

Andrew Young, F.G.S. By Professor Flint, D.D.

(Read December 21, 1891.)

Andrew Young, the subject of this notice, was born at Edinburgh in 1807. His first instructor was his father, David Young, a successful teacher in the city during half a century. He early entered the University, and passed with distinction through the curricula of Arts and Theology. He had University Prizes awarded him for no less than five poems. These poems show a facility and skill in the metrical expression of his thoughts and feelings remarkable in a youth of from fifteen to seventeen years of age, and only to be explained by a naturally poetical disposition having prompted him almost from childhood to cultivate the art of versification. The poem on "The Scottish Highlands," warmly commended by Professor Wilson when declaring him Laureate of the Moral Philosophy Class, is not only the longest and most laboured of his compositions, but the one which gives the highest conception and fullest measure of his poetical talent and resources.

Having completed his course at the University he chose teaching as his profession in preference to the ministry. At the age of twenty-one he was appointed by the Town Council of Edinburgh to the head-mastership of Niddry Street School, a position which he held for eleven years. It was during this period that he composed that delightful Sabbath-school hymn, "The Happy Land," which has been so widely and richly productive of good, and which has endeared his name to multitudes in all parts of the world. It well deserves its success and influence, although it owes them not to any rare or remarkable felicities either of thought or expression, but to the admirable adjustment of the words to the melody, and of both to the minds and voices of the young. The secret of its charm and power reveals itself at once when heard sung by a fairly large number of children. As to the circumstances in which it was written I need only refer to Mr Young's own account of them in the preface to his "Poems."

In 1840 he was appointed head-master of the English Department in Madras College, St Andrews. After teaching there with

acceptance for thirteen years, he retired into private life, and settled in Edinburgh. But he did not cease to manifest his love of teaching and his interest in the young. For many years he was the Superintendent of Greenside Parish Sunday School. No position could have been more congenial to him than was this.

He published in 1876 *The Scottish Highlands, and other Poems*. The volume was very favourably received by the press, and had a large circulation. If it nowhere shows us that its author was a great poet, it throughout shows us that he possessed a genuinely poetical nature, and a fervent and devout spirit. The feelings which inspire his verse are always pure and lovable, and the verse itself flows with ease and naturalness.

Mr Young was elected a Fellow of this Society on the 5th of December 1881. He was also a member of the Geological Society.

He died on the 30th of November 1889, and was buried on the 4th of December in Rosebank Cemetery. He was twice married, and is survived by a widow and daughter.