raised, but the small offender was never detected. Fifty-five years afterwards in visiting the scenes of his boyhood, he was interested enough to show Mrs. Henderson the spot where he had obtained the lead for his bullets, and to his astonishment the holes had never been filled up and the traces of his jack-knife were still plainly visible.

The desire common to so many ambitious country-bred boys to find their way to large cities, took possession of him at the age of fifteen, when his school-days ended. The first chance came in the offer of a position in a liquor store in Edinburgh. The scenes he there saw were sufficient in a few months to make him give up his position and thus was laid the foundation of the temperance principles that he advocated and maintained all his life. Peter Henderson was perhaps as proud of this incident as of any experience in his career; because he returned to his native village as uncontaminated as when he left it.

At the age of sixteen the dawn of his renown began to glimmer, when he was indentured as an apprentice in the gardens of Melville Castle, situated near Dalkeith, which under the direction of the then head-gardener, George Sterling, was considered the best training school in all Scotland. Mr. Sterling was a character, and his famous pupil in after years never wearied of quoting his quaint remarks. He was, too, a

great disciplinarian, and such of his apprentices who were able to stand his four years' rule had but little trouble afterwards in securing positions.

There seems to have been a gap between his Edinburgh experience and his procuring a more congenial position. In that interval he had no predilection for the profession of which in after years he was to be such a great exponent. In fact his expressed desire at that time was to enter a banking office. When his old and life long friend Mr. Hugh Wilson, now of Salem, Mass., who was then employed in the gardens of Melville Castle, suggested to him that he should become a gardener, he refused to entertain the idea at first, and only took it up finally because nothing better offered. As soon, however, as he entered on his work at Melville Castle, he became enthusiastically interested, especially in botanical nomenclature. He had only been a few months in his new position when Mr. Ballantyne, a nurseryman in Dalkeith, asked Mr. Sterling to name his collection of hardy herbaceous plants that had become badly mixed. Sterling replied that he would send "ane o' his callants doon" * to name them and selected Peter for the task. The naming was done so quickly and so correctly that Mr. Ballantyne rewarded the youth with a sovereign, and complimented him on the good use he had made of the short time he had been at the business. In his talk with him, Peter told how during the summer he had employed his spare time in making a herbarium to familiarize himself with botanical names. Mr. Ballantyne told him to bring it to him when finished, and it pleased him so much that he presented him with a silver medal, which he had intended to offer as a herbarium prize to a local society. The following season Peter Henderson competed for and won the medal offered by the Royal Botanical Society of Edinburgh for the best herbarium of native and exotic plants; a competition open to the whole of Great Britain. This gave him a practical knowledge of botany which

* "One of his young men down."

was afterwards of great benefit to him as a horticultural writer.

The above incident shows, that George Sterling discovered in his young apprentice a bright pupil and secretly was very proud of him, yet delighted to find fault and Squeers-like teach him practical lessons. Thus on several occasions he had to lecture him on the difference between "dry" and "killing dry" as affecting plant life.

It happened that Peter on more than one occasion had allowed batches of plants in the greenhouse, to get into the "killing dry" state, and finally one day after a more henious offense than usual, Mr. Sterling took him by the ear and marched him up, that he might see the results of his inattention. This practical illustration was so successful that the Nestor of American horticulture never again forgot its meaning.

We have stated that the gardening course at Melville Castle covered four years, and it may not be uninteresting to state the wages paid apprentices at that time. The first year they received nine shillings a week, the second ten shillings, the third eleven shillings, and the fourth twelve shillings; a shilling being equal to 25 cents of our American money. Out of these wages the young men fed and clothed themselves, but were lodged in a building connected with the greenhouses and known as the "Bothy." Life in the "Bothy" was free and easy, and, on the whole rather comfortable. Each apprentice took his turn a week at a time, to cook and do the housework.

The food was very plain, consisting morning and evening of "halesome parritch (porridge) chief of Scotia's food." The noon meal nearly always consisted of potatoes and milk, and skim milk at that. Once a week, on Sundays, they indulged themselves in coffee and bread and butter.

During the four years they did not taste meat of any kind on more than a dozen occasions, and yet Mr. Henderson has repeatedly stated that not a single man lost a day by sickness in all that time.

It was during his term at Melville Castle that the gardens of a large private place, which had formerly been open to the public, were closed. As the place contained a very fine collection of plants, the eight or ten young radicals, in the "Bothy" of Melville Castle, held a council of war and decided that each should prepare an article for the press protesting against the owner's action in barring out the public.

When the apprentices met again, the articles were read, and the one contributed by Peter Henderson, the youngest of them all, was unanimously adopted as the best expression of their views. It was published, and although its author years afterwards admitted that the view taken was entirely erroneous, the article was sufficiently strong and able to call forth a half column reply from one of the leading London papers.

While at Melville Castle, he first put into practical application his temperance principles, by example and entreaty inducing most of his companions to abstain from going to the village tavern Saturday nights, which, previous to his arrival had been the regular custom.

It was during his 'prentice days, not content with the education he had received at school, that he and Mr. Wilson walked ten miles twice a week for a year, to attend a mathematical class in Edinburgh. And his thirst for knowledge was so strong, that in his first apprentice days, his companions in the "Bothy" used to laugh at him for reading the Dictionary at his meals. He kept at it for six months, until he finished it, and then pronounced it a most interesting book, "no matter what others might say." The practical outcome of it was that his "Bothy" companions found that when he was through, he could spell and define any word which they might put to him. But, with all his studiousness and industry he was not a recluse by any means, for there is ample testimony to show that in all the frolics of the country side he was always the leading spirit.

Old Adam Kitchen, for fifty-two years carpenter at Melville Castle, where he still plies the hammer and saw,

remembered him well and told our envoy last spring that "Peter was a shrewd, kindly lad and most industrious."

Mr. Kitchen also has reason to remember him from an experience he suffered at the hands of Peter and two or three other kindred spirits. He had just been married and was bringing his bride home to his cottage, and when he reached there, he found that all the doors and windows had been so effectually barricaded that it took considerable time to gain an entrance.

But the time had arrived when he was to turn his face to the New World, at that time a *terra incognita* in Britain to the gardening profession, the land, however, destined to be the real arena of his labors and triumphs. Before following him to America, we must note an incident connected with his departure from "Bonnie Scotland" which reveals another and delicate phase of his character. This anecdote only became known to us after his death.

It seems that Miss Melville, daughter of Lord Melville, had been very kind to both Peter Henderson and Hugh Wilson, and just before their departure for America, both young men wished to show their appreciation of her thoughtfulness. They had little to give, but decided that they would present her with their herbariums. In some way Mr. Wilson presented his first, and in return Miss Melville forced a sovereign into his unwilling hands.

When Hugh reported to Peter what had been done, he, fearing that his motives might be misconstrued if he presented the herbarium in person, arranged that it should not be sent to Miss Melville until the day he sailed for New York. When it is remembered that he arrived in New York with but three sovereigns in his pocket, this episode will show the mettle of the youth, in putting beyond his reach, what would have been a considerable addition to his cash capital.

