

"ANNIE LAURIE'S" STORY.

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM DOUGLAS TO A REAL ANNIE.

A Story of a Stern Parent and an Ardent Lover—The Lives of the Lovers and How the Famous Song Came to be Written And Given to the Public.

MONIAVIE, Scotland, Sept. 21.—Two of the most fadless songs of human affection were written by Scotchmen in the eighteenth century. These are: "John Anderson, My Jo, John," and "Annie Laurie." Both were written near the banks of the songful Nith in Dumfriesshire. Both were written by almost strangers to their temporary environment. Both were written as true poems of joy out of almost inexpressible human happiness. And both gained their deathlessness from their directness, brevity and simplicity, which ever most powerfully appeal to the universal human heart.

Robert Burns wrote "John Anderson, my jo, John," from a hint he received out of the old doggerel rhyme upon one John Anderson, the town piper of ancient Kelso, preserved in Bishop Percy's old manuscript of about 1560. The first two lines of the rhyme were:

"John Anderson, my jo, John, cum in as ye gae by,
And ye shall see a sheep's head baken in a pie,"
but its matchless picture and lesson of changeless connubial affection and loyalty was the legitimate outgrowth of his own noble and contented life with "bonnie Jean" on the Ellisland farm, shortly after Burns' removal from Ayrshire, beside the river Nith, about eight miles above the city of Dumfries. The few years passed by the hard and his family here, were years of unalloyed happiness and content; and this poem, written in 1789, is the clearest, sweetest note to reach us out of the brief Eden of that idyllic time.

"Annie Laurie" was written a more than half a century earlier, in Maxwelltown, in Nithsdale, by William Douglas, to a real flesh and blood Annie Laurie, on the occasion of his departure from Maxwelltown, after a period of stealthy trysting and wooing, which left the Annie Laurie of the song his betrothed. This William Douglas, who never wrote other immortal lines, was a native of Finland, a wild little district of the parish of Carpsphair, in the northern part of the adjoining shire, or stewartry, of Kirkcudbright. There is little known of his people. However, through his native talents he became cadet to the noble Queensbury family, and their patronage and support gained for him the position and associations of a gentleman of rank. At an Edinburgh ball he met and became enamored with Annie Laurie, daughter of Sir Robert Laurie, baronet, of Maxwelltown. She was born at the old manor house of the latter place in 1682. Sir Robert, not fancying the prospects of young Douglas as a dependent of the Queensbury family, and noticing that the love affair between him and Annie was becoming serious, suddenly left Edinburgh and returned with his family to Maxwelltown in Nithsdale, hoping thus to separate the lovers and end an unfortunate attachment.

Had everything gone to the liking of the baronet, the world would have missed the sweet old song. Douglas shortly learned of the whereabouts of his innamorita and promptly followed. He remained secretly at Maxwelltown for months, and the love-making went on famously betimes among the glens, braes, woods and shadowy ruins with which the locality abounds. Douglas possessed Jacobite affiliation, and rumors suddenly coming from the North of an impending Stuart uprising, he hastened to Edinburgh to be near the scene of action. But before quitting the side of his Nithsdale love, he secured "her promise true." In the elation of joy upon this achievement he wrote, and left with his betrothed the immortal lines, as imperishable as any that Robert Burns ever left to Scotland and the world.

But, save in reminiscence, it was not to happen that "her promise true" he forgot would be; and William Douglas declined to "lie down and die" on account of Annie Laurie or any other Scottish lady fair. Douglas' adherence to the Stuart cause brought him under the ban of the authorities, and he was soon compelled to escape to France, where he remained in exile for a few years, until he could secure, through the powerful Queensbury family, his pardon from the government. There is no proof that either "jilted" the other. Perhaps Annie Laurie was as canny as her father, Sir Robert, who was a staunch Jacobite hater. Perhaps Douglas found interesting temporary attachments in Paris. Perhaps each unconsciously drifted away from the other through the deadly political and religious rancor of the time. It is doubtful that Annie Laurie ever received another missive from her impassioned poet lover after the one containing the ballad, which must ever preserve the memory of both. And it is certain that the pair never again met after the sadly blissful parting which gave birth to this sweetest and tenderest of songs. It is said that it was first given to the late Duke of Buccleugh, who slightly rearranged the words and the music, and who secured their publication for the benefit of some charity in behalf of widows and orphans of the Crimean war; but there is no substantial proof that the words and the tune are not now precisely as they came from the soul and the pen of the ardent Jacobite lover.

