

THEY SPOKE OF BURNS.

MEN RUDE AND ROUGH PRESSED
ROUND TO HEAR

The Praise of One Whose Heart was Made of Simple, Manly stuff, as Homeless as their Own.—The Fourth Volume of "Burnsiana"—An Amherst Poet Represented.

The fourth volume of this miscellany follows the third after a lapse of some six months. It is less rich than its predecessor in eloquent animadversion, it has much of interest in its critical articles and its memorabilia. The itinerary of "H. H." as might be expected, is the finest literary brochure given. The address by Dr. W. Symington Brown would be better put for its rabidity, and self-sufficient manner of running a muck against the churches. The grace and wit, and bon homme, as well as the poetry, pathos, and frequent good sense, that redeem the tirades of Ingersoll, are altogether wanting in this agnostic disciple. "John Keats in Ayshire," is also a delightful paper, and has the advantage of conveying that which is not "a twice-or thrice—told tale." The young Hellenic left a trail of light along his way as he went

To find a Bard's low cradle place about the silent North.

The article embodies "To Ailsa Rock," one of the richest of his magnificent sonnets. Most attractive to us are the "Unpublished Letters of Burns," collected in an article by G. A. Aitken; and "Some Burns Relics," by John Muir. We care little about the "Burns tumbler" presented by a daughter of one of the poet's sons to Mr. Muir, or the copy of "Auld Lang Syne" in the Hawaiian tongue; but any pane of glass on which Burns wrote an epigram will attract our scrutiny.

In Kirkliston stands an old house, which, in the poet's day, was an inn, where he found lodgment on one of his journeys from Edinburgh to Ayshire. Were there some contracted lives under the roof at that time, the unconscious limitations of which inspired the following lines scratched on one of the window-panes?

"The ants about a clod employ their cares,
And think the business of the world is theirs.
Lo! waxen combs seem palaces to bees,
And mines conceive the world to be a cheese."

There the record has remained until recently, when Mr. Wright, landlord of the Strathbrooke hotel, Broxburn, purchased the window containing this sentiment for a handsome sum; which, having had suitably encased, he will accord a permanent and prominent position on his premises. Of course, this is all antiquarian zeal, and is not in any measure a popular advertising conceit.

There is an alleged poem of Burns—we wonder if it is his!—which, if genuine, throws some light on his domestic life at Ellisland, and illustrates touchingly the affectionate care of "Bonnie Jean." There is no doubt but that in the first year or two on this upland farm beside the Nith they spent the happiest and most hopeful portion of their married life. There was absorbing occupation in his farming, with occasional but delightful visits of the Muse, with more of quietude and freedom of excesses than he had been, or was, afterward, accustomed to. Here he came in the early summer to prepare a home for her, here he worked and waited until she came to him, and here they first dwelt in a house as husband and wife. So run the stanzas quoted from this "unpublished poem" with its "eloquent expression of the contentment, love and happiness which formed the 'home atmosphere' of the poet and his Jean."

"To gild her worth I asked no wealthier dower;
My toil could feed her, and my arm defend;
I envied no man's riches, no man's power,
I asked no more to give, or none to lend."

"And she, the faithful partner of my care,
When ready evening streaked the western sky;
Looked through the uplands if her mate were there,
Or through the heathes cast an anxious eye."

This may be Burns, though we remember no other of his verses so unlike his tone. To write such lines we think not difficult; but, "Of a' the airts," or "I've a wife o' my ain"—well these are other things!

One of the most affecting documents in literary history is that piteous letter from his death bed, addressed by Burns to his cousin at Montrose, imploring him to save him from an oppressive creditor. Unhappily this was not a solitary instance in the life of the poet, as is disclosed by one of these recently published letters. It bears date January 15, 1795, and is addressed from Dumfries to Mr. William Stewart of Closeburn Castle. "This is a painful, disagreeable letter and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear sir, accommodate me. It will truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third part of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter. Farewell, and God bless you!—Robt. Burns." The letter bears Stewart's endorsement and signature, as follows: This day forwarded and enclosed in a letter to Mr. Burns. £3. 3s. 0d. stg., and for which I hold no security in writing—William Stewart." This letter—another indication of what befell the poet in his later years—was sold at the Messrs. Sothely's rooms in May 1892, for more than would have sufficed to relieve all his want.