Arrival in America, and First Gardening Experiences.

It was in the spring of 1843 that he arrived in New York, after a six-weeks' voyage in a sailing vessel, called the *Roscius*.

On the threshold of his American career, he met with an experience, for which many a struggling gardener had in after years reason to feel grateful. After landing, he started out to look for work, and, as was the custom in those days, as it is now, called first at a down-town seed-store.* He courteously asked the proprietor, if he had a situation open for a gardener? The proprietor, who was seated reading a newspaper spread out on the desk before him, did not even take the trouble to look up from his paper, but gave him the surliest kind of a "No," for an answer. The almost brutal manner of his reception made such an impression on the youth, that before he reached the sidewalk, he vowed that if the time ever came when he should be in a position, where men should apply to him for assistance in finding situations, if he could not aid them, he would at least always remember to treat them courteously and kindly. Commonplace as this incident seems, but few have any conception of how fraught it was with good to the multitude of private gardeners, who in the past thirty-five years applied to him for situations. Among the many thousands of letters of sympathy and condolence received by Peter Henderson's family after his death were hundreds from private gardeners; and the burden of their messages nearly always was, "I have lost my best friend."

After his rebuff at the seed store, he at once secured employment in the nurseries of George Thorburn, at Astoria, L. I., where he remained a year. Thence, to broaden his experience, he went to Robert Buist, Sr., at Philadelphia, then the leading nurseryman and florist in the United States. Mr. Buist was at once

* The seed-store in which he was so coldly received, has not been in existence for over a quarter of a century.

impressed by the young gardener's energy and industry, and a warm friendship sprung up between them, which terminated only with Mr. Buist's death. In after years Mr. Buist said that he was the best and most skillful workman he ever had. From Philadelphia he next secured a position as private gardener with Mr. Chas. F. Spang, of Pittsburgh. He travelled by canal from Philadelphia in charge of greenhouse material; and Mr. Henderson often spoke of this trip as a most delightful experience, lasting as it did for nearly three weeks of delightful weather, giving him ample time and opportunity to botanize by the way. During his stay at Pittsburgh, he remodeled Mr. Spang's greenhouses and grounds.

The country at this time was greatly excited over the Mexican war, and as his prospects did not seem over bright, he decided to enlist in the army. Indeed so bent was he upon taking this step, that Mr. Spang argued the point with him until nearly midnight before he succeeded in dissuading him from his purpose. He ever looked upon this as the turning point in his career and always felt grateful to Mr. Spang for dampening his martial ardor. He remained in Pittsburgh until he had accumulated a capital of $500, with which in 1847 he, in partnership with his brother James, who had about the same amount, started in the market garden business in Jersey City. The place they rented contained about ten acres and had three small greenhouses on it, one 50 feet long by 20 feet wide, and the others 40 feet long by 16 feet wide. For the first two years it was a hard struggle, but the energy and industry of the brothers pulled them through. After a few years they dissolved partnership, Mr. James Henderson buying a new place, in what is now known as the hill section of Jersey City, and devoting himself to vegetable growing entirely.

Peter Henderson continued at the old place; and as he found the taste for ornamental gardening increasing, he began to add to his greenhouse department, which eventually superseded the market garden, but for

years he personally and successfully conducted both the market garden and greenhouse departments, spending more than half of his working hours in his shirt sleeves, often drenched to the skin while leading his men in some active operation out of doors.

Finding his quarters limited, he bought a plot of ground of about six acres back of Jersey City, which he cultivated until about 1863, when the greenhouse department became so extensive, and its demands on his time so exacting, that he sold the "Back Lane" place, as it was called, and devoted himself solely to the Jersey City establishment, which by this time, in addition to the market garden, included twelve greenhouses, besides a large number of pits and frames.

The amount of labor he performed in those days was prodigious; he would rout out his force of men every morning by day-break and all operations, either of garden or greenhouse, he led personally. Often in the busy season, the day's labor would be carried on in the greenhouses until ten or eleven o'clock at night, where by lamp light, cuttings would be made, plants potted and staked, and labels written,—it being an iron-clad rule that no plant was to be sold or delivered unless properly and distinctly labeled. The wooden tallies or labels which for years past have been turned out by machinery by millions, were in the 50's made by hand. Cedar posts would be sawn and split into convenient lengths and then with knives were whittled down to label size. The younger members of the force, in the spring and summer mornings, used to make up bouquets which were retailed by boys in the streets of New York in the afternoon. He, however, soon gave up selling cut flowers in this way.

About 1853, he opened an office in New York with McIlvain & Orr, afterwards McIlvain & Young, at No. 9 John street, where during the spring and early summer months he sold and took orders for delivery the next day, of such greenhouse and vegetable plants as were in season; and in addition Mr. McIlvain sold plants in

small lots, at auction for him from about 11:30 A. M., until 1 P. M., daily. This however was done more as an advertisement, as his sales were principally from orders received personally and by mail. He was then, as always, a very busy man, and so jealous of wasting time, even at lunch, that he had a waiter at the restaurant he frequented, under pay to watch for his coming, and as soon as his face appeared in the doorway, his dinner would be on the table by the time he got there.

In 1864, he gave up the grounds he had so long occupied in Jersey City and moved to what was then known as South Bergen, distant a mile from his old place. Here he had been buying from time to time until he had secured nearly ten acres. On this he erected what was at that time considered a model range of greenhouses, heated and ventilated in the best known methods then in vogue.

This range of glass structures was visited by hundreds of florists to whom it served as an example for years.

In 1880, all these houses were pulled down and reconstructed, as experience had shown they could be improved upon; so a second time his greenhouse establishment served as a model and as such it still remains to-day. At the time of his death this part of his establishment covered over five acres solid in glass.

Busy as his life was he devoted no little of his time to helping beginners in his own line of business, often going long distances for this purpose. His advice as to the selection of suitable land was considered invaluable, and his judgment as to the construction and heating of greenhouses, and the selection of the most profitable classes of plants to grow, was unerring. A marked confirmation of this appeared two months ago in a sketch of the present president of the Society of American Florists, Mr. M. H. Norton, wherein it is stated that when he first started business with his brother, and began the culture of bedding plants and violets in span-roofed greenhouses, the latter being quite a venture at that time, that, "one of their first and best advisers was

the late Peter Henderson, and that his advice was sound is demonstrated by the abundant success of the young firm from the very start."

While thus busily engaged in all operations of the greenhouse and garden, he was a frequent contributor to the various horticultural journals, the *Gardener's Monthly*, the *Horticulturist*, *Tilton's Journal of Horticulture*, (while it lived) and the *American Agriculturist* rarely issuing a number without something original and timely from his pen.

By the increased facilities and economical methods he now used, the output of plants had become so large and the competition so keen that he felt constrained to send his surplus stock of plants to auction, and with his accustomed energy and foresight established a system of growing plants for auction only. This also was a marked success from the start, and is now looked upon as a legitimate part of the business in New York and other large cities.

