

**SOME MEMORIES OF
BOOKS, AUTHORS
AND EVENTS**

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Some memories of books, authors and events by James Bertram

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BY
Glass
JAMES BERTRAM

AUTHOR OF
"THE HARVEST OF THE SEA" ETC



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P R E F A C E

THE present being an age of literary and professional reminiscences, I offer no apology for following the fashion, and I trust that what is said in these pages may be found to possess some interest, more especially to persons desirous of being introduced behind the scenes of literature.

Full fifty years having elapsed since my connection with publishing first began, many of the more or less celebrated characters with whom I have been in touch have gone over to the majority, but of not a few the memory is still green. Sir Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, Thomas de Quincey, "The Ettrick Shepherd," "Christopher North," John Gibson Lockhart, are still names to conjure with; and, though I can tell little or nothing of them, or of others less famous that may be considered extraordinary, still some of my gossip

may prove interesting, and serve to supply a touch here and there for a more comprehensive picture of the authors, books and events of the thirties and forties of the present century.

J. G. BERTRAM.

GLASGOW, 1891.

MEMOIR

JAMES GLASS BERTRAM, the writer of these "Memories," was born in 1824, at the little border village of Tillsmouth. While he was yet a child his parents, who were in humble circumstances, removed first to the town of Haddington, and again to the vicinity of Edinburgh. His early boyhood was spent in the village of Davidson's Mains, and he received his education at the neighbouring school of Slateford. At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to Mr. William Tait, the proprietor of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, in whose employment he rose, before he had attained his majority, to the position of managing clerk and cashier. This situation, however, he soon abandoned for the stage, and it is to be regretted that he did not devote a chapter of his "Memories" to his experiences as a strolling player, the little book which he founded on them—

"Glimpses of Real Life"—being no longer in print. Finding himself, after three years' trial, unable to gain a living as an actor, Mr. Bertram returned to Edinburgh, and endeavoured to establish himself as a bookseller and news agent; but this failing of success, he earned a livelihood for the next few years by contributing to *Chambers's Journal*, *Hogg's Instructor*, and similar periodicals. In 1855 he was appointed editor of the *North Briton*, one of the numerous penny newspapers established on the abolition of the compulsory stamp. It was published twice a week, and seems to have been conducted on the lines of what is now called "the New Journalism." It was the first newspaper to introduce the serial story as a regular part of its contents; and the first to publish "interviews." After a somewhat noisy, and tolerably successful, career of fifteen or sixteen years, the *North Briton's* fortunes began to decline, and Mr. Bertram, who had latterly been proprietor as well as editor, was obliged to part with the paper in 1872. He continued to be editor, however, for another year, after the expiry of which he