Equally interesting to the biographer, or the curiosity-monger, are the extracts from the Kirk-Session Records of Mauchline, relating to the liaison of Burns with Jean Armour. Rumors had begun, and

were in circulation, before April 1786. On the second of that month information was formally lodged with that board of discipline, and they proceeded to action immediately, by appointing as a committee James Lamie and William Fisher, to confer with her parents. Jean had gone away from home into another parish, which action on her part tended to confirm the suspicions already excited. Record is made that on the 9th of the month Lamie reported to the session that he had interviewed Mary Smith, [the maiden family name is retained in Scotland after marriage—or was then] mother to Jean Armour; who told him that she had not suspected her child, and that Jean had gone to Paisley to see her friends, but would soon return. The delinquent daughter was summoned by the Session to appear in person, but failing to do this, directed a note to the parish minister, confessing her fault, and implicating Burns. She says in her note—which is entered on the Records, with date, June 18th, 1786: "I am heartily sorry that I have given, and must give, your Session trouble on my account." The note is dated, "Mauchline, 15th June, 1786."

An officer was ordered to "summon Robert Burns to attend this day eight days." When at the appointed time, June 25th, the poet appeared, he made a frank confession and acknowledgement. The more public confession and reproof in kirk soon followed, when, on the 6th of August, 1786, "Robert Burns, John Smith, Mary Lindsay, Jean Armour and Agnes Auld, appeared before the congregation professing their repentance; and they having each appeared two several Sabbaths formerly, were this day rebuked and absolved from the scandal."

This record occurs, "August 5th 1788—Compared Robert Burns with Jean Armour, his alleged spouse. They both acknowledged their irregular marriage, and their sorrow for that irregularity; and, desiring that the session will take such steps as may seem to them proper in order to the solemn confirmation of the said marriage."

"The session taking this affair under their consideration agree that they both be rebuked for their acknowledged irregularity, and that they be taken solemnly to adhere faithfully to one another as husband and wife all the days of their life."

"In regard the Session have a title [sic] in law to some fine for behoof of the poor, they agree to refer to Mr. Burns his own generosity. The above sentence was accordingly executed, and the session absolved the said parties from any scandal on their account."

WILLIAM AULD, Moderator.
ROBERT BURNS.
JEAN ARMOUR.

Mr. Burns gave a guinea "note for behoof of the poor."

We can well imagine how the proud and fiery spirit of Burns must have been galled by the indignity of the "cutty stool," but with his strong sense, and appreciation of justice, he doubtless would have submitted to the necessary formality without deep resentment, if the rebuke had been administered by a kind, judicious man. Unhappily the parish minister at Mauchline, Father Auld, was not such. He greatly magnified the importance of his office, and his harshness and narrowness excited the poet's indignation and contempt, and set him off at a tangent against the kirk and ministry generally. It is the galled bird that winces and often kicks.

Then, as all the world knows, followed that gloomy day in Burns' history when "hungry ruin had him in the wind," and he became a skulker from the law, and a prospective exile. Then followed the day of sorrow and bitterness and disruption in that home whose domestic peace he had helped to violate, the wrong he himself had committed, and which he paints with passionate language in the "Cottar's Saturday Night."

"Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth,
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jean's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relieving ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er the child?
Then points the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?"

We cannot suppose Burns to have drawn his own case or character in the first part of the above stanza; but he certainly had a powerful object lesson from which to form the last part in the distraction in the Armour household.

Well, it is long past, and we will not dwell upon it.

