II.—On the Scotch Kirks and Congregations in Liverpool: being a brief sketch of their rise and progress.

By David Thom, D.D., Ph.D.

7 Feb. 1850
R. 55.

"Quorum pars magna fui."

There were no Scottish Congregations in Liverpool, until the year 1792. Previously to that time, Presbyterians from the Northern part of the Island were in the habit of attending at Key Street, Benn's Garden, Paradise Street, and the Park Chapels; or, in the event of their having preferred what are popularly denominated "evangelical sentiments," at Newington Chapel, Renshaw Street. The building last named was erected in 1777 by Mr. Jonathan Mercer, and some other English Presbyterians, who quitted the Park Chapel, soon after the appointment of the Rev. Hugh Anderson, as minister: the congregation worshipping at Newington having been, for about thirty-three years, under the pastoral superintendence of the Rev. David Bruce. A few Scotch Presbyterians, I have reason to believe, sat under the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Medley.

Several parties, natives of Scotland, then resident in this town, having formed themselves into a society, and agreed to raise the necessary funds by means of shares, set about the building of Oldham Street Kirk, in 1792.* John M'Culloch, Esq., formerly surgeon here, has been good enough to inform me, that the first meeting held on the subject, consisted of only seven individuals; including himself, and six tradesmen, among whom were Messrs. George Blake, Thomas Brown, David Rankin, and —— Armstrong. At first, much opposition was encountered from various quarters. However, by dint of perseverance, and great exertions on the part of those who were hearty in the promotion of the cause, many Scotchmen, some of them influential, were induced to assist, by taking shares in

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* The writer of this was informed, between 20 and 30 years ago, that the idea of erecting a Scotch Kirk in Liverpool, originated, in the surprise expressed by a noble Lord, at a St. Andrew's dinner, that the Scottish inhabitants of so large and important a town, should be without a place of worship of their own. Being totally unable to authenticate the story, from lapse of time, and forgetfulness of the party from whom he heard it, the writer is content that it shall pass for what it is worth, as a mere *on dit*.

the building. Thus were the names of Gladstone, Ewart, M'Ivor, Stewart, Maxwell, and others, added to the list of proprietors : of the original number of whom, only Sir John Gladstone, Baronet, of Fasque, Kincardineshire, and Mr. M'Culloch, above named, now survive. The Kirk was opened for public worship early in the summer of 1793. During the few months which immediately preceded that event, the congregation which was to occupy the edifice, and which had been already formed and organized, assembled for devotional purposes, first, in the Cockpit, Cockspur Street, Vauxhall road—a circumstance which, Mr. M'Culloch mentions, gave rise to some witticisms at their expense—and afterwards in a large room, in Church Lane, Church Street. On the recommendation of Dr. Hunter, of Barjarg, Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, the Rev. William Kirkpatrick, subsequently D.D., a native of Dumfriesshire, was appointed the first minister.* This gentleman having, early in the year 1815, resigned his charge, on account of a paralytic seizure, was succeeded, in the month of June, by the Rev. James Barr, D.D., now minister of St. Enoch's Church, Glasgow.† To him, on his removal to Port Glasgow, in February, 1823, came next in order the Rev. John Stewart, afterwards minister of the parish of Sorn, Ayrshire, and now of Libberton, near Edinburgh. His connexion with Oldham Street Kirk did not extend over

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* It was during the incumbency of Dr. Kirkpatrick, in August, 1799, that, as we learn from his relative and biographer Dr. Hanna, the celebrated Dr. Chalmers preached in Oldham Street Kirk. This was his second appearance in public, after obtaining license. Twenty-five years ago, I had the details of his first sermon, delivered in the Scotch Kirk, Wigan, given me by the Rev. Mr. Dinwiddie, the minister, who had kindly granted him the use of his pulpit.

† In a long, able, but extremely severe letter written by Mr. John Gillies, which appeared in the "Glasgow Chronicle," of Thursday, 24th April, 1823, addressed to the Editor, but animadverting on the statements of an anonymous correspondent, Lynx, we find the following query, which I set down without any comment :—"We ask him," Lynx, "whether the managers" of Oldham Street Kirk, "to save the expense of bringing clergymen from Scotland, have not, in the occasional absence of Dr. Barr, repeatedly put an avowed Unitarian into his pulpit?" The whole letter, from which the above is extracted, extending to between two and three columns of close print, might furnish the future historian of Scotch Kirks here, with much interesting and amusing local information.

a period of much more than nine months. The Rev. Hugh Ralph, L.L.D., since minister of Aberdour, and at present settled at Dalgety, in the County of Fife, conducted the devotions of the congregation, from 1824, till 1842. His successors have been the Rev. Joseph R. Welsh, M.A., of whom we have again to speak, and the Rev. John Reid, the present incumbent.