The portraits of Annie Laurie, preserved at Craigharroch and Mansfield, seats of her descendants, show her to be a woman of slender physique, with a peculiarly slight and willowy figure. Upon this was set a head whose profile is as markedly classic as ever was shown upon ancient carving or modern coin. The neck was long, with that graceful swelling from breast to throat so loved of the artists; the chin was almost

sharp though roundly pointed; the lips though closed, were beautifully rounded, full and widely parted at their edges; the nose, and the archings from its bridge, strong, full, and as exquisitely moulded as the most refined Grecian type; the forehead high, wide and straight from the nose-tip; and the eyes large, full and tender; while this remarkable face and head were crowned by a mass of wavy, golden-brown hair. With all her impressive beauty she seems to have been a most commonplace personage, and while capable of awakening sudden and mighty flames in the breasts of ordinary Scottish folk as well as poets, to have been herself devoid of any of those mental or spiritual qualities capable of elevating her character to the realm of romance or heroism. She is known to have placidly enjoyed, as many young women now do before entering matrimony, a very great number of love affairs; all of which seem to have been turgid and rampant on the part of her male admirers, and received and benignly tolerated on her own, her "promise true" evidently having been rather widely distributed in southwestern Scotland; until warned by advancing years she became the wife of a man with no more poetry in him than a kail-yard wall, but with broad acres and plenty of "siller," Alexander Fergusson, laird of Craigharroch, Glencairn parish, Dumfriesshire.

The whole region roundabout the scene of this romantic episode between Annie Laurie and Douglas and of the latter's poem is exquisitely beautiful and is wondrously rife with poetic and historic interest. Much of its poetic glamor is of course due to the personality and pen of Burns. Every object you look upon from Dumfries, Craigharroch has been given almost individuality, life, and certainly undying interest by his personal association or the magic of his muse. From the ancient Observatory in the Maxwelltown opposite Dumfries, which must be kept distinct in the mind from Annie Laurie's village birthplace of Maxwelltown, a few miles distant, one can see and feel the tenderness of complete identification. The eye ranges to the east over and beyond fair Annandale across Kirkcudbrightshire, to the west, to the noble hills skirting Ayrshire; to the north, up dreampand Nithsdale to the far, dim turrets of Drumlanrig Castle, and to the south to the vast expanse of Solway Firth, where to the right of Nithmouth, looms gray-browed Criffel; while to its left is caught a gleam of the sands at Bow Well, at whose waters Burns too late struggled to save his life.

There, too, in Bank street in the "Wee Vennel," in whose upper three little rooms the bard and his little family lived when Burns was driven from the Ellisland farm by ruinous crops to the more ruinous life of exile; the old "Globe Tavern," just as it stood in Burns' time, in which, unhappy as is the fact for contemplation, one seems now almost to hear his thrilling voice, mingled with the laughter of Sybil, Maxwell, landlady Hyslop and his wife Meg, and their siren bairn, "Annie of the golden locks," the little close behind the "howl" or tavern, where poor Burns, brain-beclouded and bewildered that bitter January night in 1796, upon the straw and refuse, just at the edge of Shakespeare street, and insensible until the morn, received the chill of death that never left him, though he lingered conscious of his fate, until the 21st of July following; and there just back of this sad spot on Burns street, in the poet's time, Mill street, in the veritable cottage where he lived and died. Every square yard of Dumfries town is aglow with some touching reminder of Burns.

Pilgrimage from Dumfries a distance of but twelve miles to Craigharroch, the home of Annie Laurie from the time of her marriage to Alexander Fergusson in 1709, until her death in 1761, at the age of 72 years, you cross the "new Brig" to the west, and are at once among the braes of the Dumfries Maxwelltown.

If you proceeded five miles further on this highway you would reach Ellisland, on the west bank of the Nith, for many years the farm-home of Burns, but turning to the left you enter a lovely region, and in half an hour's walk come to Irongray Church beside Cairn water. Here you will tarry for a little, for within its grass-grown church-yard you will find the grave of "Jeanie Deans," immortalized in "Heart of Midlothian," and the inscription on the table tombstone was written by Scott himself. It is now but a short and sunny distance to the real Maxwelltown of Douglas' verse, to Moniaivie and Craigharroch.

Midway between Dunscore and Moniaivie is still more ancient Glencairn, for more than a thousand years site of the parish church. It was at Glencairn church that Annie Laurie was baptized. The entire region is one of the most beautiful in Scotland, and full of relics of feudal wealth and power. An hundred hills, many crowned by the still noble ruins of massive square keeps, are in view; scores of misty, euphonic dales and glens greet the eye; and well-kept farms and dreamful olden hamlets are interspersed with splendid seats of lairds and country gentry. It was in such a spot, whose countless verdure-covered "braes" might well prompt poetic fervor were not the inspiration of love, that Douglas wooed and won and lost, and that Annie Laurie chose to contentedly remain, the honored wife of a country gentleman, rather than share the fortunes of a poet's and a political adventurer's doubtful career.