His quick brain was constantly on the alert for simplifying and cheapening the cost of production; and by example and by words, he was ever urging those under him to seek short cuts in all their methods. This constant striving not only brought its due reward, but to Peter Henderson, more than to all others, are the florists and market gardeners of this country indebted for the shortening of the multifarious operations of both greenhouse and garden. Scores of these methods are indelibly associated with his name, and almost as many more have lost the connecting link with the master mind with whom they originated. To him, more than to any one man in this country, is due the raising of the florist's business to the level of other mercantile pursuits.

He retained his office at No. 9 John street until 1862, when by his advice, James Fleming and Wm. J. Davidson, two bright young Scotch gardeners, having opened a seed store at 67 Nassau street, he moved his office to their store, abandoning the auction part and relying wholly on his annual catalogue and newspaper advertising, which he had just then begun, for the development

of the business. In 1865 he bought Mr. Davidson's share in the seed business, the firm then becoming Henderson & Fleming. He continued with Mr. Fleming for six years, when the partnership was dissolved.

Establishment of the Seed Department.

In 1871, on his forty-ninth birthday—an age when most business men begin to think of laying their armor down—he established, in Cortlandt street, New York, the seed business, now known to the whole world under the name of Peter Henderson & Co. The partners in the original firm were Peter Henderson, Wm. H. Carson and Alfred Henderson. In 1876 Mr. Carson withdrew, and a new partnership was formed between Peter Henderson, James Reid, and Alfred Henderson. Mr. Reid died in 1887, and from that year until the death of its honored founder, the firm was composed of Peter Henderson and his sons, Alfred and Charles. While personally most of his time was taken up at the greenhouses, he still was able to throw an enormous amount of energy into this department, which, from its very nature, is capable of a much greater expansion than that of plants, articles almost exclusively a luxury. His fertility in devising schemes for its development was something phenomenal, even to those most familiar with his works and ways. Scarcely a day passed but what practical and valuable suggestions were thrown off from his busy brain. He it was who first conceived, as early as 1872, the idea of offering to the horticultural public, the opportunity of procuring all their supplies from one firm. This idea was quickly perfected in its details and found its expression in a phrase of his own coinage "Everything for the Garden," a term in a business sense, almost synonomous with the name of Peter Henderson. His long experience as a market gardener probably made him realize more than most seedsmen, the necessity of testing seeds before offering them for sale, but whatever the cause, the fact remains, that he was the first in this country to initiate the true and natural way of prov-

ing the vitality of seeds—that is, by sowing them in the soil, the seedman's usual plan being to germinate them in moist cotton or flannel—nearly always a misleading method. Not only this, but annually in his trial grounds he made certain of their purity by thorough comparative tests. His judgment as to the value of new varieties of both seeds and plants was almost infallible; and there are very few novelties that he endorsed but have stood the test of general culture, and are to-day recognized as standard sorts. That he originated and introduced more valuable new seeds and plants than any other one man in America is a fact that those competent to judge, will quickly admit.

His Services to the New York Horticultural Society.

In 1874, the New York Horticultural Society, after being practically defunct since 1860, was resuscitated, very largely through his efforts. He gave a considerable portion of his time to its reorganization, and though he would never accept any prominent office, he attended all its meetings faithfully, and by his contributions to its various exhibitions and his liberality in offering special premiums for essays and exhibits at its monthly meetings, assisted materially in making it a success. He was also a zealous member of the Society of American Florists and—recollecting his own early experience,—at the convention held in Chicago in 1888, offered a premium of $100 for the best herbarium of native plants gathered within the year, and correctly named, to be competed for at the meeting at Buffalo the following year. This offer brought out several excellent exhibits, the second best of which was so good that he voluntarily gave $50 as an award for the painstaking manner in which it was mounted and arranged.

Catalogue and Advertising Skill.

Any record of the business career of Peter Henderson would be incomplete that overlooked the skill and originality which he continually displayed in the preparation of his plant and seed catalogues. Until within the last

ten years, he personally wrote and prepared all the matter for the plant catalogues, and after the seed department had been added, he also wrote the important portions of it for many years. He had the rare gift of being terse, and at the same time, comprehensive and interesting in his description of the articles he had to offer. His newspaper and magazine advertising also exemplified his wonderful versatility. Not only did he show great skill in the wording of advertisements, but in their mechanical appearance they were always bold and original, and in their results nearly always successful. It is believed that the use of a heavy black border, which so often surrounded or enclosed his advertisements, originated with him many years ago. For effectiveness in arresting the reader's attention, it has seldom been surpassed by any advertising device. It must be admitted that it never added beauty to an advertisement; and it is also only fair to say that it worried for years many publishers who fluctuated between a laudable desire to have the advertisement in their papers, and a violation of their æsthetic tendencies.

The use of a fac-simile of an advertiser's autograph, he always considered a most effective addition to an advertisement, when it could be brought in. In his own practice his written signature was always largely used. This idea was a borrowed one, he first noticing Joseph Gillott's pens advertised in that way years before he ever supposed that he should become a great advertiser himself.

There are few pursuits in which the business departments are more weighted with detail, anxiety, or vexatious annoyances, than the occupations in which Peter Henderson loomed up supreme. It was always the rule of his life to attack first whatever work was the most difficult or disagreeable. Exasperating details that others would shirk he would take hold of and patiently and thoroughly carry to completion. In his business, as in other work, he was even in his last days as eager and enthusiastic as a man of twenty-five. The optimistic spirit

he carried into his own business interests, always broadened when he came to speak of the future of American horticulture. In August, 1886, he read an address on "*Floriculture in the United States in the Past Forty Years*" before the Society of American Florists at their annual convention in Philadelphia. Coming from the man who was always the central figure at its gatherings, its conclusion here given, invests it with more than ordinary interest.

"If the business increases in the same ratio for the next forty years, rest assured the now humble florist will have a place in the community, and that the increase will even be greater, there is good reason to believe. In the early days of floriculture, nearly all the men engaging in the business were "old-country men," who had been private gardeners, often lacking in education and intelligence and utterly untrained from the nature of their occupation, in business habits. Now hundreds of young men, with their better opportunities of education, are training in the business in all sections of the country, and I think it safe to predict that the leading florists, forty years hence, will be far better business men than even the most prominent among us now. And it may be that when the Society of American Florists meets again, in this good old city, four decades hence, some other veteran, now a stripling here to-day, will tell as I have done, of the primitive ways of the craft, as practised "forty years ago."

His Books, and other Contributions to Horticultural Literature.