Oldham Street Kirk has been the fruitful parent of a somewhat numerous progeny. Its eldest born was the body of Presbyterians, originally connected with the Associate Burgher Synod, 1808,—then, 1819, with the United Secession Church,—and, since 1847, with the United Presbyterian Church, all in Scotland—the last-named, being a religious connexion resulting from the fusion of the Secession and Relief Churches. The first location of these Scotch Seceders was in a Chapel situated at the corner of Gloucester and Silver Streets, which has since been taken down—the ground on which it stood being now occupied by St. Simon's Church. Having purchased a piece of land at the corner of Great Orford Street and Mount Pleasant, the congregation of which I am speaking laid the foundation stone of their present structure there, on the 6th day of March, 1826, and were able to open it for divine service, on the 1st of June, in the following year. From its origin, until about eight or ten years ago, this body of worshippers was under the pastoral care of the late Rev. John Stewart, D.D., assisted, towards the close of his life, by the Rev. Hugh Crichton, D.D. Dr. Crichton, and the Rev. William Graham officiate at present as joint-ministers.

The next off-shoot from the parent stock in Oldham Street, was Rodney Street Kirk. We pass it over just now,—a somewhat minute account of its origin and progress being reserved for an after part of this paper.

Owing to the disruption which took place in the Established Church of Scotland, in May, 1843, Oldham Street Kirk has been still further productive, first, *directly*, of the Chapel standing at the corner of Canning and Bedford Streets, occupied by a congregation, which, with Mr. Welsh, already spoken of, at its head, withdrew from the parent edifice;* and, secondly, through a corresponding secession from Rodney Street Kirk,

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* This event occurred in the month of May, 1846.

indirectly, of the Chapel at the corner of Myrtle and Sugnall Streets, and of the congregation worshipping there under the ministry of the Rev. Donald Fergusson, formerly incumbent of Dunnichen, in Forfarshire. The opening of the last edifice took place on the 6th of August, 1845.

Besides, it falls to be mentioned, that several years before the disruption in Scotland, a number of Scotch Presbyterians, connected with Oldham and Rodney Street Kirks, who found it inconvenient, by reason of distance, to attend at either of these places, had been formed into a congregation which met for worship in the Carpenter's Hall, Bond Street. These persons were, during the whole period of their occupancy of that place, under the pastoral guidance of the Rev. John Ferries. With him, towards the end of the year 1842, or early in 1843, they removed to what they called St. Peter's Kirk, on the east side of Scotland Road, which had been built for their reception. While there, the disruption in the Church of Scotland, before alluded to, took place; and Mr. Ferries, having accepted of a presentation to one of the vacated livings in the North, left the town. Difficulties speedily arose as to the acquisition of a legal title to St. Peter's, from the Earl of Derby, in consequence of a majority of the Trustees, and almost all the congregation, adhering to the Free Kirk cause. These resulted in the sale of the building.* The congregation, on leaving it, assembled for worship, in the Temperance Hall, Bond Street; and at last, after much delay and having been subjected to many inconveniences, is now located in a handsome edifice situated in Great Oxford Street, near the Church of St. Martin-in-the-fields, having the Rev. Walter Smith for its minister.

Nor is my list of the offspring of Oldham Street Kirk, direct and indirect, yet complete. The Irish Presbyterians resident in Liverpool—men almost exclusively of Scottish extract—had, for a long series of years, been contented to worship at one or other of the different Scotch Kirks here. Circumstances at last induced them to resolve on having an edifice of their own. Such was the origin of the Chapel erected, a few years since,† in

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* Purchased, if I mistake not, by a Railway Company, and given to the proprietor of St. Matthew's, Key Street, in lieu of that structure. St. Matthew's was formerly one of the (English) Presbyterian Chapels of Liverpool.

† 1846—January, I think.