Other attractive articles and poems in the present volume are: "Mr. Robert Fergie on Burns," an Address before the South Edinburgh Burns Club, Jan. 25th, 1893; "Verses Attributed to Burns," (doubtful) and said to have been written on a marble sideboard in the hermitage belonging to the Duke of Athol, in the woods of Aberfeldy; "Burns in Art," by H. C. Shelley; "Rhymin' Robin: An Anniversary Tribute," by Alex. G. Murdoch; "Burns at Kirkcaldy," by J. A. Westwood; Oliver, republished from "Macmillan's"; "Burns' Birthday Song," by Alex. Lowson; "Translations of Burns," by J. Young; "Song for a Burns Anniversary," by William Thompson; "The Poet of Burns," reprinted from The Scotsman, Dec. 16, 1887; "Paisley Burns Clubs," a review of a work by Robt. Brown, F. S. A., by Prof. J. Clark Murray, Montreal; "The Ayr Burns Statue, Unveiling Ceremony," from the Glasgow Weekly Herald, July 11th, 1891; "The National Celebration," "The Poet Burns: Lines on his Birthday Anniversary at Lodge Canongate Kilwinning, Edinburgh, accompanying the Presentation of a Facsimile of the Declaration of Independence," by Wallace Bruce; "Robert Burns," by Mrs. A. A. Wellington; "A French Estimate of Burns and the Scottish Renaissance," from the Glasgow Herald, June 6th, 1892; "Robert Burns: 'Sale of Tam O'Shanter Signet Ayr,'" by Mr. Robt. Ford on Burns; An Address before the Harlinnie Burns Club, Jan. 25th, 1893; "Burns: An Anniversary Rhyme," by Alex. Scrimgeour, Amherst, N. S.; "A Collection of Burns' Manuscripts," by G. A. Aitken; "Burns: An Ode," by Alex. Anderson—read at the unveiling of the Dumfries Statue of the Bard, April 6th, 1882; "Burns and Blair: With a note on Beattie," by Prof. Lewis Stuart; "Burns and the Ardwail Family," by "Bonnie Jean," by George Dobie; "Scots Wha Hae: How the famous Scotch War Song was composed," in "Memoriam, James McKie," by John Hyslop; "To a Copy of Burns' Poems, Found in the House of an Ontario Farmer," by W. M. Mackenzie.

The verso-gem of the collection is the poem by John Macfarlane:

Behold!—a morning sky,
And singing in its midst heaven a lark,
So sweet and clear, no trouble draweth nigh,
Nor footstep of the dark.
Even so!—our ploughman bard,
In lark-like accents greets the morning ray;
With soul-state upspring from earth's sward,
In song and raptur'd lay.
But lo!—a speck that grew
To thunderous glooms and mutterings over-
head;
That lyric heart is palsied in the blue,
And Robert Burns lies dead!

Mr. Ross is engaged in other volumes of this series which we expect to be as worthy of commendation as is the present one.
PASTOR FELIX.

A REMARKABLE CASE.

THE STRANGE POSITION IN WHICH
A BRANTFORD MAN FOUND
HIMSELF.

Physicians Could Not Agree as to the Nature of His Trouble—Fell Away to a Mere Skeleton—Was Unable to Move About—Continuously Suffered Terrible Pains.

From the Brantford Expositor.

Some months ago the Expositor gave the particulars of the remarkable cure wrought upon Mrs. Avery, who lives at Pleasant Ridge, a few miles out of the city, and the case created much interest among people of the city and vicinity. We are now in a position to give the particulars of another wonderful cure that has occurred in the city since the first of January. The then unfortunate, but now happy and healthy man, is William G. Woodcock, who resides at 189 Murray street. He is an English man, and has been out from Kent, England, about eleven years. A baker by trade, he accepted a position with Mr. Donaldson, and came to this city about two years ago. A reporter called on him a few days ago and interviewed him with reference to the cure which has been spoken of, and the following story was told by him:

"I came to the city two years ago and worked at Donaldson's bakery. For nearly a year previous to the first of January I had been troubled with some disease or sickness, but was able to continue my work, but about the month of September last I was completely used up and had to quit work. The trouble seemed to be excessive weakness; at first from my knees to my feet, but afterwards from my hips to my feet. I obtained advice and treatment from several medical men, some of whom said the trouble was caused by a bodily strain, others that I was run down so that I was very weak and open to take any disease. Although they did not agree as to the cause, all advised me to tightly bandage my limbs from the knees down. I did so, but this was of no avail, and I became so weak that I was not able to move even around the house. The pains I suffered were terrible, and the only way I could relieve myself at all, was to lie on one foot on the floor and extend it straight out from me. In November I was in the hospital fourteen days, and was treated for typhoid fever, and although I cannot say for certain, yet I do not think that I had the fever at all. When I was taken from the hospital I could neither eat nor sleep, and was still suffering the most intense pain. I continued in this way, more dead than alive, until the first of January, 1894, when I concluded to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I sent to Mr. Bachelor's drug store on New Year's Day and bought six boxes of pills. At this time I could not stand at all, but in about a week I threw away the bandages which I had been wearing on my limbs, and in two weeks I could walk first rate. By the time six boxes were finished I was fit for work and in the best of health. I did the hardest day's work on Saturday last that I had ever done in this country and felt some the worse for it. When I was weighed a week ago I tipped the scales at 163 pounds and when I came out of the hospital in November I did not weigh over 100 pounds, so you can easily see what Pink Pills have done for me in that way."