Peter Henderson's first horticultural writings in this country appeared in *Hovey's Magazine*, published in Boston. The initial article was on the transplanting of large trees, and written while he was in Pittsburgh. In concluding the article he in effect said that he was "more at home handling a spade than a pen." Mr. Chas. M. Hovey, editor and owner of the magazine, was struck with the vigor and originality with which he wrote and encouraged him to continue his contributions, and

several years later, when he had settled in Jersey City, Mr. Hovey decided to see for himself what his young correspondent was like. He found him not literally handling a spade, but doing pretty nearly the same thing when he discovered him on the top of a manure pile, turning it with a fork. Soon after this, he began to write for the *Horticulturist*, then the only horticultural magazine published in New York ; *The Gardener's Monthly*, Philadelphia ; Moore's *Rural New-Yorker*, Rochester, N. Y.; *The Country Gentleman*, Albany, N. Y., and other kindred publications. For some time his contributions were on vegetable culture almost exclusively, but as he drifted into the ornamental branch of horticulture, his articles began to cover that department also. Whether as a market gardener, a florist, or a seedsman, Peter Henderson always considered himself just what these designations imply. That his writings materially aided in building up the different branches of his business is beyond all question. In fact, from the beginning, all his literary work was done in his leisure intervals, or taken from time that he considered legitimately belonged to his business. At the same time his nature and characteristics were such, that whether it redounded to his benefit or not, the horticultural world always heard from him, when he had any thing to say that he believed would be of general interest or value. The fact is, that it was inherent in the man to add his quota to the sum of human knowledge. Corroborations of this without number could be given, but a single instance will suffice. As far back as 1866, in a magazine discussion over horticultural patents, among other things he said : " I consider that man particularly unfortunate who asks a patent for what he thinks to be a discovery in horticulture, for there is a free masonry about the craft which begets a generous exchange of information, and he that holds a 'secret' to himself or intrenches his 'discovery' behind a patent right is not usually benefited thereby ;" and further on in the same article, he says : " I never was good at keeping a secret." Such

were his views twenty-four years ago, and such would be his views were he alive to-day. For whether in the domain of the vegetable garden, or in the more delightful pursuits of the greenhouse, this earnest, watchful, and thoughtful man was ever near to Nature's heart, and bit by bit he wrested from her, cultural secrets which later on would be quickly made known, so that all who chose might reap the benefit of his ceaseless observation and experience.

His first book, *Gardening for Profit*, was written in the summer of 1866. Although he was then well-known as a horticultural writer, yet his modesty was such, that when the late Dr. George Thurber, then editor of the *American Agriculturist* approached him on the matter of writing this book, he refused to attempt it because he felt that writing a book was beyond his capability. He was finally convinced, however, that the hour and the man had come. Whenever he decided to do any thing, it was settled, he never looked back, and he wrote this remarkable book in the incredibly short time of one hundred hours. By this it is not meant, that *Gardening for Profit* was produced consecutively in that time, but he had the information right at his finger-ends, so that the aggregate of time he spent on the book was within the limit named. This work brought a national reputation to its author, and its value to the United States is beyond computation. A peculiarity of its production was that it was written at a time when its author was working at least sixteen hours a day, and largely at manual labor. At the noon intervals and late at night he wrote this work lying on his back with a pillow under his head, or quite as often, writing while lying face downward. We have said that its value to the nation can never be estimated, and it is a fact that the first edition appearing so soon after the close of the war, rendered it of special and inestimable value to the Southern States. The enormous market-gardening or trucking interests which have been for years and are to-day, such a factor in the South's prosperity, owe their birth and subsequent development largely to the teachings of *Gardening for Profit*.

Gardening for Profit was twice revised by its author since its first publication in 1866; the first time in 1874, the last time in 1886. The demand for this work has always been so large that the publishers have never been quite able to accurately estimate the demand. Up to this time not less than forty-one editions having been printed. His immortal countryman, Robert Burns, wrote his famous poem "Tam O'Shanter" in a day, and one of his biographers has said of it "that since the battle of Bannockburn it was the best single day's work ever done in Scotland." So in another sense there are thousands to-day who believe that it can be fairly claimed for *Gardening for Profit*, that no better one hundred hours' work was ever done on this side of the Atlantic, than when Columbia's adopted son laid his grand and grateful tribute at her feet.

The great success of his first book stimulated him to produce in 1868, *Practical Floriculture*, which was written to teach how flowers and plants could best be grown for profit. This book did for æsthetic gardening what its predecessor had accomplished for material horticulture—established thousands in a safe and profitable business. In 1875 his prolific pen launched a third work, *Gardening for Pleasure*, which was intended to, and has fully met the wants of those desiring information on gardening for private use, and who have no desire to make it a business. Its scope therefore was made greater than either of its predecessors, as it embraced directions for the propagation and culture of flowers, vegetables and fruits. A thoroughly revised and enlarged edition of this work appeared in 1888. Another volume which he published in 1884, called *Garden and Farm Topics*, consisting of a number of essays containing special information in a condensed form, has been one of the most interesting of Peter Henderson's horticultural contributions. Apart from the practical value of these essays, this volume gives perhaps a better idea of his versatility, his keen sense of humor, and finally the scientific spirit that he undoubtedly possessed than any of his larger and more important works.

In 1881, appeared the most pretentious work he had yet evolved, *Henderson's Hand Book of Plants.* This was a condensed encyclopedia of over four hundred pages, giving the botanical classification, methods of propagagation, and culture of both useful and ornamental plants, &c. While this work met with a flattering reception, its author felt that it had been too hastily prepared, and so, early in 1889, with his characteristic energy and industry, the work was not only revised but re-written and greatly enlarged. To those who saw the zeal and enthusiasm he threw into what was destined to be his last contribution to a literature he had already done so much to enrich, a tender interest will always cluster around this, his last work. The story has been told before, but no sketch, however meagre, of its author can pass it by. Mr. Henderson read, corrected and passed the last pages of the new edition December 26th, 1889, and a week later, January 3d, 1890, he was stricken with the sickness which on January 17th, following, culminated in his death. The delay incident to the printing and binding of the book, made the middle of February reached before copies were received, so that the bound and completed volume he never saw. This last edition is so much fuller and more comprehensive than its predecessor, as to have merited in the opinion of several leading horticultural journals a new and more comprehensive title.

His fertile mind opened up an entirely new vein in 1884, when in conjunction with Mr. William Crozier, one of the best known and most successful farmers in the country, he produced the work, *How the Farm Pays.* While Mr. Henderson was not a farmer, yet his long and varied experience in gardening peculiarly fitted him to share in this work. *How the Farm Pays* was produced by the aid of a stenographer, Mr. Henderson's questions and Mr. Mr. Crozier's replies being taken down just as they were spoken. As the authors progressed, the benefit of this plan was found, in that the answer often suggested other questions, and it has always been considered that

the value of the book was augmented by this plan. Quite a portion of this book is taken up by Mr. Henderson's individual cultural directions on certain vegetable and fruit crops which can be advantageously grown on the farm. This completes his work as a writer of books, but it does not begin to cover the multitude of his miscellaneous articles which, beginning years before he wrote *Gardening for Profit* he kept continually writing until a week before his death.

