

### CHAPTER III. 1851-1858.

Return to England - Fleeming at Fairbairn's - Experience in a Strike - Dr. Bell and Greek Architecture - The Gaskells - Fleeming at Greenwich - The Austins - Fleeming and the Austins - His Engagement - Fleeming and Sir W. Thomson.

IN 1851, the year of Aunt Anna's death, the family left Genoa and came to Manchester, where Fleeming was entered in Fairbairn's works as an apprentice. From the palaces and Alps, the Mole, the blue Mediterranean, the humming lanes and the bright theatres of Genoa, he fell - and he was sharply conscious of the fall - to the dim skies and the foul ways of Manchester. England he found on his return 'a horrid place,' and there is no doubt the family found it a dear one. The story of the Jenkin finances is not easy to follow. The family, I am told, did not practice frugality, only lamented that it should be needful; and Mrs. Jenkin, who was always complaining of 'those dreadful bills,' was 'always a good deal dressed.' But at this time of the return to England, things must have gone further. A holiday tour of a fortnight, Fleeming feared would be beyond what he could afford, and he only projected it 'to have a castle in the air.' And there were actual pinches. Fresh

from a warmer sun, he was obliged to go without a greatcoat, and learned on railway journeys to supply the place of one with wrappings of old newspaper.

From half-past eight till six, he must 'file and chip vigorously in a moleskin suit and infernally dirty.' The work was not new to him, for he had already passed some time in a Genoese shop; and to Fleeming no work was without interest. Whatever a man can do or know, he longed to know and do also. 'I never learned anything,' he wrote, 'not even standing on my head, but I found a use for it.' In the spare hours of his first telegraph voyage, to give an instance of his greed of knowledge, he meant 'to learn the whole art of navigation, every rope in the ship and how to handle her on any occasion'; and once when he was shown a young lady's holiday collection of seaweeds, he must cry out, 'It showed me my eyes had been idle.' Nor was his the case of the mere literary smatterer, content if he but learn the names of things. In him, to do and to do well, was even a dearer ambition than to know. Anything done well, any craft, despatch, or finish, delighted and inspired him. I remember him with a twopenny Japanese box of three drawers, so exactly fitted that, when one was driven home, the others started from their places; the whole spirit of Japan, he told me, was pictured in that box; that plain piece of carpentry was as much inspired by the spirit of perfection as the happiest drawing or the finest bronze; and he who could not enjoy it in the one was not fully able to enjoy it in the others. Thus, too, he found in

Leonardo's engineering and anatomical drawings a perpetual feast; and of the former he spoke even with emotion. Nothing indeed annoyed Fleeming more than the attempt to separate the fine arts from the arts of handicraft; any definition or theory that failed to bring these two together, according to him, had missed the point; and the essence of the pleasure received lay in seeing things well done. Other qualities must be added; he was the last to deny that; but this, of perfect craft, was at the bottom of all. And on the other hand, a nail ill-driven, a joint ill-fitted, a tracing clumsily done, anything to which a man had set his hand and not set it aptly, moved him to shame and anger. With such a character, he would feel but little drudgery at Fairbairn's. There would be something daily to be done, slovenliness to be avoided, and a higher mark of skill to be attained; he would chip and file, as he had practiced scales, impatient of his own imperfection, but resolute to learn.

And there was another spring of delight. For he was now moving daily among those strange creations of man's brain, to some so abhorrent, to him of an interest so inexhaustible: in which iron, water, and fire are made to serve as slaves, now with a tread more powerful than an elephant's, and now with a touch more precise and dainty than a pianist's. The taste for machinery was one that I could never share with him, and he had a certain bitter pity for my weakness. Once when I had proved, for the hundredth time, the depth of this defect, he looked at me askance. 'And the best of

the joke,' said he, 'is that he thinks himself quite a poet.' For to him the struggle of the engineer against brute forces and with inert allies, was nobly poetic. Habit never dulled in him the sense of the greatness of the aims and obstacles of his profession. Habit only sharpened his inventor's gusto in contrivance, in triumphant artifice, in the Odyssean subtleties, by which wires are taught to speak, and iron hands to weave, and the slender ship to brave and to outstrip the tempest. To the ignorant the great results alone are admirable; to the knowing, and to Fleeming in particular, rather the infinite device and sleight of hand that made them possible.