Upper Islington, opposite to Falkland Street, of which the Rev. Verner M. White, B.A., is minister, Ten or twelve years ago, the Scotch Presbyterians of Birkenhead deemed it expedient to have a Chapel there, in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland; the congregation of which was from its commencement, and until lately, under the charge of the Rev. John Gardner, who, along with his family, has just emigrated to Australia.* And the United Presbyterian Church, also, with the advice and co-operation of the persons worshipping at Mount Pleasant Chapel, has recently added to the number of its congregations in this town and neighbourhood, by the formation of one at Birkenhead, over which the Rev. James Towers presides. A place of worship in Grange Lane has been built for the accommodation of the body.

A small congregation of Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, of the class denominated Covenanters, existed for several years in Liverpool. The Rev. John Nevin was their pastor. They met for public worship in Back Newington, and Sir Thomas's Buildings; and, if I mistake not, latterly in Edmund street. My impression is that the body is now extinct.

Five of the Presbyterian Chapels in Liverpool, and its immediate vicinity, namely, those in Canning Street, Myrtle Street, Great Oxford Street, Upper Islington, and Conway Street, Birkenhead, (which last was, after considerable litigation in the Court of Chancery, secured to its present possessors,) have been placed under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of a Synod of Presbyterians, formed some years ago in England, and holding brotherly communion with the Free Kirk of Scotland. Oldham and Rodney Street Kirks are, through the machinery of another Synod of Presbyterians in England,† connected with the Scottish Establishment. Neither Synod—indeed none of the bodies of which I have been treating—are in connexion, or have any communion with the Old English Presbyterians.

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* The congregation of this Chapel has, since 1843, been connected with the Free Kirk of Scotland.

† The writer of this, associated with John M'Culloch, Esq., already mentioned, as Elder, had the honour, in January, 1824, to assist at Maryport, in Cumberland, in forming the Presbytery of the North-west of England. Before that time, except in London and Northumberland, no Presbyteries in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland existed in this country. The organization of the North-west Presbytery, just alluded to, was the first efficient step taken towards the erection of the Synod mentioned in the text.

The writer of this paper has, of set purpose, reserved until now saying anything particular as to the origin and history of Rodney Street Kirk, and saying anything at all as to one of its offspring, Bold Street Chapel, on account of the relation in which he has stood successively to both; and on account of his desire to put upon record, what appear to him, some rather interesting circumstances connected with the origination of both.

At the time, December 1822, when Dr. Barr resigned the ministry of Oldham Street Kirk, in consequence of his appointment to Port Glasgow, the late Wm. M'Ivor, Esq., was proprietor of from half to three-fourths of the shares in that Kirk. By the terms of its constitution, the election of minister was vested in the shareholders. None of these could, agreeably to one of the provisions in the document referred to, possess more than four votes; and yet it is evident, that by bestowing qualifications on others, a gentleman in the situation of the leading proprietor, could at any time command a majority.

A promise having been given, or supposed to be given, by Mr. M'Ivor, that the favourite of the congregation should be nominated to the vacant charge, several preachers of the gospel, of whom the writer was one, were induced to come forward in the capacity of candidates.* Three opportunities of appearing in Oldham Street pulpit were conceded to the writer; the last of which occurred on the afternoon of Sunday, the 2nd February, 1823, the day on which Dr. Barr preached his farewell sermon. That the writer was the favourite candidate—whether judiciously or not, no matter—is satisfactorily established by two facts: first, that more than three-fourths of the seatholders and sitters subscribed an application to the proprietors on his behalf; (the document, with 181 signatures, is still in his possession;) and, secondly, that on the application proving unsuccessful, the greatest importance was attached to his consenting to become the head of a new congregation.†

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* Among these were Mr. Aitkin, then assistant to Dr. Barr, in his school, and afterwards an M.D.; and Mr. John Geddes Crosbie, successively minister at Birmingham, Fenwick, and Dundee, at which last place he died, June, 1838.

† Eighty letters of introduction to leading merchants and other influential parties in Liverpool, and strong recommendations from eminent Scotch Clergymen, together with the strenuous and unwearied exertions of Messrs. Stevenson, Brown, Wotherspoon, and other kind friends, no doubt contributed largely to the raising of the writer to the position, which he was enabled to occupy.