Another field in which he was always the pioneer, and where he did yeoman's work for the general good of the profession, was his exposure of horticultural humbugs, which in some guise or other are continually cropping up. One of the best examples of his work in this line, and where, in order to get at all particulars, he assumed the role of a detective, was his exposure of two French worthies, well known in New York a few years ago as the "Blue Rose Men." This pair had opened a store in Broadway, New York, where they had displayed on the walls colored illustrations of the most impossible flowers and fruits. For instance they showed a tree on which strawberries were growing as big as oranges, peaches almost the size of musk-melons, dahlia flowers of a celestial blue, etc. When Mr. Henderson arrived, one of the voluble proprietors was just dismissing a delighted old lady who had bought five dollars worth of asparagus seeds, at a cent a piece, warranted to produce shoots an inch in diameter, in three months from the time of sowing. Mr. Henderson stood, looking in rapt admiration before a colored plate of blue moss roses, which attracted the attention of the polite French salesman, and on the price being asked, he brought forth from under the counter, three plants, representing them to be moss roses, which, by the way, were all alike, and were all our common prairie rose. As Mr. Henderson tells the story, the following conversation then ensued. The Frenchman said, "This one he only bloom once, I tell you the truth, so I sell him for two dollar; this one, he be the remontant, he bloom twice—just twice—I sell him for three dollar;

but this one, he be the everblooming perpetual blue moss rose, he bloom all the time, he cheap at five dollar." I quietly remarked if it bloomed all the time, why was it not blooming now? He looked at me pityingly and said, "my dear sir, you expect too much. These moss rose just come over in the ship from Paris. You take him home and plant him and he bloom right away, and he keep on blooming." I did not take him home, but I took the story, something in the shape it is now told and had it published in one of the leading New York papers, and in less than a week the "blue rose men" had pulled up stakes, but no doubt, to pitch their camp somewhere else, and set their traps for new victims."

While he would in a good-natured way touch up the credulity of those who ought to have known better than to have allowed themselves to be imposed upon by horticultural humbugs, his sense of humor was so strong that he never failed to tell any similar experience that happened at his own expense. One of the best of these stories is Dutch Peggy's Red Mignonette, which he tells in the following extract from one of his essays written a dozen years ago. "I have said that old Peggy was also a vender of seeds in Washington Market. It is now something over thirty years ago, that a young florist presented himself before her and purchased an ounce of mignonette. Ever alive to business, Peggy asked him if he had tried the new red mignonette. He protested there was no such thing, but Peggy's candid manner persuaded him and fifty cents were invested. The seed looked familiar, and when it sprouted it looked more familiar, when it bloomed it was far too familiar, for it was red clover. Peggy has long since been gathered to her fathers, and I have entirely forgiven her for selling me the red mignonette."

Except the usual royalties on his books, paid to him as an author, for most of his contributions to the various horticultural journals, Mr. Henderson did not accept pay. At the same time it is hardly necessary to say, that for the past twenty-five years at least for whatever

he wrote, publishers were only too glad to offer him a liberal remuneration. The *American Agriculturist*, desirous of obtaining all his contributions, for a considerable period paid him a price per column that has been considered perhaps the largest rate ever paid an American writer. About 1869, *Tilton's Journal of Horticulture*, a monthly magazine then published in Boston, but now out of existence, offered Peter Henderson $6,000 per annum if he would assume the chief editorship. This flattering offer he declined.

In addition to all this he did a great deal of anonymous writing on horticultural matters, which, for sufficient reasons, he deemed would be more effective than if they had appeared over his signature. Then, too, the innovations in culture that he advocated in *Gardening for Profit* and *Practical Floriculture*, provoked attacks which forced him to defend many of what at that time seemed radical ideas, but most of which have been long since accepted. Besides he had to repel assaults made upon him, for ventilating and exposing numberless old world cultural practices, which in our climate it was found worse than useless to follow. As a horticultural instructor, he never attempted to teach on any subject with which he had not had a personal experience; hence, when any of his views were controverted, he not only never hesitated to defend them, but few there were in such controversies that could stand up before his sabre cuts of Saxon speech. Over most of his critics, too, he had this great advantage, he could always invite them to "come and see," whether the radical ideas he advanced stood the test of actual practice. Nor did he stand on the defensive only, his good judgment and strong common sense would never permit him to accept without investigation the *dictum* of any man, however eminent, on any subject that properly came within the field of his profession. We therefore find him taking issue with Charles Darwin's statement that certain plants such as the *Drosera* or Sundew and our own Carolina Fly-trap (*Dionæa Muscipula*) are fed by the insects which their wonderful structure

enables them to catch. With a friend, Mr. Henderson made a most thorough and exhaustive experiment in his greenhouses with four hundred plants of the Carolina Fly Trap, one half of which were so protected by fine wire netting, that while they had all the necessary light and air, it was impossible for them to receive any sustenance except that derived from the atmosphere and soil. The remainder of the plants were not only regularly "fed" by hand with flies and other insects, but were also so exposed, that any insects in the greenhouse were liable to be entrapped by them. The result was that the most careful comparison failed to show the slightest difference between those fed with insects and those that were not so fed, which satisfied him that if the plants digested the insects placed in the leaf-traps, the food was in no way beneficial. Without expressing any opinion as to whether these plants do, or do not flourish on an animal diet, the published reports of the various scientists who have investigated the subject, clearly indicate, that none of their experiments were comparative. We think, therefore, that we can with propriety volunteer the opinion that such conclusions lose half their force, because the tests were not comparative. And we further believe that in this instance most people will be apt to think, that the clear headed gardener who made no pretentions to scientific lore, conducted his experiments on more practical and logical lines than did the eminent men with whose conclusions he could not agree.

We also find him disputing Mr. Darwin's theory of what he called "Graft-Hybrids"; this naturalist citing a number of instances where seemingly there was an amalgamation of the stock and graft. Mr. Henderson's views are set forth at some length in an article he read before the New York Horticultural Society, in 1881, entitled, "*Popular Errors and Scientific Dogmas in Horticulture.*" Among other arguments he advanced to refute Mr. Darwin's theory he instanced, "that during the past quarter of a century, millions upon millions of Bartlett pears and Baldwin apples have been grafted

upon millions of stocks, and yet to-day they are as true to their individuality as the Concord grape or Wilson strawberry, that are perpetuated by cuttings or runners, and not one of them is in any way changed from what it was when it first appeared, unless by the temporary accidents of soil or climate." This most interesting and valuable essay clearly shows the strong scientific instinct that Peter Henderson possessed. Its conclusion, with which we finish this record of his contributions to horticultural literature shows a comprehensiveness and loftiness of thought both tersely and grandly expressed. "I believe that the smallest or the greatest of God's creations has a separate and distinct individuality; that they cannot be blended except by generation, and that the product of generation, whether in the lowest microscopic germ, or in the highest type, man, has an individuality distinct and separate that it cannot attach to another."

His Home and Married Life.

Peter Henderson lived nearly all his life in Jersey City, where as citizen, friend and neighbor, no man stood higher in the estimation of the community in which for over forty years he made his home. There it was that he established his roof-tree, after his marriage in New York City, in 1851, to Miss Emily Gibbons, a native of Bath, England. She was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Gibbons, and the mother of his three children, Alfred, Isobel (now Mrs. Robert M. Floyd) and Charles.