A notion was current at the time that, in such a shop as Fairbairn's, a pupil would never be popular unless he drank with the workmen and imitated them in speech and manner. Fleeming, who would do none of these things, they accepted as a friend and companion; and this was the subject of remark in Manchester, where some memory of it lingers till to-day. He thought it one of the advantages of his profession to be brought into a close relation with the working classes; and for the skilled artisan he had a great esteem, liking his company, his virtues, and his taste in some of the arts. But he knew the classes too well to regard them, like a platform speaker, in a lump. He drew, on the other hand, broad distinctions; and it was his profound sense of the difference between one working man and another that led him to devote so much time, in later days, to the furtherance of technical education. In

1852 he had occasion to see both men and masters at their worst, in the excitement of a strike; and very foolishly (after their custom) both would seem to have behaved. Beginning with a fair show of justice on either side, the masters stultified their cause by obstinate impolicy, and the men disgraced their order by acts of outrage. 'On Wednesday last,' writes Fleeming, 'about three thousand banded round Fairbairn's door at 6 o'clock: men, women, and children, factory boys and girls, the lowest of the low in a very low place. Orders came that no one was to leave the works; but the men inside (Knobsticks, as they are called) were precious hungry and thought they would venture. Two of my companions and myself went out with the very first, and had the full benefit of every possible groan and bad language.' But the police cleared a lane through the crowd, the pupils were suffered to escape unhurt, and only the Knobsticks followed home and kicked with clogs; so that Fleeming enjoyed, as we may say, for nothing, that fine thrill of expectant valour with which he had sallied forth into the mob. 'I never before felt myself so decidedly somebody, instead of nobody,' he wrote.

Outside as inside the works, he was 'pretty merry and well to do,' zealous in study, welcome to many friends, unwearied in loving-kindness to his mother. For some time he spent three nights a week with Dr. Bell, 'working away at certain geometrical methods of getting the Greek architectural proportions': a business after Fleeming's heart, for he was never so pleased as when he could

marry his two devotions, art and science. This was besides, in all likelihood, the beginning of that love and intimate appreciation of things Greek, from the least to the greatest, from the AGAMEMMON (perhaps his favourite tragedy) down to the details of Grecian tailoring, which he used to express in his familiar phrase: 'The Greeks were the boys.' Dr. Bell - the son of George Joseph, the nephew of Sir Charles, and though he made less use of it than some, a sharer in the distinguished talents of his race - had hit upon the singular fact that certain geometrical intersections gave the proportions of the Doric order. Fleeming, under Dr. Bell's direction, applied the same method to the other orders, and again found the proportions accurately given. Numbers of diagrams were prepared; but the discovery was never given to the world, perhaps because of the dissensions that arose between the authors. For Dr. Bell believed that 'these intersections were in some way connected with, or symbolical of, the antagonistic forces at work'; but his pupil and helper, with characteristic trenchancy, brushed aside this mysticism, and interpreted the discovery as 'a geometrical method of dividing the spaces or (as might be said) of setting out the work, purely empirical and in no way connected with any laws of either force or beauty.' 'Many a hard and pleasant fight we had over it,' wrote Jenkin, in later years; 'and impertinent as it may seem, the pupil is still unconvinced by the arguments of the master.' I do not know about the antagonistic forces in the Doric order; in Fleeming they were plain enough; and the Bobadil of these affairs with Dr. Bell was still, like the corrector of Italian

consuls, 'a great child in everything but information.' At the house of Colonel Cleather, he might be seen with a family of children; and with these, there was no word of the Greek orders; with these Fleeming was only an uproarious boy and an entertaining draughtsman; so that his coming was the signal for the young people to troop into the playroom, where sometimes the roof rang with romping, and sometimes they gathered quietly about him as he amused them with his pencil.