The old manor house of Maxwelltown is gone, but many relics of the heroine of the song are religiously preserved in the neighborhood. Craigharroch, her home during married life and widowhood, for "she survived her husband, Alexander Fergusson, and became the lady bountiful of Nithsdale," is a noble mansion upon the Fergusson estates, but a short distance from her birthplace, now owned by Capt. R. Cutlar Fergusson, great great grandson of Annie Laurie. As Mrs. Fergusson, she had entire supervision of the construction of the Craigharroch House, as well as the extensive Georgian pleasure grounds in the rear of the mansion. Craigharroch House and its environs possess countless relics of the flesh and blood Annie Laurie of yore, but the romance you have built about the entire character of the heroine of Douglas' immortal verse fades away as you come to the spot where she lived and died. Had she been the genuine myth instead of a genuine personage, the lovely fancy which invests the heroines of poets with tender attributes could never cease its witching conjurings. As it is, it is you come here, you must be prepared to find that Annie Laurie became a garrulous match maker and was addicted to taking snuff.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

(Continued to Eighth Page.)

ST. MARY'S, N. B.

Oct. 3.—Captain William A. Barker, of Barker's Point, who had been ill for several months, died on the 19th. The funeral took place on the following Thursday. After prayer at the house, the remains were taken to the church at Lower St. Mary's where a most impressive and touching address was given by Rev. J. R. Parkinson. The little church was filled with the friends who had assembled to pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased. The coffin was entirely covered with floral offerings, some of which were very beautiful, testifying to the high esteem in which Mr. Barker was held. Mrs. D. Combes presided at the organ and played the hymns and dead march in her usual faultless manner. The sympathy of the community is extended to the widow and children in their sad affliction. Mr. Barker was captain of a volunteer company for several years.

Miss Julia E. Peppers has returned from a pleasant visit to friends in Boston.

Miss Moody is the guest of her aunt, Mrs. William Blancy.

Mrs. John Kyle has friends visiting her.

Mrs. Bradley, mother of Mr. William Bradley, of Gibson, died at her son's residence on Wednesday morning.

Mr. G. A. Johnston went to Lunenburg on Thursday to take charge of a school there.

Mrs. Thomas Robinson, of Blackville, is visiting at the home of Mr. Johnston.

Mrs. Charles Brown had a severe attack of hemorrhage last week, but is better to-day.

Mrs. Byram, who has been quite ill for some time, is recovering.

Miss Helen spent a few days at home recently.

Miss Nellie Hoben, who lately retired from the staff of the school here, was presented by her pupils with two very handsome silver toilet boxes, previous to her departure for Presque Isle, Maine.

The presentation was made in the principal's room, in the presence of a number of visitors. Speeches were made by Dr. Mullin, Rev. Mr. Davidson, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Van Wart, Miss Bessie Burpee, Miss Helen's successor.

Miss Florence Carman left for New York a short time ago, where she intended spending a few weeks with friends before going to other points of interest on an extended visit.

Mrs. Helen has returned to Boston.

The Women's Aid Society intend holding an "Old Fashioned Farmers' Supper" in the hall connected with the Episcopal church on Thursday evening.

Mr. Edward C. Barry, of Lower St. Mary's, who went to Boston this summer, has gone to Pennsylvania.

Dane Rumor says that a gentleman from the upper part of the province is soon to rob us of one of our most charming young ladies, a member of the teaching profession.

St. Mary's R. C. church was the scene of a very pretty wedding on Monday evening, when Mr. Patrick Boland tied the altar Miss Maggie Graman.

Rev. Father Keirnan performed the ceremony in the presence of a large number of friends.

The bride was attired in a pretty dress of fawn color, and was attended by her sister, Miss Nellie Graman, who wore a suit of navy blue.

Mr. Boland, who is a beautiful blonde, looked charming in an exceedingly pretty bridal costume.

Miss Bessie Foster, sister of the groom, was maid of honor, and Mr. Thomas Pope, brother of the groom, supported the groom.

After the congratulations the guests proceeded to the dining room, where an excellent repast was partaken of.

A number of the friends of the bride and groom were present from St. John, Fredericton, St. Mary's and other places.

The presents, which were displayed for the guests, were very numerous.