Mr. Stewart, before mentioned, one of the candidates, having, principally through the influence of his friend, Mr. M'Ivor, been elected minister of Oldham Street Kirk, by a small majority of the trustees and shareholders, on the 5th day of March, 1823; on the following day, twenty-five Scotch gentlemen met at the York Hotel, Williamson Square, for the purpose of considering what course of proceedings it might be necessary for them, under the circumstances of the case, to adopt. Certain resolutions were passed unanimously, and forwarded to the writer, then in the North; along with an urgent request to him to become minister of a new Scottish Congregation here, to be formed in strict connexion with the Established Church of Scotland: the parties present guaranteeing to him a *minimum* stipend of £150 *per annum*.*

The writer, then Assistant-Minister at Logie, near Stirling, and just appointed to the charge of Ardoch Chapel, in the parish of Muthil, Perthshire, was, after some hesitation, and no small degree of reluctance, on account of the preference which he gave to the country situation, induced to comply with the request of his Liverpool friends and adherents.

He opened the Music Hall, Bold Street—not then divided into two stories as now—for divine service, according to the rites and usages of the Church of Scotland, on Sunday, the 23rd March, 1823; was ordained, by the Presbytery of Glasgow, minister of the new Kirk and congregation, on the 7th day of May, following; and continued worshipping with his congregation, in the Music Hall, until Friday, the 3rd day of December, 1824, when Rodney Street Kirk was formally opened for their reception, by the Rev. Edward Irving, of London, then in the full blaze of his popularity and fame. A large, fashionable, and deeply-interested congregation assembled to listen to the talented preacher; and a collection was made, which amounted to above £180.

To go back a little, in the narrative.

On Tuesday, the 17th of June, 1823, Rear-Admiral Murray, then an inhabitant of this town, assisted by the writer, laid the foundation stone of Rodney Street Kirk,† under the south-western angle of the then future

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* See Appendix A.

† Held, with the adjoining grave-yard, under the Corporation of Liverpool, on a lease of 75 years, renewable for ever, on payment of an almost nominal fine.

building. The details of the ceremony are contained in the "Liverpool Saturday's Advertiser," of June 21st, that year, a copy of which is herewith presented to the Society: that portion of the paper which refers to the matter in hand being given at length in the Appendix.* Mr. John Gillies, then Corn Merchant in Liverpool, and now Editor of the "Colonial Watchman," at St. John's, New Brunswick, wrote the letter, signed, VIATOR. Many distinguished Scotch gentlemen, since deceased, including Harry Gordon, Craufurd Logan, Alexander Gordon, Thomas Moffatt, Hugh Stewart, George Blake, John Maxwell, John Finlay, James Marshall, and John Fleeming, Esqrs., were present on the ground.† Several highly respectable parties, still alive, such as Dr. M'Intyre, Messrs. M'Culloch, Hardie, Campbell, Stevenson, Boggie, S. M'Culloch, M'Kenzie, Huuter, Thomson, and Niven, also, I think, took part in the ceremony. All the gentlemen named were contributors towards the erection of the edifice.

Unfortunately, disputes respecting doctrinal points, soon after his settlement in Liverpool, arose between the writer and a portion of his congregation. Upon the merits of the case, no opinion whatever is offered. Suffice it to say, that after much squabbling, and the excitement of much unpleasant feeling on both sides, a suspension of hostilities was agreed to, in consequence of the writer having consented to receive the Rev. Andrew Wilson, M.A. as his junior colleague;‡ their joint ministry to commence with the opening of Rodney Street Kirk.§

On Sunday, the 5th day of December, 1824, two days subsequent to the formal opening of the Kirk, three discourses were delivered within its walls. One, by Mr. Irving, in the forenoon; one by the writer of this

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* See Appendix B.

† Daniel Stewart, Esq., architect of the Kirk, a very talented man, (father of John Stewart, Esq.,) was also, I think, present. So, if my memory can be trusted to, was Alexander Hannay, Esq., M.D.

‡ For this situation Mr. William Wodrow, a great-grandson of the celebrated historian, and a personal friend of the writer,—who died Minister of Dreghorn,—was a candidate.

§ In the writer's pamphlet, entitled "Remarks," and in Mr. Gillies' "Reply," &c., both now the property of the Society, the greater part of the correspondence connected with this affair will be found. The writer regrets that the length of a "Protest" which he addressed to the Rodney Street Trustees and Shareholders, precludes his introducing it as an appendix to this paper.

article, in the afternoon ;* and one by Mr. Wilson, in the evening. The writer was, at the time, regarded by many in the light of a heretic. Placed, therefore, he was, to use Lord Ellenborough's well-known simile, "like a wild elephant, between two tame ones." What, however, was the fate of his two tame keepers? Singularly enough, Mr. Irving, then "in the odour of" orthodoxy, was deposed from the office of the ministry, on account of alleged heretical opinions, by the Presbytery of Annan, in 1831 ;† and the opposition which Mr. Wilson encountered from several influential members of his session and congregation, in 1829 and 1830, on the score of some of his religious tenets having been supposed to resemble those of Messrs. Irving and Campbell, of Row—an opposition which, had he lived, might have led to serious consequences—may be allowed to pass with this slight notice.