In another Manchester family, whose name will be familiar to my readers - that of the Gaskells, Fleeming was a frequent visitor. To Mrs. Gaskell, he would often bring his new ideas, a process that many of his later friends will understand and, in their own cases, remember. With the girls, he had 'constant fierce wrangles,' forcing them to reason out their thoughts and to explain their prepossessions; and I hear from Miss Gaskell that they used to wonder how he could throw all the ardour of his character into the smallest matters, and to admire his unselfish devotion to his parents. Of one of these wrangles, I have found a record most characteristic of the man. Fleeming had been laying down his doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that it is quite right 'to boast of your six men-servants to a burglar or to steal a knife to prevent a murder'; and the Miss Gaskells, with girlish loyalty to what is current, had rejected the heresy with indignation. From such passages-at-arms, many retire mortified and ruffled; but Fleeming had no sooner left the house than he fell

into delighted admiration of the spirit of his adversaries. From that it was but a step to ask himself 'what truth was sticking in their heads'; for even the falsest form of words (in Fleeming's life-long opinion) reposed upon some truth, just as he could 'not even allow that people admire ugly things, they admire what is pretty in the ugly thing.' And before he sat down to write his letter, he thought he had hit upon the explanation. 'I fancy the true idea,' he wrote, 'is that you must never do yourself or anyone else a moral injury - make any man a thief or a liar - for any end'; quite a different thing, as he would have loved to point out, from never stealing or lying. But this perfervid disputant was not always out of key with his audience. One whom he met in the same house announced that she would never again be happy. 'What does that signify?' cried Fleeming. 'We are not here to be happy, but to be good.' And the words (as his hearer writes to me) became to her a sort of motto during life.

From Fairbairn's and Manchester, Fleeming passed to a railway survey in Switzerland, and thence again to Mr. Penn's at Greenwich, where he was engaged as draughtsman. There in 1856, we find him in 'a terribly busy state, finishing up engines for innumerable gun-boats and steam frigates for the ensuing campaign.' From half-past eight in the morning till nine or ten at night, he worked in a crowded office among uncongenial comrades, 'saluted by chaff, generally low personal and not witty,' pelted with oranges and apples, regaled with dirty stories, and seeking to suit himself



with his surroundings or (as he writes it) trying to be as little like himself as possible. His lodgings were hard by, 'across a dirty green and through some half-built streets of two-storied houses'; he had Carlyle and the poets, engineering and mathematics, to study by himself in such spare time as remained to him; and there were several ladies, young and not so young, with whom he liked to correspond. But not all of these could compensate for the absence of that mother, who had made herself so large a figure in his life, for sorry surroundings, unsuitable society, and work that leaned to the mechanical. 'Sunday,' says he, 'I generally visit some friends in town and seem to swim in clearer water, but the dirty green seems all the dirtier when I get back. Luckily I am fond of my profession, or I could not stand this life.' It is a question in my mind, if he could have long continued to stand it without loss. 'We are not here to be happy, but to be good,' quoth the young philosopher; but no man had a keener appetite for happiness than Fleeming Jenkin. There is a time of life besides when apart from circumstances, few men are agreeable to their neighbours and still fewer to themselves; and it was at this stage that Fleeming had arrived, later than common and even worse provided. The letter from which I have quoted is the last of his correspondence with Frank Scott, and his last confidential letter to one of his own sex. 'If you consider it rightly,' he wrote long after, 'you will find the want of correspondence no such strange want in men's friendships. There is, believe me, something noble in the metal which does not rust though not burnished by daily

use.' It is well said; but the last letter to Frank Scott is scarcely of a noble metal. It is plain the writer has outgrown his old self, yet not made acquaintance with the new. This letter from a busy youth of three and twenty, breathes of seventeen: the sickening alternations of conceit and shame, the expense of hope IN VACUO, the lack of friends, the longing after love; the whole world of egoism under which youth stands groaning, a voluntary Atlas.