Many handsome costumes were worn, but want of space prevents a description of them.

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community in the death of their little son, who died last week after a short illness.

Mr. and Mrs. John McGovern are receiving the congratulations of their friends on the arrival of a baby boy.

Mrs. Charles King has moved to his cottage in Kingsville.

Mrs. William Evans has returned home after a three months visit to her sister, Mrs. Henry Hebert, Worcester, Mass.

Miss Sadie Ferrick spent a few days last week in Kingsville, the guest of her sister, Mrs. John Lee.

HILLSBORO, N. B.

Oct. 3.—Mrs. G. L. Brown of Petticoat Road is visiting Mrs. Curry.

Mrs. B. C. Mowat and little daughter, of New Westminister, B. C., is the guest of Mrs. J. T. Steeves, Millbrook Farm.

Mrs. G. D. Steeves, who has been visiting friends at Salisbury returned home last week.

Mr. H. N. Steeves who has been absent a number of years, is visiting his father, Mr. Asa Steeves.

Miss Addie Jump gave a recital at Hopewell Cape, which was a grand success. Miss Jump was an eloquent, intelligent, giving two other recitals, one, which will be held in Albert and another at Hillsboro. The following was the programme:

Organ Solo—Miss Annie Steeves.

Vocal Solo—Kiss Me as I Fall Asleep.

Reading—The Light on Dead Man's Bar.

Vocal Solo—Love's Sweet Song.

Reading—Minuet enchoire, Little Willie Drew.

Vocal Solo—Going to Market.

Reading—Chinese Question.

Song—Old Madrid.

Reading—Don Quixote's Ghost.

Pict.—Misses Condon and Found.

Reading—The Dead Dolly.

Encore—The Gobbits.

HAMPTON.

Oct. 4.—Mr. and Mrs. Geo. F. Calkin spent Sunday here the guests of Rev. Wm. Tweedie.

Miss Fannie H. Barnes has returned from her visit to St. Martins.

Mrs. Samuel Howard, Mrs. Philip Palmer, and Miss Bessie Peters, left for Moncton on Tuesday to attend the annual meeting of the Women's Missionary society of the Methodist church.

Mr. Charles K. Leonard, who has spent the summer in the U. S., has returned home.

Rev. Geo. M. Young, of Upper Kent, is spending a few days with Mr. and Mrs. H. D. McLeod at "Asholun."

Among the visitors in town on Tuesday were Hon. A. S. White, Mr. Geo. W. Fowler and Hon. C. N. Skinner, of St. John, in attendance at the county court.

Mr. E. G. Evans and Mr. T. A. Peters, left on Tuesday for Chicago, via Montreal and Boston.

Mr. Frank A. McCully, of Moncton, was in town on Monday.

APOHAQUI, N. B.

Oct. 3.—Mr. W. Campbell, Moncton, visited his parents on Sunday.

Miss Kiefer, Penobscot, is making Mrs. Fred Gross a visit.

Miss Nina Sinnott returned to Moncton on Wednesday, to spend the winter with Mrs. E. Sherard.

Mrs. W. Tyng Peters and daughter, Miss Julia, are spending a few days with Mrs. G. Ellison. They returned to St. John this evening.

Mr. Seth Jones, Sussex, spent Sunday at his parents' home here.

Miss Alice Pearson returned to Newton, Mass., last Thursday. Miss Ida Pearson accompanied her and will spend the winter in Spencer with her brother, Mr. John Pearson.

Mr. and Mrs. S. F. Huestis, Halifax, spent Friday with their daughter, Mrs. G. Dawson.

Mr. J. A. Sinnott spent Tuesday at Hampton.

MUSQUASH.

Oct. 3.—The annual fancy sale and high tea of St. Ann's Guild, was held in Knight's Hall on Wednesday last and was a perfect success in every way.

The hall was handsomely decorated with flags, Japanese ornaments and spruce.

Rev. H. M. Spike returned home last week after an extended trip through the United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Clinch and Mrs. C. Clinch, left on Tuesday last for Boston, the home of the latter.

Mrs. Chas. Clinch will travel through the province and the Western States before returning home.

Mr. Fred Bell spent Sunday with his parents at the "Willows."

The Misses Carrie and Nellie Reynolds of Lepreau, were the guests last week of Miss Balcom.

Mr. C. C. Ludgate is spending the week in St. George.

Mr. George and Miss Nettie Anderson visited the city this week.

Black Duck & Teal Duck.

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY, N. S. BEEF.

—LAMB, VEAL AND MUTTON;

—PORK, LARD, and small cakes;

—FRESH AND PICKLED PORK;

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