the reputation which he had gained for himself, when the directors of the Institution first saw their youthful appointee, his personal appearance made them incredulous of his ability to hold a public audience in interest, and so they had him give to them a preliminary lecture in private as a sort of trial. "Let this young man command anything the Institution can afford," was their joyous ejaculation when the trial was over. The full professorship was soon given to him, and every effort was made to supply him with apparatus and assistance. And their confidence was well placed. It was soon seen that Davy was the Institution. His lectures became the rage. Men and women of all ranks and professions, men about town no less than philosophers, and ladies of fashion equally with blue-stockings, crowded to hear him. "His youth, his simplicity, his chemical knowledge, his happy illustrations, his well-conducted experiments, excited universal admiration and unbounded applause." Such was the report of a contemporary. Nor was this enthusiasm a mere passing fad that had its day and died. Every day Davy's popularity grew greater. No doubt some of it was of sentimental origin, but most of it was based on a real admiration for his genius. Ladies sent him poems and composed sonnets in his honor replete with the tenderest emotions. But men, also, of the highest credit and standing, were proud to be thought his disciples or his associates. Even Coleridge testified: "I go to hear Davy to increase my stock of metaphors." And it is because of the enthusiasm for science which he inspired that the philanthropy of the time showed itself in the establishment of such institutions as the Zoological Gardens and the South Kensington Museum. When from overwork he broke down and became sick, bulletins had to be published hourly as to the progress of his illness or his convalescence. Nor was his popularity confined to individuals. Whole institutions, and those of the gravest sort, were affected by it. The Royal Society of London scarcely passed a year without making him its Bakerian lecturer, its highest scientific honor. The Royal Society of Dublin besought him to give courses in lectures on science in the Irish capital, and rewarded him munificently for doing so. In short, both in a popular sense and in a scientific sense, Davy's career during the twelve years he was professor of chemistry at the Royal Institution, beginning with his very first occupation of the position when he was but a young man of twenty-two, was one of wonderful and unexampled success.

Davy resigned his position in the Royal Institution early in 1812. The reason of his resignation was a change in his fortunes. On April 11 of that year he was married to a lady, described in a letter to a friend by Sir Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society of the time, as "a rich and handsome widow." This lady was a Mrs. Apreece, a "far-away cousin" of Sir Walter Scott's. Sir Walter, at the time of the marriage, wrote of her as having been during the preceding winter "a lioness of the first magnitude" in Edinburgh. She had come to London, and being fond of science had attended Davy's lectures. There were at the time many skits and squibs printed rallying Davy on his good fortune. One of them, said to have been indited by Maria Edgeworth, ran as follows:

"Too many men have often seen
Their talents underrated;
But Davy owns that his have been
Duly 'Apreeciated.'"

DAVY'S INTEREST IN SOCIETY

The stories told by Paris [his first biographer] of Davy's habits at this period [when he was in the height of his fame as a lecturer and discoverer], and of his various expedients to gain time—of his rushing off to dinner with persons of the highest rank with no fewer than five shirts on, and as many pairs of stockings, because in his haste he could not put on fresh linen without removing that which was underneath; of his continuing his chemical labors on his return to the laboratory until three or four in the morning; and of his then being up before the servants, are certainly much exaggerated, if not wholly apocryphal. He was, it is true, not very systematic in the disposal of his time, but he seldom entered the laboratory before ten or eleven in the morning, and rarely left it later than four, and he was scarcely ever known to visit it after he had dressed for dinner. Except when preparing a lecture, he seldom dined in his rooms at the Institution: his brother tells us that his invitations to dinner were so numerous that he was, or might have been, constantly engaged; and after dinner he was much in the habit of attending evening parties, and devoting the evening to amusement, "so that to the mere frequenters of such parties he must have appeared a votary of fashion rather than of science."—DR. T. E. THORPE.

FARADAY'S REPORT OF DAVY'S FAREWELL LECTURE
April 9, 1812

"Having thus given the general character of the metals, Sir H. Davy proceeded to make a few observations on the

connection of science with the other parts of polished and social life. Here it would be improper for me to follow him. I should merely injure and destroy the beautiful, the sublime observations that fell from his lips. He spoke in the most energetic and luminous manner of the advancement of the arts and sciences, of the connection that had always existed between them and other parts of a nation's economy. He noticed the peculiar congeries of great men in all departments of life that generally appeared together, noticed Anaximander, Anaximenes, Socrates, Newton, Bacon, Elizabeth, etc., but, by an unaccountable omission, forgot himself, though, I venture to say, no one else present did.

"During the whole of these observations his delivery was easy, his diction elegant, his tone good, and his sentiments sublime."—*Quoted by Dr. T. E. Thorpe, from Faraday's manuscript note-book, written when he was a book-binder's apprentice, and now preserved in the Royal Institution.*

DAVY AND FARADAY

The jealousy thus manifested by Davy [towards Faraday, when the latter was elected into the Royal Society] is one of the most pitiful facts in his history. It was a sign of that moral weakness which was at the bottom of much of his unpopularity, and which revealed itself in various ways as his physical strength decayed.

Greedy as he was of fame—that infirmity of noble minds—many incidents in his life up to this period prove that he was not wanting on occasion in a generous appreciation of the work of his contemporaries, even in fields he might reasonably claim as his own. But, although in

his intellectual combats he could show at times a certain knightly courtesy, it must be confessed that he was lacking in the magnanimity which springs from the charity that envieth not.