With Fleeming this disease was never seemingly severe. The very day before this (to me) distasteful letter, he had written to Miss Bell of Manchester in a sweeter strain; I do not quote the one, I quote the other; fair things are the best. 'I keep my own little lodgings,' he writes, 'but come up every night to see mamma' (who was then on a visit to London) 'if not kept too late at the works; and have singing lessons once more, and sing "DONNE L'AMORE E SCALTRO PARGO-LETTO"; and think and talk about you; and listen to mamma's projects DE Stowting. Everything turns to gold at her touch, she's a fairy and no mistake. We go on talking till I have a picture in my head, and can hardly believe at the end that the original is Stowting. Even you don't know half how good mamma is; in other things too, which I must not mention. She teaches me how it is not necessary to be very rich to do much good. I begin to understand that mamma would find useful occupation and create beauty at the bottom of a volcano. She has little weaknesses, but is a real generous-hearted woman, which I suppose is the finest thing in the world.' Though neither mother nor son could be called

beautiful, they make a pretty picture; the ugly, generous, ardent woman weaving rainbow illusions; the ugly, clear-sighted, loving son sitting at her side in one of his rare hours of pleasure, half-beguiled, half-amused, wholly admiring, as he listens. But as he goes home, and the fancy pictures fade, and Stowting is once more burthened with debt, and the noisy companions and the long hours of drudgery once more approach, no wonder if the dirty green seems all the dirtier or if Atlas must resume his load.

But in healthy natures, this time of moral teething passes quickly of itself, and is easily alleviated by fresh interests; and already, in the letter to Frank Scott, there are two words of hope: his friends in London, his love for his profession. The last might have saved him; for he was ere long to pass into a new sphere, where all his faculties were to be tried and exercised, and his life to be filled with interest and effort. But it was not left to engineering: another and more influential aim was to be set before him. He must, in any case, have fallen in love; in any case, his love would have ruled his life; and the question of choice was, for the descendant of two such families, a thing of paramount importance. Innocent of the world, fiery, generous, devoted as he was, the son of the wild Jacksons and the facile Jenkins might have been led far astray. By one of those partialities that fill men at once with gratitude and wonder, his choosing was directed well. Or are we to say that by a man's choice in marriage, as by a crucial merit, he deserves his fortune? One thing at least reason may

discern: that a man but partly chooses, he also partly forms, his help-mate; and he must in part deserve her, or the treasure is but won for a moment to be lost. Fleeming chanced if you will (and indeed all these opportunities are as 'random as blind man's buff) upon a wife who was worthy of him; but he had the wit to know it, the courage to wait and labour for his prize, and the tenderness and chivalry that are required to keep such prizes precious. Upon this point he has himself written well, as usual with fervent optimism, but as usual (in his own phrase) with a truth sticking in his head.

'Love,' he wrote, 'is not an intuition of the person most suitable to us, most required by us; of the person with whom life flowers and bears fruit. If this were so, the chances of our meeting that person would be small indeed; our intuition would often fail; the blindness of love would then be fatal as it is proverbial. No, love works differently, and in its blindness lies its strength. Man and woman, each strongly desires to be loved, each opens to the other that heart of ideal aspirations which they have often hid till then; each, thus knowing the ideal of the other, tries to fulfil that ideal, each partially succeeds. The greater the love, the greater the success; the nobler the idea of each, the more durable, the more beautiful the effect. Meanwhile the blindness of each to the other's defects enables the transformation to proceed [unobserved,] so that when the veil is withdrawn (if it ever is, and this I do not know) neither knows that any change has occurred

in the person whom they loved. Do not fear, therefore. I do not tell you that your friend will not change, but as I am sure that her choice cannot be that of a man with a base ideal, so I am sure the change will be a safe and a good one. Do not fear that anything you love will vanish, he must love it too.'