As to the writer, he was not permitted to remain long in a state of suspense as to the intentions of those who, on religious grounds, stood opposed to him. He was brought to the bar of the Presbytery of Glasgow, in June, 1825, by thirty-five members of his congregation, on a charge of holding and propagating sentiments inconsistent with the "Westminster Confession of Faith." Nine articles of accusation were specified.‡ The appointment of a Commission by the Presbytery of Glasgow, presided over by the late Dr. M'Lean, Minister of Gorbals, and an examination of witnesses in

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* His text, on the occasion, was, Acts vii. 48—*Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*

† Frequently has it occurred to the writer to ask himself, what share, if any, a conversation extending to four hours and a half—to him most interesting, and turning almost exclusively on theological topics—which he had with Mr. Irving, on the evening of Thursday, the 2nd of December, 1824, may have had in the suggestion and formation of that gentleman's subsequent views. Mr. Irving's words, addressed to him on parting, "You are the man for this place, and I hope you will stick by it," still ring in his ears. Much as the writer, who for several years enjoyed the pleasure of Mr. Irving's acquaintance, admired his genius, originality of mind, power of quaint and forcible illustration, extensive reading, and general ability, he must be permitted to say, that he always considered that gentleman's notions of theology, crude, superficial, and confused.

‡ The seventh and ninth were clearly irrelevant. Having been inconsistent with none of the standards of the Church of Scotland, they should have been struck out by the Presbytery.

Rodney Street Kirk, were the immediate results. This Commission continued its sittings during three weeks of the month of July; and excited no small degree of curiosity and interest in the minds of the Liverpool community.* After receiving its report, printing the evidence, and listening to long legal and theological discussions, (eminent counsel having been employed on both sides, and an expenditure incurred, which could not have fallen much short of a thousand pounds,) the Presbytery, on the 22nd of September,—the day on which its members laid the foundation stone of a monument to John Knox—at a meeting held in the city of Glasgow, pronounced a judgment condemnatory of the writer of this paper: there having been only two dissentient voices from the decision, namely those of Mr. John Dick, Minister of Rutherglen, and Mr. Thomas Lockerby, Minister of Cadder. Thus ended this curious, and, in as far as Liverpool is concerned, unprecedented trial; and thus did the writer cease to be Minister of Rodney Street Kirk. Details of the whole procedure, including the evidence adduced, and the sentence pronounced, will be found in Mr. Gillies' "Reply," as well as in two pamphlets published by the writer in 1825, all of which are enrolled among the donations made to the Society.

The removal of the writer from Rodney Street Kirk, and the immediate formation of a new Congregation, over which he was called to preside as Minister, occasioned a second occupancy of the Music Hall, by himself and his friends, for devotional purposes. There he remained from Sunday, the 2nd of October, 1825, until the opening of Bold Street Chapel,† on the first Sunday of April, 1828. Connected with this Chapel, the writer has been ever since. It constitutes the last of the off-shoots of Oldham Street Kirk, of which he possesses any knowledge.

Having been suspended from the office of the ministry in the Church of Scotland, *sine die*, by the General Assembly of that Church, on the 2nd June, 1828, and this, on account of the publication of the first edition of his "Three Questions proposed and answered," and of his having declined to obtemper the jurisdiction of the Court, by appearing at its bar to defend himself, all occasion for the writer's speaking of himself now ceases; Scottish Kirks and Congregations constituting the theme of this paper.

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* See, in proof of this, the Liverpool papers of the day.

† Its foundation stone was laid in August, 1827.