Of her, the companion of his early manhood, the share she bore in bye-gone years, in the daily drama of thrift, economy and self-denial, even filial devotion cannot adequately record. To their seventeen years of married life she brought every sweet and noble attribute to be found in wife and mother. The worldly honors her husband won she scarcely more than saw, for she died in 1868, at the early age of thirty-four years. The turf that for these many years has crowned her grave, is not greener than is her memory to-day in the hearts of those who knew and loved her. All three of her children are

still living. Three years after her death Mr. Henderson married Miss Jean H. Reid, an intimate friend of his first wife, and daughter of his old friend, Mr. Andrew Reid.* Mrs. Henderson still survives her husband.

Personal Appearance, Manner, and other Characteristics.

Six feet in height, broad-shouldered, 38 inches around the chest, and 34 inches around the waist, never weighing more than 160 pounds, Peter Henderson was a splendid specimen of physical manhood. His complexion was florid, and his keen gray eyes twinkled with humor, fully as often as they flashed fire with thought. During his latter years, his short-cut hair and closely trimmed beard and mustache were gray, but that was the only indication of added years about him. A stranger seeing him for the first time, would be impressed by his erect carriage, his head up and shoulders back, with questioning eyes looking straight at the speaker,—that was his first instinctive attitude. This expression changed in an instant, and his manner, though always kind and courteous, was dependent upon the estimate his rapid brain formed of the person before him. The most ancient of professions, ranks among its votaries "all sorts and conditions of men," and while Peter Henderson was greatly lacking in veneration, no man was quicker to see and admire true merit, whether in a millionaire or in a humble tiller of the soil. His friendship with Andrew Carnegie grew out of a letter which he wrote on the spur of the moment, to that gentleman after reading his work, "Triumphant Democracy," a book which thrilled him to the core. On the other hand, he held in the highest esteem, and counted among his most valued friends many whom fortune, in her smiling moods, had seemingly passed by.

His eminence in his profession brought him into personal contact with many men of national reputation, but of all the public men that he knew, perhaps the one he

* Many gardeners and florists are still living who can recall Mr. Reid, whose hospitable home in East 14th St. forty years ago, was the Mecca towards which most Scotch gardeners headed on their arrival in New York.

most admired was the late Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. The great preacher's well-known love for flowers, brought them first together over thirty years ago, and it was a treat to see these two men, each so eminent in his own sphere, become as enthusiastic as school boys over some marvel or beauty in flower or leaf.

While Mr. Henderson had handled for over thirty consecutive years every tool used in the garden or greenhouse, he never at any time possessed very great muscular strength, but his nervous energy was simply tremendous. The Scotch are often characterized as being clannish and unable to understand how any other nationality can do a thing quite as well as themselves; but here was a son of "Auld Scotia" broad enough to quickly see and admit superiority in others. For instance, Scotchman as he was, and retaining to the last a great love for his native land, he always averred that weight for weight, Irishmen were the strongest physically of any people he ever came in contact with. He also always contended that no race under the sun could handle the spade with the quickness and dexterity of the Irish; and at any time in his long career you could have paid him no higher compliment than to have told him that, in that department of human endeavor, he could handle a spade equal to an Irishman, which he could and did.

In the first portion of this sketch, reference was made to the enormous number of letters he wrote during his life-time, and it should have been there told, that for at least the first twenty years of that time he made out his own bills, kept his own books and filled the greater part of the plant orders himself. When about the age of fifty years, he began gradually to ease up in his personal labor, but even in the last year of his life, the amount of work he accomplished daily would have been unusual for most men of fifty. As far back as 1865, this enormous amount of writing caused an attack of "pen paralysis," or as it is sometimes called, "writer's cramp"; by stopping all writing for four or five months it disap-

peared, and, although he subsequently wrote more than ever, he never had a recurrence of that trouble. He was one of the most rapid penmen we have ever known, and when he wrote comparatively slowly, his penmanship was really beautiful, and had an individuality of its own so marked, that of the millions of letters received during the past forty years, we cannot recall more than a dozen instances in which the writing in any way resembled his. His hands were finely shaped, and pen or pencil he always held in the orthodox way as delineated on the covers of copy books.

Mr. Henderson was not only an abstainer from liquor, but tobacco in any form he never touched. He was very regular in his habits, and simple in his tastes. Up to the close of his life he made it a rule to spend from three to four hours every day in the open air. All this undoubtedly enabled him to perform the enormous amount of work he accomplished. He was a very rapid walker and for short distances, a fast runner. Before the iron gates were put on the ferry boats plying between Jersey City and New York, he was always one of the first men off the boat; and when verging on three score years and ten, he moved so rapidly that he would overtake most pedestrians between the ferry-slip and his stores in New York, a distance of only three blocks.

While we know that industrious men are by no means rare, the remarkable feature of Peter Henderson's industry was, that it was always accompanied by a wonderful rapidity of movement, whether of brain or body, and in this respect it was unusual. His rapidity and accuracy of decision were remarkable, and yet while capable of grasping large outlines of work or enterprises, he paid an attention to all details that was as painstaking as it was indefatigable.

In horticulture, either here or abroad, in certain respects he had no prototype. The annals of the profession may be searched in vain to find where any one man attained the same degree of eminence which Peter Henderson secured at one and the same time, in three distinct

divisions of horticulture. To have been either the leading florist, great seed merchant, or the versatile horticultural writer, would have been fame enough for most men. So when it is considered that he held almost the highest rank in all three departments, we begin to understand how wonderful his genius and his industry must have been.

His Modesty and Freedom from Envy and Jealousy.

His modesty as regards his own unusual achievements showed the rare balance of his mind. What he had accomplished, he knew,—no man better,—but he never boasted of it, nor in any way was he ever egotistical. No man ever rejoiced at another's success more than he. Envy was foreign to him and jealousy unknown; in fact whenever he could applaud merit in another, he took the greatest delight in so doing. Although a public spirited man in the best sense, he never could be induced to hold any public office.

He was, however, at one time a director in the Bergen Savings Bank, Jersey City, which through the mismanagement of its president, suffered a large deficit. For this neither Mr. Henderson nor his fellow directors were responsible; but he, and two or three others felt that as their names had been used in the directorate, they were morally so, and, they therefore paid out of their own pockets the bank's loss, so that every depositor was paid in full.

During the last twenty years of his life he was asked to fill many positions of honor from his own city, the state, and the nation, and the strongest pressure was several times brought to bear, to make him accept; but he was inflexible—refusing them all. While no man ever realized his power better than he did in certain directions, no one more clearly understood his own limitations.

His Humor and Pathos.

He could hardly be called a wit, but he had a rare fund of humor, and few men possessed a keener sense of the ridiculous than he, and while his sense of the ridiculous was ever near the surface, no man was more careful not to hurt another's feelings. The weaknesses of his fellow men never aroused his sarcasm, but pretence or affectation of any sort, he would cut with words of scathing scorn. Genuine himself, he despised all false metal, and in small things, as well as in great, no man ever rang more true.