Among other introductions in London, Fleeming had presented a letter from Mrs. Gaskell to the Alfred Austins. This was a family certain to interest a thoughtful young man. Alfred, the youngest and least known of the Austins, had been a beautiful golden-haired child, petted and kept out of the way of both sport and study by a partial mother. Bred an attorney, he had (like both his brothers) changed his way of life, and was called to the bar when past thirty. A Commission of Enquiry into the state of the poor in Dorsetshire gave him an opportunity of proving his true talents; and he was appointed a Poor Law Inspector, first at Worcester, next at Manchester, where he had to deal with the potato famine and the Irish immigration of the 'forties, and finally in London, where he again distinguished himself during an epidemic of cholera. He was then advanced to the Permanent Secretaryship of Her Majesty's Office of Works and Public Buildings; a position which he filled with perfect competence, but with an extreme of modesty; and on his retirement, in 1868, he was made a Companion of the Bath. While apprentice to a Norwich attorney, Alfred Austin was a frequent visitor in the house of Mr. Barron, a rallying place in those days of intellectual society. Edward Barron, the son of a rich saddler

or leather merchant in the Borough, was a man typical of the time. When he was a child, he had once been patted on the head in his father's shop by no less a man than Samuel Johnson, as the Doctor went round the Borough canvassing for Mr. Thrale; and the child was true to this early consecration. 'A life of lettered ease spent in provincial retirement,' it is thus that the biographer of that remarkable man, William Taylor, announces his subject; and the phrase is equally descriptive of the life of Edward Barron. The pair were close friends, 'W. T. and a pipe render everything agreeable,' writes Barron in his diary in 1823; and in 1833, after Barron had moved to London and Taylor had tasted the first public failure of his powers, the latter wrote: 'To my ever dearest Mr. Barron say, if you please, that I miss him more than I regret him - that I acquiesce in his retirement from Norwich, because I could ill brook his observation of my increasing debility of mind.' This chosen companion of William Taylor must himself have been no ordinary man; and he was the friend besides of Borrow, whom I find him helping in his Latin. But he had no desire for popular distinction, lived privately, married a daughter of Dr. Enfield of Enfield's SPEAKER, and devoted his time to the education of his family, in a deliberate and scholarly fashion, and with certain traits of stoicism, that would surprise a modern. From these children we must single out his youngest daughter, Eliza, who learned under his care to be a sound Latin, an elegant Grecian, and to suppress emotion without outward sign after the manner of the Godwin school. This was the more notable, as the girl really

derived from the Enfields; whose high-flown romantic temper, I wish I could find space to illustrate. She was but seven years old, when Alfred Austin remarked and fell in love with her; and the union thus early prepared was singularly full. Where the husband and wife differed, and they did so on momentous subjects, they differed with perfect temper and content; and in the conduct of life, and in depth and durability of love, they were at one. Each full of high spirits, each practised something of the same repression: no sharp word was uttered in their house. The same point of honour ruled them, a guest was sacred and stood within the pale from criticism. It was a house, besides, of unusual intellectual tension. Mrs. Austin remembered, in the early days of the marriage, the three brothers, John, Charles, and Alfred, marching to and fro, each with his hands behind his back, and 'reasoning high' till morning; and how, like Dr. Johnson, they would cheer their speculations with as many as fifteen cups of tea. And though, before the date of Fleeming's visit, the brothers were separated, Charles long ago retired from the world at Brandeston, and John already near his end in the 'rambling old house' at Weybridge, Alfred Austin and his wife were still a centre of much intellectual society, and still, as indeed they remained until the last, youthfully alert in mind. There was but one child of the marriage, Anne, and she was herself something new for the eyes of the young visitor; brought up, as she had been, like her mother before her, to the standard of a man's acquirements. Only one art had she been denied, she must not learn the violin - the thought

was too monstrous even for the Austins; and indeed it would seem as if that tide of reform which we may date from the days of Mary Wollstonecraft had in some degree even receded; for though Miss Austin was suffered to learn Greek, the accomplishment was kept secret like a piece of guilt. But whether this stealth was caused by a backward movement in public thought since the time of Edward Barron, or by the change from enlightened Norwich to barbarian London, I have no means of judging.