Every statement of Mr. Woodcock's was corroborated by his wife who was present at the interview, and if appearances are correct Mr. Woodcock is enjoying the best of health and can do many hard day's work yet. He is also very positive that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and nothing but them relieved him of his terrible disease and probably saved his life.

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Was It the Cat?

The efficacy of a black cat as a lighting rod has been frequently the subject of discussion and assertion to be treated at length at the present time. An illustration of this popular belief can be deduced from an incident that occurred on the evening of the Fourth of July to the wife of the well-known business man of Washington.

The young matron had been expending considerable time and attention upon a handsome black cat, which she continued to stroke, notwithstanding the assertion of her family that by so doing she was charging herself with electricity. Finally, after dark, she decided that a pleasant way of winding up the evening would be to go for a ride on the electric cars to Bethesda. Accordingly, inviting two of her friends to accompany her, she set out for the ride in high spirits. The trio found places together near the middle of the car and had gone a short space beyond the power house, when their conversation was interrupted by the conductor hurrying bending over them as though to avert some catastrophe from beneath, and telling them to leave the car with all speed, as it was on fire. Scarcely had they left their

seats before a sheet of flame burst through the floor just under the very spot over which the young matron had been sitting, the electrical apparatus beneath having ignited at that very point. She declares she will never stroke another cat.

A TALE OF GRASSHOPPERS.

How They Pulled the Bell-Rope and Stopped the Train.

"Tell us about them in the cars," said Long Jim. "This gentleman from the East ain't never seen the like." "They stopped the cars more times than you could count on your fingers by getting on the tracks, and makin' them slippery, actin' like so much grease. And onest—gentlemen, you may not believe it but it's gospel truth—they pulled the bell and the engineer stopped the car stock-still. It was this-a-way, for I were there, and see it myself. The conductor came into the car when it stopped, an' he says, says he:—'Who pulled that bell-rope?' Everybody was scared, 'cept me, an' I spoke up an' says:—

"Don't talk foolishness," says the conductor. 'I don't low no galoot to tend to my duties. When this train is stopped I do it myself. Don't none of you ever tetch that bell-rope agin'."

"I'd like to see ennyone tetch it now," says I, an' I pinter it out to him weighted down with hoppers as thick as a constrictor snake after it had swallowed a calf, an' the car bell a-ringing like mad."

"Holy Moses," he says, an' looked skait, but it were a fact just the same. Them hoppers followed us into the stage, and we sat there knee-deep in 'em. Scairt! No, not so much to speak of. You see them wasn't the seventeen-year locusts with a big 'W' on their backs. These here critters were leetle slim things, kind of a brown-green, but Lord, how they did eat things! We folks had skeeter nets in our winders, and in two minutes after the hoppers struck us it hung in strips and threads and they were swarmin' round the house like flies."

"If they come agin'," said Long Jim, "I'd jest fill up every growin' thing with pizen an' then when the hoppers were all dead I'd burn 'em and use 'em for fertilizers."

"Yer mought," said the man on the cracker-box with a thoughtful look, "if they sent cards a-sayin' they was comin'." But when they steal on yer like a thief in the night, you can't most always calkulate just what you would do. I layin' for 'em this year, but they ain't sent on no advance agent with plan of campaign, as yet."

And he enveloped himself in a blue haze of smoke that forbade further discussion.

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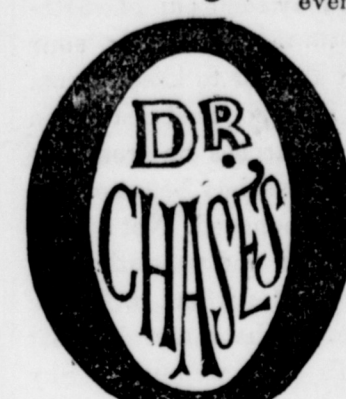
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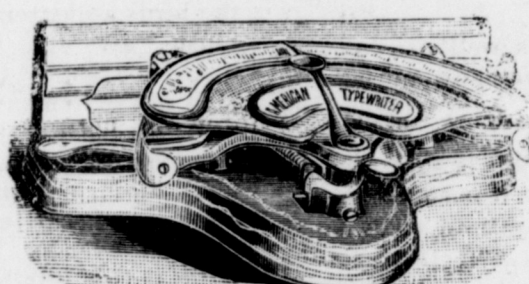
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