

mistress of a remote Highland manse, and known but to her personal friends by those earlier letters which form the first half of her "Letters from the Mountains," and which, in ease and freshness greatly surpass aught which she produced after she began her career of authorship. Not a few of her letters, and several of her poems, were addressed to my friend Miss Dunbar. Some of the other members of the group were greatly younger than Mrs. Grant and the Lady of Kilravock. And of these, one of the most accomplished was the late Lady Gordon Cumming of Altyre, known to scientific men by her geologic labors among the ichthyolitic formations of Moray, and mother of the famous lion-hunter, Mr. Gordon Cumming. My friend Miss Dunbar was at this time considerably advanced in life, and her health far from good. She possessed, however, a singular buoyancy of spirits, which years and frequent illness had failed to depress; and her interest and enjoyment in nature and in books remained as high as when, long before, her friend Mrs. Grant had addressed her as

"Helen, by every sympathy allied,
By love of virtue and by love of song,
Compassionate in youth and beauty's pride."

Her mind was imbued with literature, and stored with literary anecdote: she conversed with elegance, giving interest to whatever she touched; and, though she seemed never to have thought of authorship in her own behalf, she wrote pleasingly and with great facility, in both prose and verse. Her verses, usually of a humorous cast, ran trippingly off the tongue, as if the words had dropped by some happy accident,—for the arrangement bore no mark of effort,—into exactly the places where they at once best brought out the writer's meaning, and addressed themselves most pleasingly to the ear. The opening stanzas of a light *jeu d'esprit* on a young naval officer engaged in a lady-killing 'expedition in Cromarty, dwell in my memory; and—first premising, by way of explanation, that Miss Dunbar's brother, the late Baronet of Boath, was a captain in the navy, and that the lady-killer was his first lieutenant