Rodney Street Kirk, after the expulsion of the writer by the Presbytery of Glasgow, in September, 1825, continued to enjoy the ministrations of Mr. Wilson, as sole Pastor, until the summer of 1830.* He was then laid prostrate by an illness of a painful and protracted nature, which issued in his death, in March, 1831. The gentleman who officiated as his assistant for some time previous to that melancholy event, was Mr. Thomas Pitcairn, afterwards Minister of Cockpen, near Edinburgh, and now one of the Clerks of the General Assembly of the Free Kirk of Scotland. Mr. Wilson bore his long and severe sufferings with much resignation to the divine will. Subsequently to his decease, the charge of the Congregation was entrusted to the Rev. John Park, M.A., who, in 1843, became Minister of Glencairn. To him, in 1844, succeeded the Rev. John Tod Brown,† who had previously been one of the Ministers of Dunfermline. This gentleman had to contend with many difficulties, the principal of which arose out of the secession of a large proportion of the members of Rodney Street Kirk, pledged to the support of the Free Kirk cause.‡ After Mr. Brown's resignation in November, 1846, but not until considerable delay, occasioned, in a great measure, by an attempted sale of the Kirk, had occurred, the trustees and congregation, in 1848, placed themselves under the pastoral care of the Rev. David Brown, the present Minister, who, before his call to Liverpool, had been a clergyman in Dumfriesshire.

The subject proposed by me is now exhausted. And yet, perhaps, it would not be proper to close, without referring to the fact of some of the ministers, whose names I have had occasion to mention, having locally or otherwise been known as authors. To Dr. Kirkpatrick, his congregation and the Liverpool public were indebted for at least one theological treatise.§ Dr. Barr acquired some local and temporary notoriety, first, as the writer

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* His last public discourse was, singularly enough, delivered as the substitute of Mr. Irving; who, having been detained by adverse winds on his passage from Dublin, was unable to appear in the pulpit of Rodney Street Kirk, in the morning, as had been previouly arranged.

† Recently admitted to Holy Orders in the Church of England, by the Bishop of London.

‡ Located in Myrtle Street, under the ministry of the Rev. Donald Fergusson, as already stated.

§ "Pious Meditations," 1 vol., 12mo., 1805. Did not the Doctor publish also a volume of Sermons?

of a clever epistle, signed ALIQUIS, addressed to the Rev. George Harris, then, 1820, Minister of Renshaw Street Chapel; and, secondly, by the sermon which he preached in Oldham Street Kirk, February 2nd, 1823, on occasion of his removal to Port Glasgow, and which was published at the request of the congregation. Several other tracts have since emanated from his pen. A pamphlet by John Stewart, D.D., on baptism—replied to by Mr. D. S. Wylie—and some other publications of his, deserve notice, on account of the ability which they display. Mr. Park, soon after his settlement in Liverpool (1831), published, of course posthumously, a small work of his predecessor, Mr. Wilson;* and followed this up, in 1843, by issuing from the press, his own farewell sermon.† "The Union of Christians," a poem by the Rev. John Tod Brown, published 1846, and some other productions of his, have contributed to make him known to the literary world. By Mr. Gardner, an obituary, and, if I mistake not, some other pieces, were published, during the period of his incumbency at Birkenhead. A volume of "Lectures," by the Rev. Verner M. White, has been favourably received. Concerning his own productions, the writer of this does not feel disposed to say anything. To attacks made upon him, however, by Mr. William Jones, son of the author of the "History of the Albigenses and Waldenses," in his "Letter" addressed to him, 1825; by Mr. John Gillies, in his "Reply," &c., 1825; by Dr. Weatherill, in his strictures on the *Divine Inversion*, 1843; and by Robert Townley, A.B., some time Curate of St. Mathew's, here, now Minister of the Universalist Church, Charlestown, Boston, Massachusetts, in his "Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, a past event," 8vo., 1845, he may be allowed thus passingly to advert.

Liverpool, 3, *St. Mary's Place*, *Feb.* 1, 1850.

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* The abilities, as well as scientific attainments of Mr. Wilson, were of no common order. And his dispositions were amiable. This very slight tribute to his memory, the writer has no small pleasure in paying; and to do so, is the more gratifying to his own feelings, when he considers the state of alienation from each other's society in which, owing to the unhappy Rodney Street disputes, the last years of Mr. Wilson's life were spent by that gentleman and himself. It occurs to the writer to mention, that Mr. Wilson's address, at the opening of the "Liverpool Mechanics' Institution," 1825, and which appeared in the columns of the "Liverpool Mercury," was much admired.

† Mr. Park's taste in poetry, music, and painting—indeed, in the fine arts in general—is well known.

Appendix, A.

"*Liverpool, 6th March*, 1823.