He was ever easily approached, and many a man and woman to-day bless him for the time he took from his busy days, to write them a letter of desired counsel, or the few moments he gave to impart asked for advice. His sympathy was universal; no man had a more tender heart than he, towards suffering or distress of any kind. His helpful words of hope and cheer have been an inspiration to thousands who to-day have an ache at their hearts because he walks this earth no more.

His Love of Poetry and Fiction.

Many who saw only the practical business side of Peter Henderson, will be surprised to know that he was as full of poetry and sentiment as he was of hard common sense. He was very fond of novel-reading; his favorite authors being Scott and Dickens, and few of the general reading public were better posted on modern light literature of the day than he. His love of poetry was very marked, and, as a Scotsman, he was naturally fond of Burns' poems, at the same time he had a decided preference for poetry that had a war-like ring. Campbell's "Hohenlinden," Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," "Lord Clyde of Clydesdale," and especially Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake," and "Marmion" were great favorites with him. Of all poetical productions, however, "Marmion" always held the first place in his affections. We cannot better illustrate the senti-

mental side of his nature than by a quotation from a letter he sent to his sister from Scotland, where he had found the neglected grave of his mother, and over which he had placed a tombstone. After giving some details of what he had done, occurs this sentence, "No one in whom our blood flows will ever likely see it again, but I could not go away without showing this little token of remembrance."

Love of Animals.

He was very fond of animals, but especially so of dogs and cats, and it was his delight when an hour of leisure came to enjoy his many pets. A Scotch collie dog called Wattie, that he had taught to perform a number of tricks, was a particular favorite. A magnificent St. Bernard dog named Jeff, grand and dignified, he owned for many years. But fond as he was of dogs, he was even more so of cats; and as long as we can remember, there were always four or five around the place. If he came across a cat in the street, or in fact anywhere, he was sure to pick it up and fondle it. In the seclusion of his home, he almost invariably lay stretched at full length on a sofa, after the cares of the day, with some favorite puss on his breast, his kind eyes half closed, and say to those near him, "Just listen to that singing; now, isn't that music?" Time and again he could be seen walking through his grounds with a favorite cat on his shoulder, who, from his high perch, seemed literally to be "monarch of all he surveyed." His fondness for cats must have begun at an early day, as the following reminiscence of "Bothy" life indicates, and for which Mr. Wilson stands sponsor. After telling how he would always stop to talk to and fondle a cat, Mr. Wilson says that one dark night, when they were both on their way to the mathematical school in Edinburgh, in jumping a wide ditch they heard a splash just as they landed on the other side. While they were wondering what the noise meant, they heard a *meow*, and in a few seconds the "Bothy" cat with whom

Peter was the chief favorite, emerged from the water. Peter picked up his faithful follower, and after petting him, threw him back over the ditch, telling him at the same time to "clear away home." When the youths returned at midnight over the same route they were surprised to see the "Bothy" cat waiting for them by the ditch, and supposed he had remained there when he was thrown back, but to their surprise they learned from their fellow apprentices that the cat had returned to the Bothy, dried himself over a furnace, and then gone back and patiently waited for the return of his master. No wonder half a century later when a grandchild suggested that cats were ungrateful and had poor memories, that he should have said: "The poor Beastie! How can you say that? Look at old Tom, how he jumps up on my shoulder and sits there while I go half over the place. Isn't that love and memory?"

He was naturally very fond of company; but his life was such a busy one as to leave him but little time to mingle much in society, yet at social gatherings he was always an interesting and humorous talker, and a good story teller. He had a faculty, too, that few suspected, in being a splendid mimic.

Love for his Adopted Land.

He always retained a tender feeling for the land of his birth, of which another of her worthy sons, Mr. James Hope Park* has sung:

> There is a land I dearly love,
> The land of song and fame
> Where roses blow, and daisies grow,
> My ain loved hame,

But we would be recreant to his memory, did we fail to record the almost passionate love Peter Henderson felt for America and American institutions. No "native here and to the manner born" was prouder of his citi-

* Mr. Park, formerly of Brooklyn, New York, but now of Canonbie, Scotland, was for over thirty years, perhaps of all men, Mr. Henderson's most intimate and cherished friend.

zenship in this Republic. As soon as practicable after his arrival in this country he became naturalized and he always urged all those from the old world, with whom he came in contact and who intended to settle here, that it was their first duty to become citizens of this—the greatest of nations.

Last Days.

Mr. Henderson all his life was a very healthy man. Until his death, he never had but one serious illness, an attack of pleurisy twenty-five years before. Regular and temperate as he was, he was careless of himself in many ways, and even when he was past sixty, time and again we have seen him going the rounds of his place in winter in his shirt sleeves. For two years previous to his last illness he declared that he felt, and he looked, almost as strong as he ever did, and frequently commented on the physical vigor he maintained and the amount of work he was still able to perform, for a man of his years. He was always very regular in his habits, and held to his routine work up to January 3d last. On the evening of that day when he returned home from his New York office, he showed unmistakable signs of having "la grippe." Mrs. Henderson had no trouble in inducing him to remain within doors, and the next day she sent for Dr. Bidwell. The attack was light and he was advised to stay in the house for a few days. On the few occasions in his life that he had been ailing a little, he was very impatient of such restraint, but now he was willing to obey the doctor's instructions. By January 10th, the influenza seemed to have disappeared, and tempted by a sunshiny day, he ventured to the greenhouses, just across the street from his residence. His wife did her utmost to keep him in the house, but he felt so well that he thought he was running no risk. Mrs. Henderson, however, took the precaution to have him heavily wrapped up, but he had not been out of the house twenty minutes when he returned chilled through. He was at once put to bed and remedies

administered. Next morning he expressed himself as feeling all right again. About this time, however, both Dr. Bidwell and the family thought it advisable to bring another physician in, and his old and life-long friend, Dr. A. A. Lutkins, was called. He was carefully examined by both physicians from time to time, for symptoms of pneumonia, but until Monday evening the 13th, no symptoms appeared.

About this time he received a letter from the editor of the *Florida Dispatch*, enclosing a clipping that had been going the rounds of the press, stating that the famous rose "American Beauty" was of American origin, and asking Mr. Henderson if this were true. He pencilled a reply, stating the circumstances under which it was found, and that the variety was really an old French rose, "Madame Ferdinand Jamain." This was the last article he wrote, and it was written on what literally proved to be his death-bed. With characteristic thoroughness, in that article, he also mentioned the leading roses that were of American origin.