When Fleeming presented his letter, he fell in love at first sight with Mrs. Austin and the life, and atmosphere of the house. There was in the society of the Austins, outward, stoical conformers to the world, something gravely suggestive of essential eccentricity, something unpretentiously breathing of intellectual effort, that could not fail to hit the fancy of this hot-brained boy. The unbroken enamel of courtesy, the self-restraint, the dignified kindness of these married folk, had besides a particular attraction for their visitor. He could not but compare what he saw, with what he knew of his mother and himself. Whatever virtues Fleeming possessed, he could never count on being civil; whatever brave, true-hearted qualities he was able to admire in Mrs. Jenkin, mildness of demeanour was not one of them. And here he found persons who were the equals of his mother and himself in intellect and width of interest, and the equals of his father in mild urbanity of disposition. Show Fleeming an active virtue, and he always loved it. He went away from that house struck through with admiration,



and vowing to himself that his own married life should be upon that pattern, his wife (whoever she might be) like Eliza Barron, himself such another husband as Alfred Austin. What is more strange, he not only brought away, but left behind him, golden opinions. He must have been - he was, I am told - a trying lad; but there shone out of him such a light of innocent candour, enthusiasm, intelligence, and appreciation, that to persons already some way forward in years, and thus able to enjoy indulgently the perennial comedy of youth, the sight of him was delightful. By a pleasant coincidence, there was one person in the house whom he did not appreciate and who did not appreciate him: Anne Austin, his future wife. His boyish vanity ruffled her; his appearance, never impressive, was then, by reason of obtrusive boyishness, still less so; she found occasion to put him in the wrong by correcting a false quantity; and when Mr. Austin, after doing his visitor the almost unheard-of honour of accompanying him to the door, announced 'That was what young men were like in my time' - she could only reply, looking on her handsome father, 'I thought they had been better looking.'

This first visit to the Austins took place in 1855; and it seems it was some time before Fleeming began to know his mind; and yet longer ere he ventured to show it. The corrected quantity, to those who knew him well, will seem to have played its part; he was the man always to reflect over a correction and to admire the castigator. And fall in love he did; not hurriedly but step by

step, not blindly but with critical discrimination; not in the fashion of Romeo, but before he was done, with all Romeo's ardour and more than Romeo's faith. The high favour to which he presently rose in the esteem of Alfred Austin and his wife, might well give him ambitious notions; but the poverty of the present and the obscurity of the future were there to give him pause; and when his aspirations began to settle round Miss Austin, he tasted, perhaps for the only time in his life, the pangs of diffidence. There was indeed opening before him a wide door of hope. He had changed into the service of Messrs. Liddell & Gordon; these gentlemen had begun to dabble in the new field of marine telegraphy; and Fleeming was already face to face with his life's work. That impotent sense of his own value, as of a ship aground, which makes one of the agonies of youth, began to fall from him. New problems which he was endowed to solve, vistas of new enquiry which he was fitted to explore, opened before him continually. His gifts had found their avenue and goal. And with this pleasure of effective exercise, there must have sprung up at once the hope of what is called by the world success. But from these low beginnings, it was a far look upward to Miss Austin: the favour of the loved one seems always more than problematical to any lover; the consent of parents must be always more than doubtful to a young man with a small salary and no capital except capacity and hope. But Fleeming was not the lad to lose any good thing for the lack of trial; and at length, in the autumn of 1857, this boyish-sized, boyish-mannered, and superlatively ill-dressed young engineer, entered the house of the

