

PREFATORY NOTE

In 1724 Allan Ramsay published his 'Evergreen,' desiring thereby to stimulate the return to local and national tradition and living nature. We who inherit Ramsay's old home and would also follow in his steps as workers and writers, publishers and builders, are seeking to gather such traditions as still linger around us, to set down such thought or song as may be in ourselves—hopeful at least of suggesting better things to those who will follow us here.

Amongst the Local and National Traditions which are interesting many Scotsmen to-day, the present issue of the 'Evergreen' is particularly concerned with two. These are the Celtic Renascence, now incipient alike in Literature and Art, and the revival and development of the old Continental sympathies of Scotland—the development of the newer but increasing sympathies of England. The Ancient League with France and the later intercourse with the Netherlands have deeply marked our history, sometimes even theirs, and the 'Evergreen' of 'Spring' and 'Autumn' give evidence that this association is still a living and fruitful one. Hence, while we would renew local feeling and local colour, we would also express the larger view of Edinburgh as not only a National and Imperial, but a European city—the larger view of Scotland, again as in recent, in mediæval, most of all in ancient times, one of the European Powers of Culture—as of course far smaller countries like Norway are to-day. Our first appeal is thus to Magna Scotia beyond Tweed and over sea, but we would also share in that wider culture-movement which knows neither nationality nor race.

The 'Return to Nature' is a rallying call which each age must answer in its own way. The ending century has written its answer large in Science and Industry, in Literature and Art; yet many solutions are still lacking. Many of us are no longer satisfied with analysis and observation, with criticism and pessimism; many begin to ask for Synthesis, for Action, for Life, for Joy. The solution lies through action, through experiment—'vivendo discimus.' Hence our open and growing group with its many activities, educational and civic, architectural and decorative, seeks to realise somewhat of the 'Cit  du Bon Accord' of our illustrious guest, the veteran pioneer of synthetic science and of social ideals, M. Elis e Reclus. But Social Life is not merely built upon the ground of Nature; it is its outcome and growth. Hence the need of fresh readings in Life, of fresh groupings in Science, both now mainly from the humanist side, as lately from the naturalist side. Yet if Man be one with Nature, her evolution is also his, and this not only through the ages and the generations, but through the year and its Seasons.

Here then are some of the ideas of the 'Evergreen.' It makes no promise of perpetual life, but seeks only to link the Autumn of our own age with an approaching Spring, and pass, through Decadence, towards Renascence.

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