All through his illness he was bright and cheerful. Monday morning, January 13, when his son Charles called, he was in excellent spirits. In reply to what kind of a night he had passed, he said, "rather a bad one, but I feel a great deal better this morning," adding with a smile, "do you know, Charlie, that at one time I thought it was "Good-night to Marmion." That same morning a characteristic incident occured. Among a few letters that he had intended to answer personally, was one from a gardener, asking if he could give him employment in his greenhouses. This letter he handed to his son, saying, "tell him we cannot take him on, Charlie, but be sure you do it kindly." That same Monday night, pneumonia set in. There is every reason to believe that he had a conviction, that this attack would prove fatal; for, a few days before he died, in conversation with his daughter, Mrs. Floyd, he said "do you know," (calling her by a pet name he had given her in childhood) "that I have an idea that I won't get over this attack,

and, strange as it may seem, I really don't much care;" he paused for a moment, and then the philosophy with which he had met every sorrow or trouble in life, did not fail him, as he uttered these words. "It is a wise provision of Nature that, as we grow older, our hold on life loosens."

After the dreaded pneumonia appeared, the days and nights passed all too rapidly to the anxious watchers, who saw the life they so much loved steadily ebbing away. The same wifely thoughtfulness that looked after this beloved man in the first symptoms of his illness, was shown still further in the tender care and solicitude Mrs. Henderson gave him night and day, up to his last moments. To her, he was the world, and if her unceasing devotion could have saved him, he would have been with us still to-day. He retained perfect consciousnes up to eleven o'clock, Thursday night, Jan. 16th ; at that hour delirium ensued from the mental eclipse of which he never again emerged. When Friday morning dawned it was seen that the end was near, and at exactly half past ten o'clock, all was over—he had crossed the frontier of this life, to enter as we fondly hope, the radiant gardens of Paradise.

The funeral services were held in the First Presbyterian Church of Jersey City, on Monday, Jan. 20th, 1890. Notwithstanding a heavy down-pour of rain, the church was unable to contain the great throng, many of whom came from distant states to testify their respect for the deceased. The Pastor, the Rev. Charles Herr, delivered an eloquent and impressive tribute to the well rounded life which had come to a close.

The Society of American Florists were represented by a committee of fifty, and other organizations to which he belonged were also in attendance. The same Monday afternoon his remains were interred in the family plot in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, N. Y.

His Rank in Horticultural History.

Mr. William R. Smith, for nearly thirty-five years superintendent of the Botanic Gardens at Washington, and a man highly distinguished for his botanical research, paid him the highest possible tribute in terming him "the great horticultural missionary;" and Mr. E. E. Smith, in an address delivered before the California Horticultural Society, in San Francisco, last February, not only dilated on the great loss horticulture had sustained in his death, but expressed the general feeling, that the extent of Peter Henderson's services would hold his memory in lasting remembrance. Here are a few passages from Mr. Smith's eulogy: "Peter Henderson is dead. There has come to the Goddess Flora a grief, and the sad sweet tones of her funeral chant, as they float o'er the great man's grave, are echoed by the odors of millions of flowers. No one will ever know the laurels that in memory have been placed upon his grave by sorrowing human hearts. One of nature's noblemen, he embowered our windows with climbing vines, and adorned and made beautiful our door-yards with bright flowers; he made green our lawns and fruitful our gardens. He is dead, but the flowers with which he has strewn the pathway of life will emblazon forever his memory upon earth."

Mr. A. D. Cowan paid a beautiful and appreciative tribute to his memory in a paper read before the New York Florists' Club, March 10, 1890. Among other things in his eloquent address Mr. Cowan said: "No man ever lived who carried on his researches under greater difficulties, and no one ever exercised greater perseverance to gain a full knowledge of the subject which claimed his attention. No one but he handled the pioneer's pen which brought the dark, selfish and ignorant methods of the old School of Horticulture into daylight; and to Peter Henderson will belong for generations to come the credit of popularizing, improving, and developing gardening in these United States."

The opinions above quoted are but types of hundreds

of expressions given utterance to both by individuals and horticultural journals after his death, and when this significant fact is remembered that from 1866 up to this hour that his horticultural teachings have not been traversed to any appreciable degree, it shows conclusively the popular estimate which has been placed upon his works; and that judgment steadily maintained for a quarter of a century, posterity is not likely to reverse. The unpretentious man who, during the last twenty-five years of his life, received eulogistic letters and personal thanks from at least seventy thousand people, for what his horticultural writings alone had done for them, left an impress that will endure far beyond his day and generation.

The coming years we doubt not will be guardians of his fame; for wherever rugged manhood toils with plow or spade, the memory of Peter Henderson will lend dignity and hope unto his labor. Wherever gentle woman bends anxiously o'er fragile blossoms, the memory of Peter Henderson will be as dew to fall upon their petals. And those who honored him may feel sure of this, that his monument will be enduring, for it is rooted in old Mother Earth, and in the flowers, her faithful children.

His Possibilities.

It is somewhat remarkable that, in the multitude of tributes paid to the memory of Peter Henderson, many would so far digress as to dwell upon his possibilities in other walks of life. That he would have attained distinction in almost any direction was a very commonly expressed opinion. Some were so far interested in his career as to suggest certain lines in which, if he had received the essential education, he would have attained eminence. For instance the *Phrenological Journal* said, "if he had been trained to engineering in its broadest sense, literature in connection with science, law in connection with ethics, he would have been a strong man." Singularly enough there is one calling which so far as

we know has not suggested itself to any one, but in which we believe, had he had the preliminary training, he would have attained great distinction—we mean, the profession of arms. To begin with, a soldier's career always had the strongest fascination for him; and all his life, many of his spoken as well as his written thoughts, were tinctured with a martial ring. Then his intellectual characteristics, or at least those which predominated, were such as are usually found in military men of the first order; and finally, he possessed in the highest degree attributes, where in victory he would have displayed the magnanimity of Ulysses S. Grant, and in defeat, the serenity of Robert E. Lee.

Conclusion.

From the griefs and troubles that line our road from the cradle to the grave, he was not exempt; but, over all, his life was a happy one. Blessed with good health all his days, showered with the gratitude and applause of his fellow-men, finding in the daily contemplation of plant life, a delight and a charm of which he never wearied, with the consciousness which for him had a special significance, "that he who makes two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, is a benefactor to his race;" and then at last to die, as he always hoped he might die, "in harness," Peter Henderson, when his hour came, calmly and smilingly bade the world good night.

During the forty-two years of his business life, Mr. Henderson employed a large number of people, many of whom have long since preceded him to the grave. Could we gather the testimony of that fragment of the silent host, we may be sure it would be akin to that which the living felt, when his great heart ceased to beat—that in him had been lost, not only the just and generous employer, the unselfish adviser, but the best of friends. From those who in business relations stood closest to him, down to the humblest employe, all mourned and will miss for many a day the presence of the king-like man whose kindly sceptre swayed them all.

Great Chieftain of our gentle art, hail and farewell! Not thy just renown, not the memory of thy blameless life, which in days to come will be the heritages we most shall cherish—not these, but the sorrow of those mourning their kindred dust still lingers uppermost. For thine own, there will remain while life lasts the recollection of thy tender care and unselfish devotion, hallowed by a love that began at our cradles, and which through all the cares of thy long and busy life, thou didst maintain, even unto thy dying hour. To thy children's children, who in future years may happily recall thee, we trust will long be mirrored in their hearts, the memory of thy kindly face, illuminated then as now by the halo of thy imperishable glory.