In genius he was unquestionably superior to Faraday; in true nobility of character he was far below him. It is almost impossible to avoid comparing him with Faraday. Indeed it is one of the penalties of his position that he has to be tried by so severe a standard, and it may well be that his good name has suffered unduly in consequence. His true place in the history of science is defined by his discoveries; it is a sad reflection that the lustre of his fame has been dimmed rather than heightened by what has been styled the greatest of them all—Faraday.

But there has undoubtedly been injustice in the comparisons which have been made. What Davy was to Faraday, Faraday would have been the first to admit. Davy made himself what he was by the sheer force of his unaided genius; what Faraday became was in a large measure due to his connection with Davy, and the germs of his greatest works are to be traced to this association. This fact has been frankly acknowledged by Faraday. To the end of his days he regarded Davy as his true master, preserving to the last, in spite of his knowledge of the moral frailties of Davy's nature, the respect and even reverence which is to be seen in his early lecture notes and in his letters to his friend Abbot. Faraday was not easily roused to anger, but nothing so effectually moved him as any aspersion of Davy's character as a man of science, or any insinuation of ungenerous treatment of himself by Davy.—Dr. T. E. Thorpe.

DAVY'S FONDNESS FOR ANGLING

The love of angling amounted to a passion with Davy; and he told Ticknor that he thought if he were obliged to renounce either fishing or philosophy he should find the struggle of his choice pretty severe. Whenever he could escape from town he would hie him to some favorite stream and spend the day in the practice of his beloved art. He was known to have posted a couple of hundred miles for the sake of a day's fishing, and to have returned contented although he had never a rise. When confined to Albemarle Street [the Royal Institution], and chafing at his inability to get away, he would sometimes turn over the leaves of his fly-book and derive much consolation from the sight of his hackles and harles, his green-tails, duncuts, red spinners, and all the rest of the deadly paraphernalia associated in his mind with the memories of pleasant days and exciting combats. He greatly prided himself on his skill, and his friends were often secretly amused to notice his ill-concealed chagrin when a brother-angler outvied him in the day's catch or in the narration of some piscatorial triumph. They were amused, too, at the costume which he was wont to don on such occasions—his broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, lined with green and garnished with flies; his grey-green jacket, with a multitude of pockets for the various articles of his angling gear; his wading-boots and knee-caps—all made up an attire as original as it was picturesque. In these fishing expeditions he enjoyed some of the happiest hours of his life. At such times he threw off his cares and annoyances; he was

cheerful even to hilarity, and never was his conversation more sprightly or more entertaining.—DR. T. E. THORPE.

READERS' AND STUDENTS' NOTES

1. Sir Humphry Davy has very frequently been made the subject of popular biography; especially of popular biography intended for young people. A work of this sort is *"The Wonders of Science, or Young Humphry Davy, the Cornish Apothecary's Boy"* by Henry Mayhew (New York: Harper & Brothers, $1.25). Another popular account of Davy will be found in Sarah K. Bolton's *"Famous Men of Science,"* already mentioned.

2. Dr. T. E. Thorpe's *"Humphry Davy, Poet and Philosopher"* in *"The Century Science Series"* is the latest biography of Davy. It is a sympathetic and appreciative, and yet a just and impartial, account of the life of a great man who, notwithstanding his greatness, was not without his weaknesses. (New York: The Macmillan Co., $1.25.)

John James Audubon

The happy philosopher had been knighted a few days before his marriage. Not long afterward (October, 1813), in company with his wife, he made a prolonged tour in Europe. On this tour he took with him, as an assistant, Faraday, then a young man of twenty, thus giving rise to the saying that Faraday was the greatest of Davy's discoveries. It has also been said that this fortunate discovery was his last. But this latter statement is hardly true, though there is a lamentable measure of truth in it. Davy's fame was at its zenith at the time of his marriage. While on his tour in Europe he made some remarkable discoveries in the nature of fluorine. When he returned (in 1815), in response to the request of the coal owners of Britain, he made a number of investigations into the nature of the deadly fire-damp, and these led to his great practical invention of the safety lamp. In 1819, on the death of Sir Joseph Banks, he was elected president of the Royal Society, the highest scientific honor that it was possible for him to receive. But with this election Davy's work as a scientist practically terminated. The duties of his presidency engrossed his time and attention almost wholly. And besides it was not long before he fell into serious ill-health. It is said, too, that his married life, which at first was very happy, became in no long time a sad disappointment to him. "The finest nectars and ambrosias will all be spoilt by a few drops of bitter extract, and a bad temper has the same effect on life." These are his own sad words. In 1826, after seven years occupancy, he resigned his presidency; he was too ill to hold it longer. Once more he went to Europe, but his fast failing powers were beyond recuperation. On May 29, 1829, he died at Geneva, and there he is buried. His wife had rejoined him a few days before.

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY

SELECTED STUDIES AND REMINISCENCES

THE ROYAL INSTITUTION

The chemical laboratory of the Royal Institution, as the scene of Davy's greatest discoveries—discoveries which mark epochs in the development of natural knowledge—will forever be hallowed ground to the philosopher. The votaries of Hermes have raised far more stately temples; to-day they follow their pursuit in edifices which in architectural elegance and in equipment are palaces compared with the subterranean structure which lies behind the Corinthian façade in Albemarle street. But to the chemist this spot is what the Ka'ba at Mecca is to the follower of Mohammed, or what Iona was to Dr. Johnson; and, if we may venture to adopt the language of the English moralist, that student has little to be envied whose enthusiasm would not grow warmer, or whose devotion would not gain force, within the place made sacred by the genius and labors of Davy and Faraday.—T. E. Thorpe, LL. D., F. R. S., *in "Humphry Davy, Poet and Philosopher" in "The Century Science Series."*