"At a meeting composed of the subscribing gentlemen, Mr. John M'Culloch was chosen Chairman, and Mr. John Gillies, Secretary, when a motion was made by Mr. Alexander Hunter, and seconded by Mr. Samuel M'Culloch, and carried unanimously,—

"That this meeting do guarantee to Mr. David Thom, on his accepting a call from the Scottish Congregation here, a stipend of £150 a year; and an augmentation according to the sum which can with propriety be collected from the seats, when a new Church can be built, according to the mode now in practise in Oldham Street.

"A second motion, made by Mr. Samuel M'Culloch, and seconded by Mr. Robert Jackson, was also carried unanimously,—

"That no general meeting of the Congregation be called, until it be ascertained whether Mr. Thom will accept a call on these terms.

"A third motion, made by Mr. Samuel M'Culloch, and seconded by Mr. William Stevenson, was also carried unanimously,—

"That a deputation be appointed to ascertain whether a temporary place of worship can be found, and at what price; and to collect every other necessary information: to report to a future meeting. And that the following persons be appointed:—Mr. John Finlay, Mr. Robert Jackson, Mr. Alex. Hunter, Mr. Malcolm Hunter, Mr. Wm. Stevenson, and Mr. John Gillies.

"A fourth motion was made by Mr. Samuel M'Culloch, and seconded by Dr. Peter M'Intyre, and passed unanimously,—

"Authorising the Secretary to transmit these resolutions to Mr. Thom, and to invite him accordingly to come as early as possible to Liverpool; and that Sunday the 16th currt. would be satisfactory to open a meeting for public worship, if practicable."

(Signed,) "JOHN M'CULLOCH, Chairman,
JOHN GILLIES, Secretary.

"James Marshall,
Peter Macintyre,
Alex. Hannay,
John Fleeming,
John Finlay,
D. Niven,
Matt^w Steele,
Will: Anderson,
M. Hunter,
Alex. Hunter,
Sam^l. M'Culloch,
Robert Jackson,

"Wm. Stevenson,
Harry Gordon,
A. Gordon,
Chas. Abercrombie,
George Gracie,
David Rankin,
D. Abercromby,
Wm. Carson,
Wm. Gibson,
Jos. Johnstone,
John Burnet."

Concerning the parties subscribing this first record of the proceedings of the body afterwards formed into the congregation of Rodney Street Kirk, I may be permitted to remark, that eleven are known to me to be dead; that of the fate of three I am uncertain; that five are abroad, reside in London, or have returned to Scotland; and that only six are now in Liverpool, or the neighbourhood. Mr. John M'Culloch, still alive at the advanced age of about ninety, has taken an active part in the formation of three of the Scotch Kirks mentioned in this paper; namely, Oldham Street, 1792, Rodney Street, 1823, and Myrtle Street, 1845.—D. T.

Appendix, B.

"NEW SCOTCH CHURCH.

"On Tuesday last, Admiral Murray, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Thom, laid the first stone of the new Scottish Church, in Rodney Street, which, when built, will highly ornament that fine street, being calculated for near 1800 sitters, and the architectural design greatly admired by all who have seen it. The beauty of the site is striking, and the large space allotted for burying-ground on each side of the building, will bring it prominently into view to the passing stranger; while the trees and shrubbery on every side will give relief to the fine decorations of the edifice. It will decidedly take the lead of all dissenting chapels in this place. There were deposited in the stone, as usual, a specimen of all the coins of the present reign, and a list of the trustees, committee of management, and members of session of the infant establishment, with a copy of the resolutions forming the basis of its constitution. The day being uncommonly fine, great numbers of well-dressed females and gentlemen were early on the ground to see the ceremony, to whom Mr. Thom addressed a very powerful and energetic discourse, appropriate to the occasion,* and in his usual manner, pressing the passing circumstances into that great cause for which he was ordained. He was heard with the most minute attention by all present. After the addresses, a solemn prayer was offered to the Almighty Disposer of events, that he might bless the work, and that in it many sons and daughters might be added to the church of Christ; which, when finished, closed this simple and impressive ceremony, when the assembled people gradually left the ground.—Thus auspiciously has commenced a building to be solely appropriated for the worship of God, by a congregation considered dissenters in this country, but really, in as far as international law will permit, a part of the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. After the ceremony, the committee for managing this work met in the Music-hall, and having taken into consideration the very handsome manner in which Admiral Murray came forward to lay the foundation stone, and the deep interest which he evidently manifested in their

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* The passage spoken from was, *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* I. Corinth. iii. 11.—D. T.

success, unanimously resolved to return him their cordial and heartfelt thanks for his kind and liberal conduct on this occasion, and instructed their secretary to transmit the same to the Admiral, which was done accordingly. In twelve months from this time, should the ensuing winter be moderately open, the contractors are bound to have the chapel ready for divine worship.†

"On the above subject we have received the following letter from a correspondent:—

"'TO THE EDITORS.

