considerably, and indicate an oceanic circulation. Further dredging expeditions at greater and greater depths fol­lowed. The remarkable results gained for hydrography as well as zoology, in association with the practical needs of ocean telegraphy, soon led to the granting of H.M.S. “ Challenger ” for a circumnavigating expedition, and Thomson sailed at the end of 1872 as director of the scientific staff, the cruise lasting three years and a half. On his return he received many academic honours, and was knighted. In 1877 he published two volumes of a preliminary account of the results of the voyage, mean­while carrying on his administrative labours in connexion with the disposition of the special collections and publi­cation of the monographs of these. His health, never robust, was meanwhile giving way; from 1879 he ceased to perform the duties of his chair, and he died in 1882.

See obituary notice in Proc. Roy. Soc. Edin., 1883, also Thom­son’s Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger, London, 1877, and Thom­son and Murray, Reports of the Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger, Edin­burgh, 1885.

THOMSON, James (1700-1748), author of *The Seasons,* was a native of the Scottish Border country, his father being successively minister of the parishes of Ednam and Southdean, in Roxburghshire. He was born at Ednam on September 11, 1700, and was reared at a dis­tance from the social influences and literary fashions that helped to form and fix the manner of the “ classical ” school, the monotony of which he was the first to break. Amidst the bare breezy hills and glens of a Border parish, his youth was safe against the ascendency of the taste established in the metropolis. Jedburgh school and Edinburgh university gave him his book learning of the ordinary type; and he was fortunate enough to have neighbours of extraordinary accomplishment, who opened his eyes to the poetic side of nature, and encouraged him in verse-making. The teacher from whom he learnt most was a Mr Riccalton, or Riccaulton, a graduate of Edin­burgh, who had taken to farming, but was afterwards persuaded to enter the church, and made some contribu­tions to theological literature. This scholarly enthusiast taught Latin to the boys of Jedburgh in an aisle of the church, and encouraged Thomson in his poetical turn by example as well as precept. We have the poet’s own acknowledgment that the first hint of the *Seasons* came from a striking dramatic poem by Riccaulton entitled *A Winter's Day.* As a schoolboy Thomson wrote verses, and at the university he continued the practice, but his early efforts were not particularly promising. He was intended for the ministry, and was for five years a student of divinity; but in 1725 he determined to follow his friend and classfellow David Mallet to London, and seek his fortune there. Through the influence of Lady Grizel Baillie, herself a song-writer, he obtained a tutorship in the family of Lord Binning ; but the plain-looking and plain-mannered poet had not the adroitness of his friend Mallet, and he gave up the post after a few months. It was while he lingered in the neighbourhood of Barnet, without employment, without money, with few friends, saddened by the loss of his mother (his father had died when he was eighteen), that Thomson conceived the idea of the first of his poems on the Seasons, *Winter.* The lines— Welcome, kindred glooms,

Congenial horrors, hail !

came from the heart ; they expressed his own forlorn mood on the approach of the winter of 1725. *Winter* appeared in the spring of 1726. A publisher, Millan,—not Millar, who afterwards published for him,—gave him three guineas for the poem. The tradition is that it attracted no notice for a month, but that, at the end of that time, a literary clergyman, Whatley, chanced to take it up from a bookseller’s counter, and at once rushed off to the coffee­houses to proclaim the discovery of a new poet. The town received the discovery with acclamation ; in another month a second edition was called for. No time could have been better suited for the appreciation of Thomson’s striking qualities ; they were so entirely unlike what the public had for many years been accustomed to. The fresh treatment of a simple theme, the warm poetical colouring of commonplace incidents, the freedom and irregularity of the plan, the boldness of the descriptions, the manly and sincere sentiment, the rough vigour of the verse, took by surprise a generation accustomed to witty satire and burlesque, refined diction, translations from the classics, themes valued in proportion to their remoteness from vulgar life. Thomson at once became famous, and, his naturally easy temper roused to full exertion, vigorously followed up his success with *Summer* and an *Ode to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton. Spring* was completed and published in 1728. A longer interval elapsed before the appearance of *Autumn* ; it was published in 1730, and followed presently by a handsome edition of the whole four *Seasons.* Meantime, drawn into the ardent political strife of the time, he had produced, in 1729, his *Britannia,* and early in 1730 had made his first attempt as a dramatist with *Sophonisba.* From this time there was a manifest slackening either in his will or in his power to produce. He was appointed travelling tutor to the son of Sir Charles Talbot, travelled with his pupil on the Continent, and in 1733 obtained a small sinecure in the Court of Chancery. It may have been this removal of the spur of necessity that made him take longer over his poems. But it is a fair theory that the rigid taste of the time for finish, which he had unconsciously defied with triumphant results, began to make good an ascendency over him, and that he wrote less because he was cramped by fear of the critics. None of the other *Seasons* have the same large and careless freedom as *Winter ; Autumn* especially, the last of them, is much more laboured, and his revisions and enlargements in successive editions show an anxious ambition after the finish of the classical school. How­ever this may be, he hesitated long over his next poem, *Liberty·,* the first part was published in 1734 and the conclusion in 1736. He intended it to be his masterpiece, but with all his care and pains it has fallen into deserved oblivion. In 1737 he lost his sinecure by the death of his patron, but was recompensed by a pension from the prince. Poverty, rather than natural fitness or inclination, drove him again to dramatic composition. *Agamemnon* was produced in 1738, with indifferent success. Next year a play, written in the interest of the prince and the oppo­sition, was interdicted by the lord chamberlain. The masque of *Alfred,* written by Thomson in conjunction with Mallet, and containing the song *Rule Britannia,* was produced in 1740, *Tancred and Sigismunda* in 1745. A year before this last event the “ poetical posture ” of the poet’s income was improved by his appointment to the sinecure office of surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands. The *Castle of Indolence* was his last work. It was not published till the year of his death (1748), but he had been long engaged upon it. The poem is full of character and humour, with here and there passages of elaborately rich description ; it is fuller than any other of the person­ality of the poet, of the good-nature, generosity, and solid wisdom which gained him the affection of so many friends ; but still it is in the *Seasons,* and especially in the first of them, that Thomson is seen at his best and strongest.

Till the advent of Scott and Byron, Thomson was the most widely popular poet in our language ; and as late as the middle of this century a sumptuous edition, illustrated by the Etching Club, was printed three times within ten years (1842-52). The popular verdict on Thomson has been unanimously justified by critics. (W. Μ.)