Austins, with such sinkings as we may fancy, and asked leave to pay his addresses to the daughter. Mrs. Austin already loved him like a son, she was but too glad to give him her consent; Mr. Austin reserved the right to inquire into his character; from neither was there a word about his prospects, by neither was his income mentioned. 'Are these people,' he wrote, struck with wonder at this dignified disinterestedness, 'are these people the same as other people?' It was not till he was armed with this permission, that Miss Austin even suspected the nature of his hopes: so strong, in this unmannerly boy, was the principle of true courtesy; so powerful, in this impetuous nature, the springs of self-repression. And yet a boy he was; a boy in heart and mind; and it was with a boy's chivalry and frankness that he won his wife. His conduct was a model of honour, hardly of tact; to conceal love from the loved one, to court her parents, to be silent and discreet till these are won, and then without preparation to approach the lady - these are not arts that I would recommend for imitation. They lead to final refusal. Nothing saved Fleeming from that fate, but one circumstance that cannot be counted upon - the hearty favour of the mother, and one gift that is inimitable and that never failed him throughout life, the gift of a nature essentially noble and outspoken. A happy and high-minded anger flashed through his despair: it won for him his wife.

Nearly two years passed before it was possible to marry: two years of activity, now in London; now at Birkenhead, fitting out ships,

inventing new machinery for new purposes, and dipping into electrical experiment; now in the ELBA on his first telegraph cruise between Sardinia and Algiers: a busy and delightful period of bounding ardour, incessant toil, growing hope and fresh interests, with behind and through all, the image of his beloved. A few extracts from his correspondence with his betrothed will give the note of these truly joyous years. 'My profession gives me all the excitement and interest I ever hope for, but the sorry jade is obviously jealous of you.' - "'Poor Fleeming," in spite of wet, cold and wind, clambering over moist, tarry slips, wandering among pools of slush in waste places inhabited by wandering locomotives, grows visibly stronger, has dismissed his office cough and cured his toothache.' - 'The whole of the paying out and lifting machinery must be designed and ordered in two or three days, and I am half crazy with work. I like it though: it's like a good ball, the excitement carries you through.' - 'I was running to and from the ships and warehouse through fierce gusts of rain and wind till near eleven, and you cannot think what a pleasure it was to be blown about and think of you in your pretty dress.' - 'I am at the works till ten and sometimes till eleven. But I have a nice office to sit in, with a fire to myself, and bright brass scientific instruments all round me, and books to read, and experiments to make, and enjoy myself amazingly. I find the study of electricity so entertaining that I am apt to neglect my other work.' And for a last taste, 'Yesterday I had some charming electrical experiments. What shall I compare them to - a new song? a Greek play?'

It was at this time besides that he made the acquaintance of Professor, now Sir William, Thomson. To describe the part played by these two in each other's lives would lie out of my way. They worked together on the Committee on Electrical Standards; they served together at the laying down or the repair of many deep-sea cables; and Sir William was regarded by Fleeming, not only with the 'worship' (the word is his own) due to great scientific gifts, but with an ardour of personal friendship not frequently excelled. To their association, Fleeming brought the valuable element of a practical understanding; but he never thought or spoke of himself where Sir William was in question; and I recall quite in his last days, a singular instance of this modest loyalty to one whom he admired and loved. He drew up a paper, in a quite personal interest, of his own services; yet even here he must step out of his way, he must add, where it had no claim to be added, his opinion that, in their joint work, the contributions of Sir William had been always greatly the most valuable. Again, I shall not readily forget with what emotion he once told me an incident of their associated travels. On one of the mountain ledges of Madeira, Fleeming's pony bolted between Sir William and the precipice above; by strange good fortune and thanks to the steadiness of Sir William's horse, no harm was done; but for the moment, Fleeming saw his friend hurled into the sea, and almost by his own act: it was a memory that haunted him.