"'GENTLEMEN,—Attracted by curiosity, I went, on Tuesday last, to see the foundation-stone laid of an intended Scotch Church, in Rodney Street. It was laid by Admiral Murray, a gentleman who is ever ready, when he can serve the cause of religion, to undergo any trouble, or descend to any labour. He seemed, by the care he took in laying the stone on the solid rock, to be anxious that his share of the work should be stable, and as if he meant to show to the admiring spectators, that to raise the superstructure of a religious character, the foundation should be securely laid upon the Rock of Ages. What a fine contrast does such a man exhibit when compared to the mere worldlings. Zealous and indefatigable in his labours of love, he is laying up for himself treasures in heaven; while they are carefully collecting portions of this earth, not a particle of which can they carry with them, when they are called upon to leave it. Mr. Thom, also, the clergyman of this intended church, seemed busy and earnest in the work. With his gown on, I saw him descend into the fosse, as if he intended to show to his congregation, that to commence the work of religion, they must lay the foundation in humility, and lower their good opinion of themselves to rise in that of their Creator; and he put his hand to the work, as if to impress upon the bystanders the necessity of working out their own salvation. I understood he was to address the people, and waited patiently until he had finished the bodily part of the labour to begin the mental. He has certainly high oratorical talents, and a ready command of language; but what I most admired was his ardent and impassioned manner. Feeling strongly himself, he impresses strongly all who hear him, and carries them with him like an overflowing torrent. I noticed a servant maid, on the opposite side of the street, busy rubbing the glass of a window. As the speaker proceeded, she gradually rubbed slower and slower, till at length her hand fell by her side, and she seemed absorbed in attention. This is, after all, the chief excellence of oratory. An address, however elegant its language, however musical its periods, if the speaker seems unmoved, makes no impression. Mr. Thom seems diffuse, however; but it may not be fair to criticise in this case too strictly, as I was told he declared it was entirely extempore; but certainly the principal fault of all the Scottish clergy that I have heard, was want of condenseness, and repetition. This is, perhaps, inseparable from their mode of preaching. Seen in the light of a mere extempore effusion, it certainly proves him capable of be-

† Mr. David Abercromby, I presume, was the writer of this.—D. T.

coming an eminent public speaker, and one day doing honour to his profession. I was pleased to see the attention with which he was heard by the crowd around, though composed of all ranks and ages. The power with which a good orator commands attention, and the facility with which he conveys us through every subtlety of doctrine, and through every labyrinth of reasoning, is inexplicable; and were there no other, would be a proof to my mind of the existence of a soul distinct from matter.

"'The prayer with which the ceremony closed was admirable, and came evidently from the heart of the speaker; but I would advise Mr. Thom to guard carefully the motions of his mind in prayer. His features are very flexible, and assume those indications of the internal and passing feelings, which, however natural, does not appear to me sufficiently solemn, when we address the Almighty; at least to think it so, we would require to be more habituated to it.

"'I am told that this is to be a fine building. Indeed, to do any justice to the situation in which it is to be placed, it should be so; besides that, if this congregation, as they claim, do really belong to the Scottish Church, they should take precedence after the Church of England. The Scotch inhabitants of Liverpool are certainly, as a body very respectable; and it seems as if they had at last roused themselves to assert their rank in the religious world, and to claim what they should always have enjoyed, a place by the side of the sister establishment. I think, however, by what we have seen of them hitherto, we may fairly conclude that they are not attached to their national church, for I would not insinuate that they leave it from any other than conscientious motives. It says little for poor Presbyterianism, if its professors are ashamed of it, and when they come from home, should change its homely forms for a more splendid ritual, as a rustic youth throws off his russet attire when he comes into the gay and fashionable city. I hope better of them, and am pleased to see this display of their patriotism.

"'I find, gentlemen, in reading over what I have written, that it is a kind of olio of criticism, description, and reflections; so, I will conclude at once, lest I should add any more ingredients, by subscribing myself your obedient servant,

"'VIATOR.

"'*20th June*, 1823.'"